

PUBLIC RELATIONS

IN

UNIVERSITY AND TECHNIKON

LIBRARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

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Dedication

This piece of work is dedicated to the memory of my wonderful parents, the late Mr. and Mrs. L.J. Panday, who nurtured me in the strongest bonds of their love.

Acknowledgements

With any kind of research study, it is virtually impossible to list by name all the people who have contributed to its success, I would, however, like to specifically mention a few.

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Summary

Public relations is the art of relating to and communicating with one's public. The study emphasizes the dualistic nature of the concept, i.e. identifying the public's needs and wants ; and, keeping the public informed. PR is a planned process and planning effective PR programmes requires academic libraries to conduct a PR audit.

The traditional concept of PR as merely a component of promotion is challenged. The role of PR is re-examined, indicating that PR could be regarded as the more dominant function over marketing of which promotion is only a component.

An analysis of the statements by the Inter-University Library Committee (IULC) and the Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP) on the role of academic libraries, lends support to the view that PR should not be restricted to being a component of promotion, but that the converse should apply, and that promotion should rather become a component of PR. The view that academic libraries have a "captive audience" and therefore need not concern themselves much with PR, is therefore, rejected.

A survey of university and technikon libraries in South Africa shows that although PR should be a continuous and planned process of evaluating human needs and keeping users informed, only 33% of academic libraries have formal, planned PR programmes. Furthermore, the existing programmes address mainly one aspect of the PR function, namely that of keeping users informed. Only 26% evaluate user needs. This indicates that, for academic libraries, the PR audit is not yet fully visible.

Opsomming

Openbare betrekkinge is die kuns om 'n verstandhouding op te bou en te kommunikeer met jou gebruikersgroep. Die navorsing beklemtoon die tweeledige aard van die begrip, naamlik om gebruikers se behoeftes te bepaal, en om die gebruikers in te lig. Openbare betrekkinge moet beplan word en om dit doeltreffend te kan doen, moet akademiese biblioteke 'n oudit vir openbare betrekkinge uitvoer.

Die tradisionele opvatting omtrent die term 'openbare betrekkinge', naamlik dat dit 'n onderafdeling van promosie is, word bevraagteken. Die rol van openbare betrekkinge word belig en daar word aangetoon dat openbare betrekkinge nie slegs 'n komponent van promosie is nie, maar beskou kan word as 'n meer dominante funksie as selfs bemarking, waarvan promosie slegs 'n onderdeel is.

'n Ontleding van stellings deur die Interuniversitêre Biblioteekkomitee (UBK) en die Komitee van Teknikonhoofde (KTH) oor die rol van akademiese biblioteke verleen steun aan die gesigspunt dat openbare betrekkinge nie beperk moet word tot 'n komponent van promosie nie, maar dat die teenoorgestelde waar is, naamlik dat promosie 'n komponent van openbare betrekkinge behoort te wees. Die siening dat akademiese biblioteke 'n 'ingeslote gehoor' het en hulle nie veel met openbare betrekkinge hoef te bemoei nie, word dus verwerp.

'n Opname van universiteits- en teknikonbiblioteke in Suid-Afrika toon dat alhoewel openbare betrekkinge 'n deurlopende en beplande proses van evaluering van menslike behoeftes en inligtinggewing behoort te wees, net 33% van akademiese biblioteke formele, beplande programme vir openbare betrekkinge het. Die opname toon ook dat hoofsaaklik een aspek van openbare betrekkinge aangespreek word, naamlik om gebruikers in te lig. Net 26% bepaal gebruikersbehoefte. Die resultate toon aan dat die konsep van 'n openbare betrekkinge-oudit nog nie inslag

gevind het nie.

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"A library is not a luxury, but one of the necessities of life"

- H.W.Beecher (Sherman, 1980 : 235)

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CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction to the study of public relations in academic libraries

1.1 Background

Public relations affects almost everyone of us in one way or another in our interaction with others. This point of view is supported by Seitel (1987 : 4) who states that public relations affects almost everyone who has contact with other human beings, therefore, all of us, in one way or another, practise public relations daily. Sherman (1980 : 4) adds that "the names for PR run the gamut from PR and community relations to public affairs and customer service." However, in the end, it distils to "the art and technique of relating to the public."

The application of some public relations techniques goes back to the beginnings of civilisation. In ancient Egypt special achievements were proclaimed through pictures on monuments. In Greece the value of communication by word-of-mouth was well understood. The Romans were masters of persuasive techniques. However, it was only after the invention of printing by Gutenberg, that the written word became a medium of mass communication (Malan & L'Estrange, 1981 : 6-8).

The history of modern public relations has its origins in the American Industrial Revolution. Powerful businesses met with strong antagonism because of their unfair labour practices. Public protest was so strong that they realized the need for improving their public image (Malan & L'Estrange, 1981 : 7-8).

In South Africa today, public relations has come of age and developments such as the introduction of PR courses at universities, colleges and technikons clearly reflect the importance and status of the practice.

In commerce, industry, politics and government PR departments have been established for effective two-way communication between an organization and its publics, and libraries should be no exception. The ultimate aim of libraries is communication, and the library's public relations programme must be accepted as an integral part of the library's total programme. It should involve all staff members and create an awareness of the way in which libraries communicate.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Most libraries are service institutions. They are storehouses of recorded information. They collect and disseminate materials and information and provide related services. The whole purpose of libraries is to provide a service to users without whom their very existence would be threatened. Garvey (1980 : 12) observes that this fact sometimes gets forgotten along the way, and librarians come to regard patrons as adversaries rather than the *raison d'être* of the operation.

It has been suggested by De Gennaro (1983 : 1321) that librarians need to go back to basics and re-discover that their main function is serving their users not building collections. "It is not our main function to devise and implement new cataloguing codes on online catalogues, or national networks. Like collection building, these are all means of serving users and not ends in themselves."

Educational libraries such as university, technikon and college libraries must be geared to serve their immediate public, i.e. members of the teaching staff and students who are greatly dependent on the library for materials and services.

The library literature stresses the need for **active library promotion** (Butler, 1976 : 11). Weisenberg (1970 : 406-407) notes a general lack of commitment to public relations by librarians

and his theory is supported by many other studies ; inter alia, Myhre (1972) and Oakes (1972) (quoted in Butler, 1976 : 10). The need for applying public relations principles to librarianship is also noted by Martin (1971) ; Neil (1972) and Smith (1962) (quoted in Butler, 1976 : 10).

According to Butler (1976 : 10) these studies show that a sizeable number of libraries do not have any active relationship with their community and that library services will have to be constantly 'sold' to the public if they are to receive their share of the tax money. Martin (quoted in Butler, 1976 : 10) found that public library respondents listed "public relations, the library image, and failure to communicate" as critical problem areas falling behind only one other area - "financial problems."

While these studies were undertaken in the U.S.A., they are not peculiar to the situation there, as these are typical factors also facing South African libraries. Personal experience shows that academic libraries need to become more PR conscious. Even public libraries do not seem to be doing enough in this regard (Newlands, 1987 : 21).

In view of the above, it is being proposed that more concerted efforts toward public relations programmes be instituted at South African university and technikon libraries to improve the existing situation.

1.3 Aim of the study

This study is an attempt to establish the extent of public relations practices at university and technikon libraries in South Africa.

Some of the secondary aims of the study are to :

- draw a distinction between public relations and other marketing concepts in relation to libraries ;
- collect and analyze information on the state of public relations at South African academic libraries at present ;
- establish whether academic libraries are practising public relations. If so, are they practising public relations by means of a formal programme or informally ?
- establish to what extent senior library management are involved with PR ;
- ascertain how university and technikon libraries promote themselves ;
- develop public relations guidelines for academic libraries which will hopefully help library directors appraise their libraries' public relations activities.

1.4 Motivation for the study

Being involved in the library profession for many years and interacting closely with users, I have perceived a distinct shift of emphasis from the user being the *raison d'être* of the library's operation, to a diffused situation where libraries and librarians are caught up in technological advancement (for example, computerisation, automation, networking), and the need for recognition and achievement.

In these times of changing socio-economic and political climates when university and technikon libraries in South Africa are being inundated by users who come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, with widely differing abilities and expectations, it has become essential for libraries to go back to the basics and re-examine their purpose. They should ask themselves why they are in existence. Ultimately, the answer is most likely to be : **to serve the information needs of the user.**

In view of the above I have been motivated to find out what exactly university and technikon libraries are doing to :

- make users aware of the library and its services
- help users make optimum use of the library and so become better informed members of the community.

1.5 Delimitation of the study

- This study covers public relations practices at university and technikon libraries in South Africa, including the T.V.B.C. (Transkei, Venda, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei) states.
- In this regard, a survey of the following academic libraries was conducted :

Universities :

University of Bophuthatswana
University of Cape Town
University of Durban-Westville
University of Fort Hare
University of Natal (Durban)
University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg)
University of Port Elizabeth
University of Potchefstroom
University of Pretoria
University of South Africa
University of Stellenbosch
University of the North
University of the Orange Free State
University of the Western Cape
University of the Witwatersrand
University of Transkei
University of Venda
University of Zululand

Medical University of South Africa
Rand Afrikaans University
Rhodes University
Vista University

Technikons :

Cape Technikon
M L Sultan Technikon
Mangosuthu Technikon
Northern Transvaal Technikon
Peninsula Technikon
Port Elizabeth Technikon
Technikon Natal
Technikon O F S
Technikon Pretoria
Technikon R S A
Technikon Witwatersrand
Vaal Triangle Technikon

- Public, school, college, and special libraries were excluded.
- The study was further supported by briefly testing some aspects of communication in academic libraries because they were considered important areas of PR.

1.6 Hypothesis

- Public relations at South African academic libraries is a relatively unrecognized concept at present. Insufficient effort is spent directly on public relations. Even though academic librarians may recognize the importance of the practice, they have not been giving PR the attention it deserves.

1.7 Assumptions

- Public relations and marketing techniques lend themselves to achieving the objectives of library and information services which include education, provision and transmission of information, and research.
- The user's support for more adequate library services can be promoted through use of public relations principles.

1.8 Methodology

- At the very outset of the study, a request for an online search was made to the Human Sciences Research Council to confirm that the topic had not already been researched.
- A review of the literature covering the broader spectrum of marketing, advertising, promotion and public relations principles was conducted by means of a DIALOG search to support the study.
- A survey of public relations practices in university and technikon libraries was conducted from July-October 1992. This was done by means of a self-administered postal questionnaire, a pilot study of which was done formally at two university libraries, and informally at one technikon library. The questionnaires were revised in accordance with the suggestions/criticisms from the pilot studies and then distributed to all university and technikon libraries in South Africa, including the T.V.B.C. states.
- The questionnaire, which included closed, open-ended and multiple choice questions, covered the following aspects :
 - background information
 - library staff
 - views on public relations

- areas in which public relations are practised
- ways in which the library is promoted
- signage in the library
- budget for PR
- rating of the PR programme

The following factors led the researcher to select this type of questionnaire as the most suitable survey instrument for collecting the required data :

- (i) the geographical distribution of the population being studied ;
- (ii) lack of funds to travel from place to place to conduct personal interviews with librarians at all the institutions involved ;
- (iii) the perception of the researcher that the population being studied included a group of highly professional people who would be able to answer the questions, and that the percentage feedback would be high ;
- (iv) the nature of the questions were factual and unambiguous and answers could be provided without prompting.

- Part of the general overview supporting the theory of communication was covered by means of :

- (a) personal observation of the manner in which the telephone was answered and messages relayed at various academic libraries ;
- (b) evaluation of notices, newsletters, annual reports, pro forma letters, etc.

However, since this study has a managerial focus, it was felt that a detailed analysis of these aspects would lend themselves more to psychological research and fell beyond the scope of this study.

- The Harvard Graphics programme was used to generate charts and graphs.

- Quattro Pro was used to capture the data from the responses received.

- Using the SYSTAT (Statistical Package) the data gathered from the responses was analyzed by computer.

- Conclusions were drawn and recommendations formulated on the basis of the literature survey and analysis of data and the researcher's own observations.

1.9 Definition of terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms, when used in library situations, are defined :

Academic libraries

- Include both university and technikon libraries

Exhibits, Exhibitions

- Visual presentations of materials or objects which communicate information to the viewer.

Human relations

- The practice of management principles by the library staff to assist with communication and convey to users a favourable image of the library.

Library marketing

- Identifying patron needs and satisfying those needs by using information to provide a service, and then making people aware of these services.

Public relations (Traditional definition)

External public relations

- An attempt to inform one's public(s) of products and services through publicity in the media and promotional techniques.

Internal public relations

- An attempt to inform one's public(s) of products and services by making collections more visible, by improving the interior design of one's library and by conducting patron and staff orientation programmes.

Publicity

- Information, usually printed, which is designed to draw the attention of the public.

User(s)

- The actual and potential patron(s) or client(s) who use library materials and services.

1.10 Outline of the study

- Chapter one : Provides the introduction and background to the study.
- Chapter two : Covers the theoretical nature of public relations and concentrates on a review of the literature. It provides an elaboration of key concepts on which the study is based. It deals with planning for PR as a key function of management, and also shows PR as possibly the dominant function over marketing.

- Chapter three : Deals with public relations and its close link with effective communication.
- Chapter four : Deals with the role, purpose and functions of University and Technikon libraries and shows how PR could improve the efficiency of academic library services.
- Chapter five : Provides the personalized approach to practising PR in academic libraries and the numerous techniques which could be used to promote them.
- Chapter six : Deals with the publicity approach to PR and looks at printed communication.
- Chapter seven : Contains the analysis, presentation and discussion of data collected from questionnaires completed in a survey of PR practices in South African academic libraries.
- Chapter eight : Contains the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

2. The nature of public relations with special reference to libraries

2.1 Introduction

As stated earlier, the essence of public relations is the art of relating to the public (Sherman, 1980 : 4). Public relations has become more important today as institutions strive to understand and adapt to the forces of change and new pressures in order to communicate more effectively. In this regard, Seitel (1987 : 5) observes that over the last decade "public relations has steadily built its reputation, increased its prominence and earned respect across a wide span of society."

In the academic library context, institutions will have to seek user support and trust, and also the support of the executive such as the Council and Senate, for without such support, as Seitel (1987 : 5) points out, they will be rendered powerless.

2.2 The search for a single definition

While a generally accepted definition of public relations still escapes us, substantial progress has been made toward a clearer understanding of the field.

According to Kies (1974 : xiii) library public relations is often defined "by an **un-definition**, a description of what it is **not**." Garvey (1980 : 11) confirms this point of view with the statement that "PR is **not** an 'apply and let dry' process ; it's **not** a fresh coat of paint slapped on a rickety structure." But she adds positively, "library service maintenance, like building maintenance, should be an on-going process of making modifications as necessary and repairing defects as they appear."

An early attempt to find a single definition of public relations was made at a conference held at The Hague in May 1960 (Malan, 1981 : 5). The International Public Relations Association concluded :

- that public relations was "a management function of a continuing and planned character" through which organizations sought to win and retain the understanding and support of those with whom they are concerned ; and
- that this was done "by evaluating public opinion about themselves", in order to bring about "more productive co-operation and more efficient fulfilment of their common interests."

Later, one of the most impressive searches for a universal definition of the term was commissioned by the Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education in 1975 (Harlow, 1976 : 36). Sixty-five public relations leaders participated in this study which analyzed 472 different definitions and eventually concluded :

- that public relations was a distinctive management function which helped establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and co-operation between an organization and its publics ;
- that public relations helped keep management informed of and responsive to public opinion, at the same time emphasising the responsibility of management to serve the public interest.

Thus public relations could be used "as an early warning system" to anticipate trends and thereby help management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change (Cutlip & Center, 1985 : 4).

At the first World Assembly of Public Relations' Associations held in Mexico City in December 1978 (Skinner & Von Essen, 1989 : 1) the following definition of the nature and purpose of public relations was unanimously adopted :

- that public relations practice was the "art and social science" of analysing trends and predicting their consequences ;
- it could also be used to counsel heads of organizations and implement "planned programmes of action" which would serve both the interest of the organization as well as that of the public.

In the meantime, there had emerged a definition which as Butler (1976 : 1) points out, most librarians and public relations practitioners were to agree with. This was Wilson's traditional definition which summarised public relations as :

"A deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its public" (Wilson, 1972 : 119).

This is also the definition adopted by the Public Relations Institute of South Africa (Skinner & Von Essen, 1989 : 1).

Malan (1981 : 6) observes that while this definition by Wilson does not specifically mention all the essentials, "they are most certainly implied." For example, it stands to reason that mutual understanding cannot take place unless an organization gets to know what its public wants and then considers these needs and wants when planning future programmes and policies and keeping the public informed.

The various definitions quoted indicate what the essential elements of public relations are :

- (i) They confirm that public relations is a vital part of the **management function**.
- (ii) Public relations is a **continuous and planned process** and not some activity done in a haphazard way or on a random basis.
- (iii) Public relations is concerned with **communication between an organization and its publics** :
 - it must keep management informed of public opinion so that it (management) can anticipate trends and utilize change ;
 - it must keep the public informed of the programmes of action planned to serve the interests of the public.

The last point (iii) emphasizes the dual nature of the concept :

- (a) the **evaluation of the public's needs and wants** and the attuning of one's policies and actions to match those needs and wants ; and then,
- (b) **keeping the public informed**, in order to win understanding and co-operation.

This means that although the products, services and practices of an organization may be excellent, the public will neither appreciate nor use them unless they understand, or are made aware of what they are. At the same time, unless an organization understands the needs and wants of its public(s), it cannot adjust its products, services and practices to meet those needs.

Public relations is therefore, a **management function** that aims at developing a good name for its organization by ensuring that the policies, products and services of the organization are

acceptable to the public and that the public is made aware of them.

2.3 Public relations as a management function

With regard to the concept of public relations as a management function, Cutlip & Center (1985 : 4) highlight Rex Harlow's definition of public relations as a **distinctive management function** through which lines of communication, understanding and co-operation between an organization and its publics are established and which emphasizes the responsibility of management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion.

In recent years public relations has earned its own special niche in management and in this regard Seitel (1987 : 4) is of the opinion that the primary vehicle through which an organization shows its public consideration and sensitivity is its public relations professionals. Grunig & Hunt (Seitel, 1987 : 55) suggest that public relations managers serve a "boundary" role in that they function as a liaison between the organization and its internal and external publics, i.e. on the one hand, they must interpret the philosophies, policies, programmes and practices of management to the public ; on the other hand, they must translate the attitudes of the public to management. As "boundary managers" they support their colleagues and help them communicate across organizational lines both within and outside the organization. In this way they also become "systems managers" who deal with and become aware of complex relationships in the organization.

Good public relations cannot be practised in a vacuum. No matter what the size of the organization, a public relations department is only as good as its access to management (Seitel, 1987 : 15). It can counsel and advise management, but management must decide on organizational policy. Seitel (1987 : 15) places strong emphasis on the fact that the public relations personnel need to

understand both the agreed policy, and the reasons behind the decisions to follow particular lines of action, if they are to be able to interpret policy accurately. Such staff should be consulted on all appropriate matters **before** decisions are reached instead of merely receiving instructions to carry out a decision.

Clearly, public relations is being regarded more and more frequently today as a management process in itself and, like other management processes, it originates from clear strategies and bottom-line objectives, which flow into specific practices, each with its own discrete budget, timetable, and allocation of resources (Seitel, 1987 : 49).

Public relations managers must develop innovative solutions to organizational problems and make these solutions understandable and acceptable to their colleagues. To do this they must think strategically. They must have sound knowledge of the mission, objectives and strategies of the organization. They must state clearly what they want to accomplish, they must systematically set out to achieve this and they must measure their success. This illustrates the pivotal role of **planning** in all aspects of management.

2.3.1 Planning as a key function of management

Planning needs a clear statement of aims and objectives. Although the other functions of management, such as leadership, organization, control and decision-making are all important in their own right, **planning** is the core function of management and it is implicit in all other functions to a greater or lesser extent.

Planning is a philosophy that represents an organization's approach to decision-making and, as such, has become a **priority function** of many organizations. This fact is supported by the shift of emphasis in the 1980s by the American Library

Association, from rigid standards for service to the concept of planning, which is based on the needs of the various publics of an organization. In this regard, Weingand (1987 : 14) observes that this shift to planning "is in complete tune with the emergence of planning as an important managerial tool upon the organizational scene."

Wilson's widely accepted definition of public relations as "a deliberate, **planned** and sustained effort to establish mutual understanding between an organization and its publics" (1972 : 119), shows that the planning of a public relations programme should be a conscious, continuous and on-going process and not an occasional activity. It involves commitment by all staff, so ideally everyone in the library should contribute to the planning process. An innovative organization would encourage much staff involvement in the planning process.

Sannwald (1981 : 7) suggests that the actual preparation and co-ordination of the plan may be delegated to a staff member who has a good knowledge of the library and one who is self-motivated and has an ability to work well with other staff members. However, the most important criterion for the composition of the planning team according to Weingand (1987 : 25), is that it reflect the interests of those persons or groups who will be affected by the decisions emerging from the planning process. In this way, not only would staff participation be an excellent source of ideas for incorporation into the plan, but participation would also help staff members in their acceptance of changes that may result as an outcome of planning.

However, the success of the public relations function is directly related to the importance that **management** attaches to it according to Cutlip & Center (1985 : 80). These authors believe, furthermore, that an organization's public reputation derives substantially from its senior officials who have the authority to speak and act ; and that, therefore, public relations is inescapably tied to the management function. Thus

before organizing for public relations work, managers must determine basic goals, consider plans and budgets, adopt strategies and evaluate results (Cutlip & Center, 1985 : 80).

Hence, in order for planning to be successful, it is vitally important for top management to be involved and to be committed to take the lead in the planning process. In this regard, Weingand (1987 : 24) states that there should be a policy statement supporting the concept and programme of planning in order to demonstrate library management's commitment to the entire operation, viz. the establishment of organizational goals and objectives ; the evaluation of user needs and programmes and services to meet these needs ; and the establishment of two-way communication with both internal (library staff) and external publics (users).

When the organizational mission, goals, objectives and strategies are developed and are based on careful analysis of client needs, then managerial decision-making is based on hard facts with a vision towards future trends. Thus, engaging in systematic planning, eliminates a scattershot approach to management. Managers have the advantage of careful forethought to guide them when planning programmes. In this way, planning can be used as a road map since it deals with the making of present decisions in the light of planned future events (Weingand, 1987 : 12-15).

The broad environment in which an organization operates will determine overall objectives. These in turn will determine specific public relations objectives and strategies, and once these have been defined the task of organizing a PR programme should flow naturally.

Figure 1 (below) illustrates this approach which is also valid for library and information services.

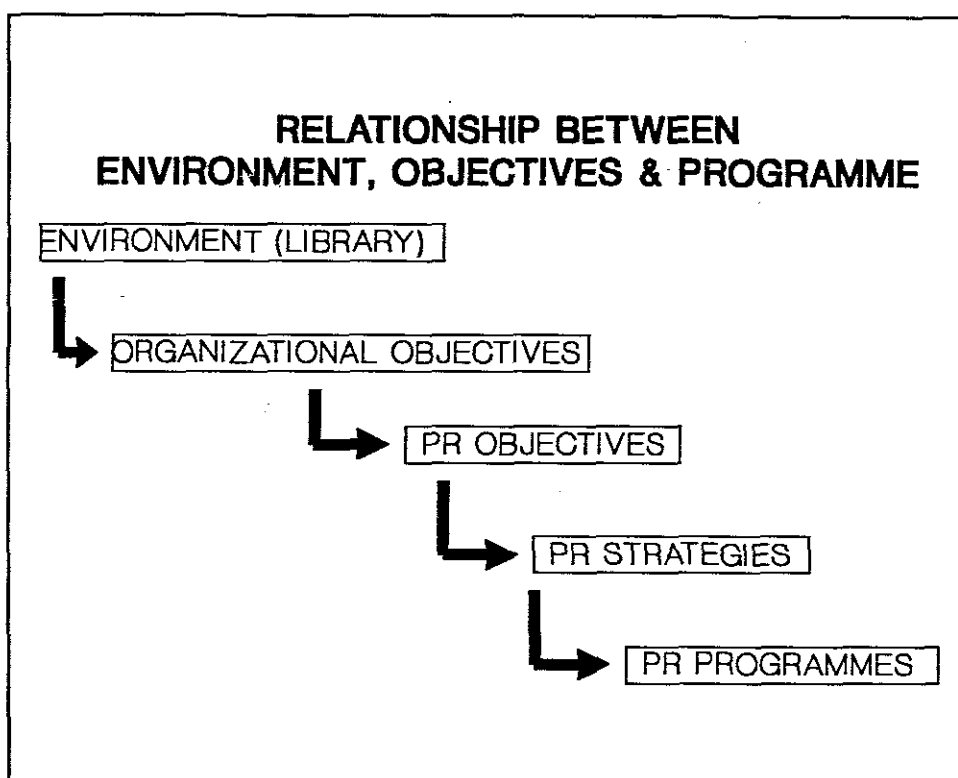


Figure 1

(Adapted from Seitel, 1987 : 56).

In the library world, the increasing pressures of a rapidly changing information society require that librarians and other information professionals relate to their clients on a needs-based level in order to adapt and respond to the diversity of information needs. Weingand (1987 : xv) reminds us that information agency managers can no longer sit back in the traditional easy chair of certainty and expect clients to enter through the front door because they "should." Librarians should make every effort to ascertain what the information needs of their clients are, how to satisfy these needs and how best to make known the services and facilities offered by the library.

Weingand reduces the basic elements of this approach to decisions regarding :

- (i) 'where to go' (which would involve a process of

- planning) ; and
- (ii) 'how to get there', i.e. the ideal state of PR (which would involve a process of marketing).

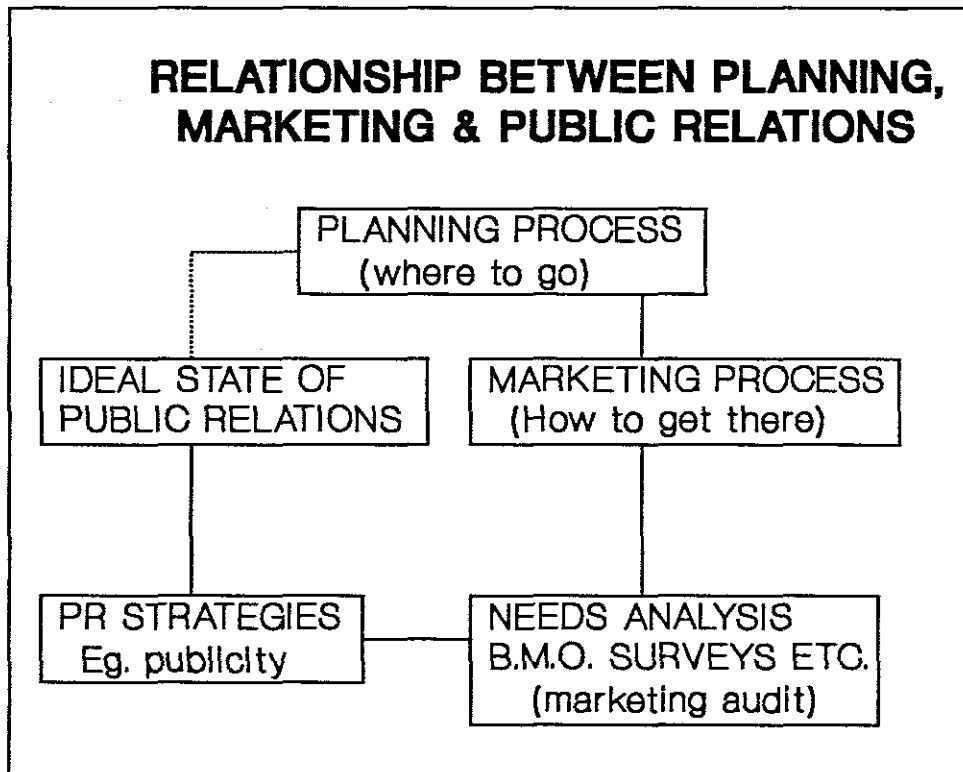


Figure 2

2.3.2 Public relations a component of promotion ?

As observed by Seitel (1987 : 241) and Weingand (1987 : 110), the traditional view of libraries toward PR has been a very narrow one of promotion only. Promotion has been seen in the sense that a library's products are so intrinsically valuable that people "should" use them and therefore only need to be alerted to their existence. This, however, is a very inaccurate perception. As Akinpelu (1980 : 24) points out, the conviction that the academic library "has a 'captive audience' and therefore requires little or no public relations programme needs serious second thought." He warns that **if nothing is done to show them [the users] that the library is**

indispensable to their education, the academic library will be no better than a bookstore and librarians mere custodians of library materials.

This means that nowadays, with so many other 'distractions' on academic campuses, academic libraries should become ever more perceptive to varying needs. It is not sufficient that they merely promote themselves - academic libraries should become involved with public relations programmes to actively **communicate** their message(s) to their publics. They must plan and embark on active public relations programmes if they are to sustain the attention of students and staff (i.e. their primary publics).

Public relations covers the interaction between an organization and its publics and includes everything that is directed towards improving communication between the two (Skinner & Von Essen, 1991 : 4). It influences public opinion by making known the advantages of using the products being offered or proposed and in so doing, aims to build a favourable public image of an organization. In support of this, Weingand (1987 : 110) strongly urges that the view of **promotion** also be restructured to reflect its true purpose - **communication**.

According to Weingand (1987 : 111), the different components of promotion are :

(i) **Public relations** of which the ultimate objective is **communication**. Public relations could be further divided into the following two aspects :

- publicity ; and
- personal contact.

Publicity involves news coverage (for example, press releases, newsletters, posters, displays, etc.) ; while **personal contact**, or the '**people**' component as I prefer to call it, is

generated by the staff of an organization.

In the selection and training of library personnel, it should be stressed that librarianship is a profession of service to the people (Weingand, 1987 : 111). Library staff should never hesitate to approach the patron and offer assistance. Van Niekerk (1988 : 6) adds that friendly, efficient, helpful interactions with library users provide a means to 'sell' products, and to get feedback from users.

Thus, public relations has been equated with communication, and quite rightfully so because **any exercise in PR, whether personal or non-personal, is an exercise in communication.**

(ii) The second component of promotion is **advertising** which is a paid form of publicity, often expensive and sophisticated.

(iii) **Incentives** are the third component of promotion. In library terms, examples of incentives would be : free online searches, sample CD-ROM searches, bookmarks describing new services, amnesty weeks of no fines for overdue books, etc.

(iv) **Atmospherics** are vital to the promotion issue. Libraries must make an attempt to improve their atmospherics with bright posters, adequate lighting, comfortable chairs, displays, etc. (Van Niekerk, 1988 : 6).

All the above aspects of promotion are intended :

- (a) to help libraries achieve their objectives, and
- (b) to facilitate the communication between the library and its target markets and thereby favourably influence their attitudes.

Stanton (1992 : 431) supports the above by pointing out that the ultimate objective of the promotional exercise is to influence feelings, beliefs or behaviour.

However, authors like Weingand (1987 : 6-10), Seitel (1987 : 4-11) and Kotler (1982 : 382), among others, approach promotion at the macro level, as merely an aspect of the marketing process.

Since, according to these authors, PR is a component of promotion, it seems to follow that PR is only a subsidiary function to marketing following this traditional concept.

I would tend to disagree with this concept in view of the following :

Marketing which is described as a management process that is based on carefully planned programmes designed to facilitate the exchange of services and resources in return for patronage (Kotler, 1975 : 5), utilizes the **"marketing mix"** or the "4P's" : i.e. a set of components to attain the objectives of an organization and to satisfy the needs of certain target markets (Kotler, 1982 : 108).

These are, according to McCarthy (quoted in Kotler, 1982 : 108) : **Product, Price, Place / Distribution, and Promotion / Communication** or as I call it, the **People** component ; to which Weingand (1987 : 6) adds : **Prelude**(the marketing audit) and **Postlude**(the evaluation).

The Product : includes anything that can be marketed. In the profit sector the product is usually of a tangible nature, while the information services product may be more nebulous. The products that a library markets to its patrons are :

(i) Materials, for example, books, newspapers, periodicals, records, slides, tapes, films, sculpture, audio- and video-cassettes, etc. ;

(ii) Services, for example, offering information/reference assistance, and advice on choice of books ; compiling

bibliographies ; conducting computerised literature searches using databases like Sabinet, INCH, CD-ROM, Info-Access ; systems like URICA, DOBIS/LIBIS and vendors like DIALOG and DATASTAR, etc. ; providing photocopying, interlibrary-loans, SDI, document delivery or electronic mail service ; providing audio-visual equipment with screening / viewing /recording facilities ; providing suggestions boxes to facilitate user feedback and enhance services ;

(iii) Programmes, for example, conducting orientation and bibliographic or course-related instruction ; holding exhibitions, conferences, workshops etc.

The Price : Cost, in library terms, may be defined directly as the amount of money or other consideration exchanged in order to provide a service, activity or function as suggested by Weingand (1987 : 7) ; or indirectly where it need not have monetary implications as suggested by Van Niekerk (1988 : 6), for example, the user pays a price to visit the library in terms of time, transport, convenience, parking, etc.

Place / Distribution : This is the component in the marketing mix that links the product and the consumer. Library products are removed in space from the user and libraries will have to keep abreast of new trends and developments in order to extend the channels of distribution in order to bring its products and users together. Mobile and branch libraries are examples of attempts to take the product to the user, as pointed out by Van Niekerk (1988 : 6). Other examples would be setting up exhibitions and book displays, writing book reviews in campus newspapers, providing a link-up to the library's catalogue via computer networks, etc.

Promotion / Communication of which PR is merely a tool.

However, upon examination of the 4 P's, it becomes clear that neither the product, nor the price nor the

distribution elements are as important, where libraries are concerned, as the promotion element. This statement may be justified as follows :

The product in the library world remains relatively fixed. Books and journals appear as the prime source of information. Audio-video cassettes, microforms, radio, television, etc. have been introduced to libraries but, from personal observation, do not, as yet, play a major role in the information services of academic libraries. As far as price goes, this, too, is fairly fixed as most academic libraries do not charge for basic services. With regard to place, libraries are again, relatively fixed in their location and cater for specific groups of users. There is nothing much that libraries can do (apart from the creation of branch libraries and the provision of mobile library services) to extend their location/place.

Thus, it is clear that all these factors (product, price, place) have a certain rigidity and hence a limiting effect on library services. Promotion is the only element that allows an unlimited degree of flexibility as far as user outreach, information transfer and the provision of services are concerned. Libraries can go all out to promote themselves.

Although the other P's highlight the managerial quality and the usefulness of the marketing process in getting to know user needs - this is more acceptable for the business world where profit is the motive and where marketing takes the lead role and PR need not necessarily be involved ; but this is not sufficient for libraries where all activities should ideally stem from public relations as the base function. The main reason for this, in my opinion, is that the driving force behind business ventures is profit, whereas for academic libraries, it is service to users.

Hence, it would appear that for non-profit organizations such

as academic libraries, public relations should appear as the wider, all-encompassing function and other managerial functions such as marketing should become subsidiary to it. Skinner & Von Essen (1991 : 25) support this view by stating that marketing and public relations are exterior functions of an organization. Both start their analysis and planning from the point of view of satisfying one or more of the publics, **however for maximum effect, it is essential that public relations be involved right from the start. Indeed this could lead to a situation where marketing becomes a subsidiary function to PR.** I believe that this is how it should be in the library world.

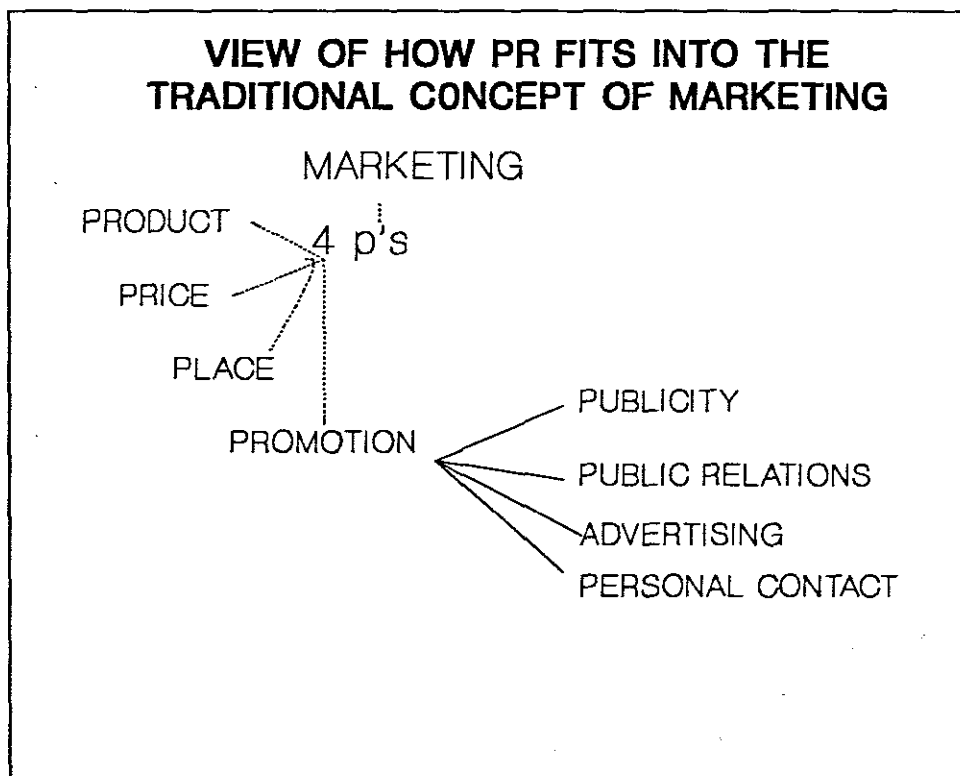


Figure 3

From : Seitel (1987 : 4-11) and Kotler (1982 : 382)

Thus, in view of changing times and diversity of user needs, I propose that the traditional concept of PR being relegated to a function of only secondary importance to marketing, be

re-examined.

In this regard, Skinner & Von Essen's models (1991 : 25) which reflect the different types of relationships between PR and marketing is evolutionary. It builds on the old model which shows PR as traditionally being a subsection of promotion which in turn becomes a subsection of marketing, into one which has PR as the dominant, all-encompassing function that it ought to be.

Skinner & Von Essen's fifth illustration (Figure 4) below most appropriately reflects what the ideal position of PR should be in present day academic libraries ; and Figure 5 shows the ideal relationship of communication, marketing and promotion within this context.

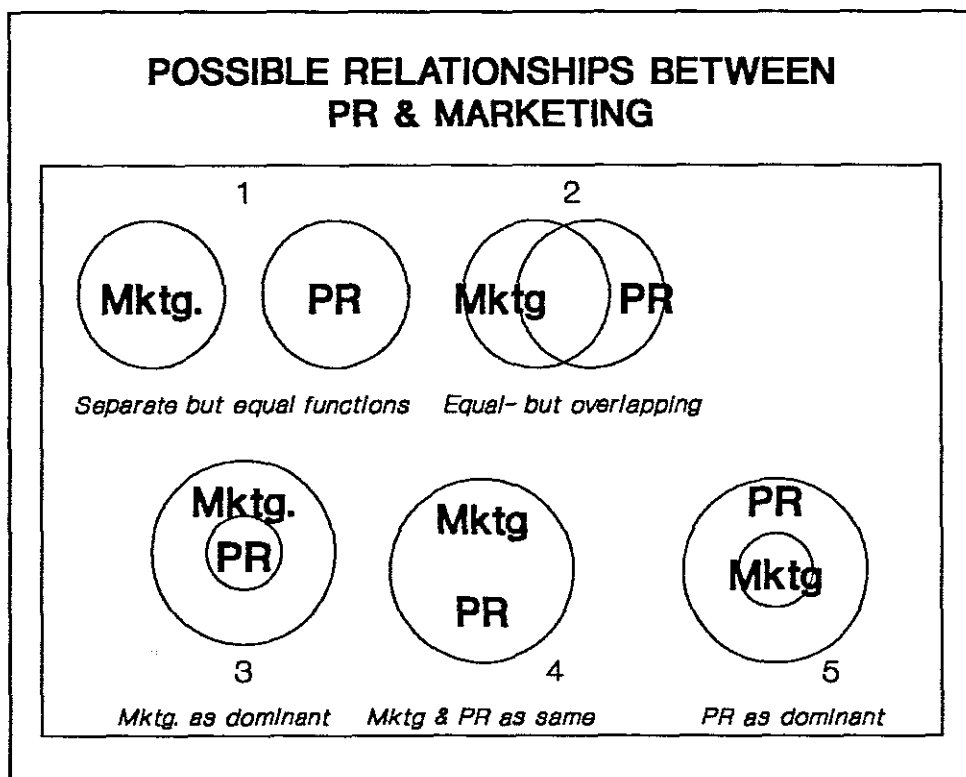


Figure 4

(From Skinner & Von Essen, 1991 : 25)

Based on theories put forward by the various authors discussed above, I would see the role of PR in the promotional/marketing mix as follows :

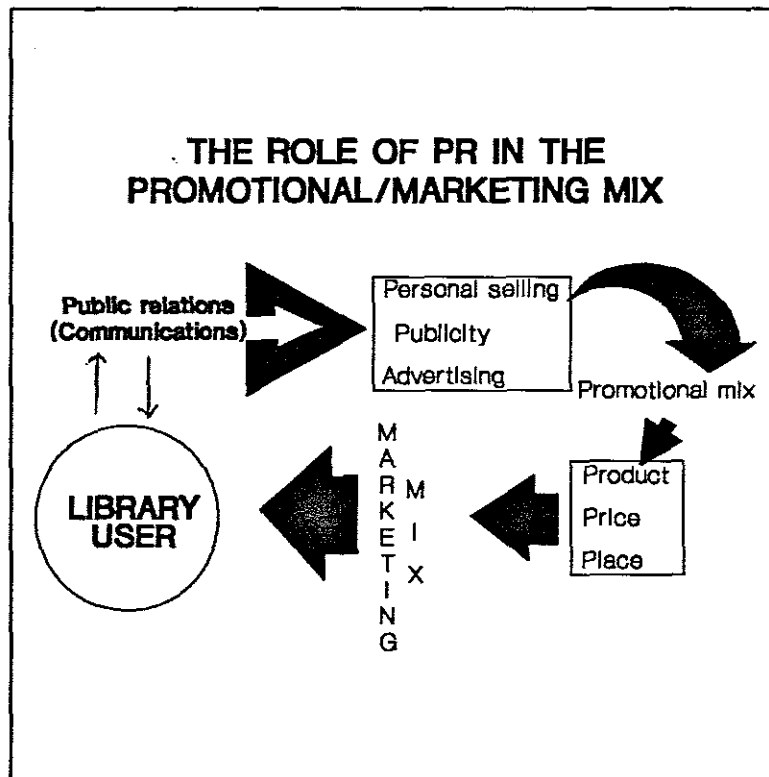


Figure 5

(Substantially adapted from Stanton, 1992 : 430)

Therefore, I DO NOT agree with the concept that PR is a component of promotion, but instead view promotion (and hence marketing) as being components of PR.

2.3.3 Public relations as a planned process

As stated earlier, it is essential that public relations be involved right from the very outset in any programme.

2.3.3.1 What is planning ?

Planning is a process that begins with the setting of organizational aims and goals, defining strategies and policies to achieve them, and then developing detailed plans to make sure that the strategies are implemented (Sannwald, 1981 : 6). A strategy, according to Stanton (1992 : 13-14), may be described as a broad plan of action by which an organization intends to reach its objective ; while planning could be described as a process of "studying the past to decide in the present what to do in the future". Thus, he, like Weingand (1987 : 15), believes that it deals with the making of present decisions in the light of future events.

Strategic planning looks at the alternative courses of action for the future and when choices are made from the alternatives, they become the basis for making current decisions ; or as Weingand (1987 : 11) puts it, "planning is a logical way to create the future on paper - if what is written is not acceptable, one can erase it and start again."

Strategic planning may thus be defined as the managerial process of selecting an organization's goals, determining policies and programmes necessary to achieve certain objectives, and establishing methods to ensure that the policies and programmes are implemented (Stoner & Wankel, 1986 : 114).

In this regard, planning can be viewed as a road map. When organizational goals, objectives and strategies for action are well planned and are based on the careful analysis of client needs, then managerial decision-making is based on core facts. This means that "the destination is charted in advance and decisions can be made which will move the organization toward that destination - alert it to potential crises, but always focusing on the selected outcome" (Weingand, 1987 : 12).

Planning is a process of deciding in advance **what** kind of planning exercise will be undertaken ; **when** it will be done ; **how** it will be done ; **who** will be doing it ; and **what** will be done with the results. This results in a determination to plan constantly and systematically as an integral part of management, and involves on-going commitment on the part of both management and staff (Skinner & Von Essen, 1989 : 13-15). Weingand (1987 : 11) supports this view by observing that with institutions, including non-profit agencies (such as libraries), striving towards excellence in service, the benefits perceived from formalized planning are now becoming a vital part of managerial consciousness.

Thus, it must be remembered, that with regard to planning for PR, no organization can reach the ideal state of planning overnight. It should be an on-going process. Before any public relations programme can be undertaken, information must be gathered and facts extracted. Only then can an organization map out policy decisions and strategies for effective communication programmes. To communicate effectively, it is necessary for an organization to get to know the needs of its target audiences (Skinner & Von Essen, 1991 : 16).

In the library context, the more a library understands its users, the better it will be able to formulate programmes to meet their needs, and as Skinner & Von Essen (1991 : 17) point out, if communication can be tailored to the self-interest of users, there will be a much greater chance of success. In this regard, an opinion survey of users may reveal the attitudes and feelings of the public toward the library. It will also provide a scientific basis for the planning of future programmes.

Sannwald (1981 : 7) is of the opinion that one of the first steps in preparing a plan is to develop a **marketing audit** which, according to Kotler (1982 : 185), can be defined as a comprehensive, systematic, independent and periodic

examination of an organization's total environment, objectives, strategies, activities and resources in order to determine problem areas and opportunities and to recommend a plan of action. The marketing audit, involves assessing client needs and understanding user patterns thus including the entire environment in its examination. However, in keeping with the more recent model as suggested by Skinner & Von Essen (1991 : 25) and my own (Figure 5), in which PR appears to be a dominant factor, I am of the opinion that academic libraries should conduct a **PR audit** rather than a marketing audit since this is more appropriate for their needs in present times. This is more so because academic libraries have a more specific client base than do businesses who have much wider markets. At the same time, I believe that it is more important for an organization to first determine its mission, and thereafter the public relations audit can be worked around this.

To explain the various stages involved in the planning process, I have chosen the staircase concept which is a very useful concept in this regard. This concept which has been adapted from Weingand (1987 : 120) is illustrated as follows :

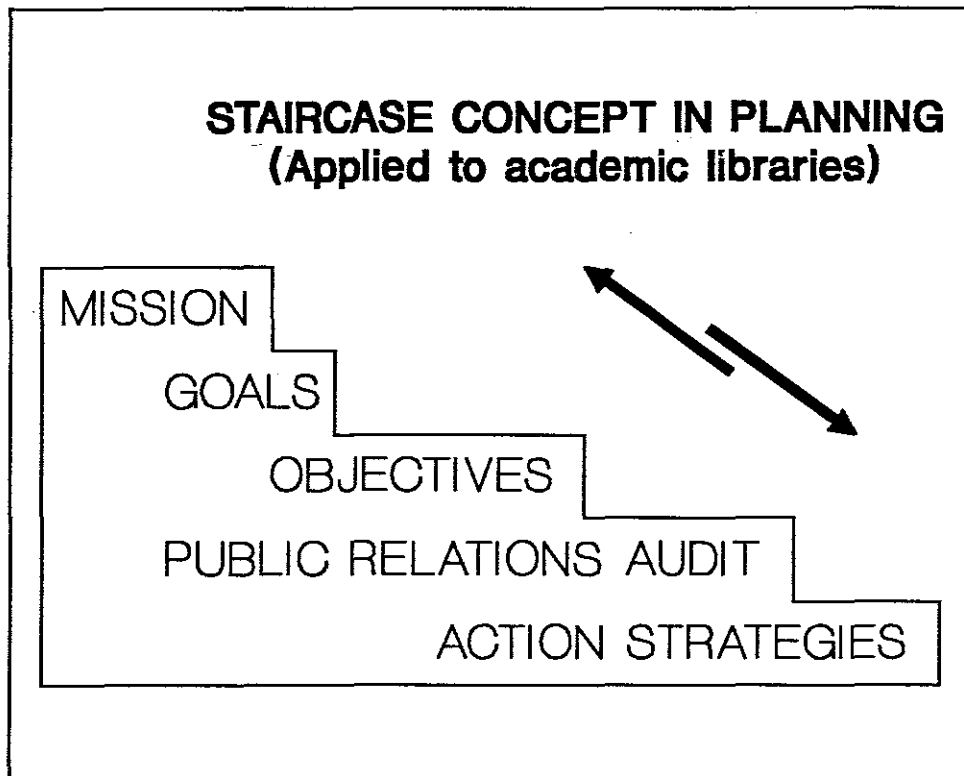


Figure 6

(Adapted from Weingand, 1987 : 120)

During the **initial phase** of the planning process, the planning team moves down the staircase, step by step :

- (a) beginning with the formulation of the organizational **mission** ;
- (b) setting **goals and objectives** ;
- (c) conducting the **public relations audit** ; and
- (d) concluding with decisions with regard to **action strategies**.

Decisions about product, price, place and promotion take place at each of these steps (Weingand, 1987 : 119). As stated earlier and as illustrated in Figure 1, when the organizational mission, goals and objectives and strategies are developed then managerial decision-making is based on hard facts with a vision towards future trends.

During the **implementation phase** of the process, movement on the staircase reverses :

- (a) **action strategies** are completed,
- (b) which responds to the needs identified in the **public relations audit**,
- (c) which in turn accomplishes the **objectives**,
- (d) which brings the organization closer to reaching its **goals**,
- (e) which in turn, fulfils the **mission** of the organization.

2.3.3.2 The components of the 'public relations audit'

The components of a public relations audit would include all the elements of a marketing audit and would include both external and internal environments.

The external environment

Academic libraries need to conduct periodic surveys in order to identify the information needs, attitudes and preferences of the library's user groups. As stated by Newlands (1987 : 41), a survey could also be a scientific way of assessing shortcomings in the provision of library services in order to determine the effectiveness of the library's operation.

The internal environment

The internal environment comprises all the elements that go to make up the library. Careful examination of the internal environment provides data essential to the public relations audit.

The following are the five components within the internal environment :

(i) **The mission** : It is important for the library to understand the reason for its existence and its philosophy of service. Such a mission statement would form the basis for subsequent goals and objectives.

The mission of both **universities and technikons** could be crystallized as an endeavour toward excellence in teaching and research ; and that of **the library** as :

- commitment to information transfer to users ; and
- acting as an indispensable service resource to support the teaching and research function of the parent institution.

If all staff understand this mission, and if anticipated changes are planned and discussed with all staff members who are affected by them, then this situation will result in a healthy working environment.

(ii) **Goals and objectives** : Weingand (1987 : 41) suggests that every organization needs a road map in order to reach a desired destination, and it also needs to know when that destination has been reached. Statements of goals allow the institution to know where it is headed and they facilitate the choice of roads by which to reach the destination (Weingand, 1987 : 50).

Goals are statements of intent or purpose and are not necessarily attainable ; while objectives are specific and measurable and when accomplished, they bring the organization closer toward stated goals. Goals form the basis of the philosophy of the mission statement. They give direction and establish priorities of service. In this regard, Weingand (1987 : 41) points out, that the creation of goals and objectives and their subsequent inclusion in a planning document as an integral part of daily management practice is critical to the internal environment.

(iii) **Resources** - these include :

(a) The **human / staff element** : This, in my opinion is the most valuable resource and since a large percentage of the library's budget is typically spent on staff salaries and benefits, a well thought out set of goals related to staffing is vital for effective management.

However, in these days of increasing economic constraints, as Weingand (1987 : 13) observes there is a tendency particularly in libraries, to try to maintain a level of service despite diminishing numbers of staff and she comments on the detrimental and debilitating effect this can have on the quality of services offered. She attributes this kind of administrative behaviour to a **reactive** style of management - one in which planning has never achieved a systematic status.

In such cases the user is bound to perceive the lack of personalized attention. In this regard, the following analogy could be applied : the medical practitioner who attends to 100 patients a day is likely to rush over the treatment of these patients ; while another practitioner who only treats 20 patients is more likely to give them a better quality service.

Weingand believes that a **pro-active** manager views planning in a much different light ; such a manager knows that involvement in planning trains staff in managerial skills and allows them to participate in decision-making. According to Weingand (1987 : 51), the process of setting goals is based on certain assumptions, the **first** of which is that ideas must come from the entire staff and not just one individual. All staff need to feel involved and feel a part of the total effort.

It, therefore, becomes imperative when planning that staff be given a thorough explanation of the rationale and anticipated benefits to the organization as a whole and to staff members individually, since people normally co-operate if they

perceive some benefit to themselves from a deal - and this should be a first priority of planning (Weingand, 1987 : 13).

Secondly, anyone who will be affected by the goal-setting activity must be kept informed - acceptance by these people is critical to success. This is a basic principle of communication and one that should be remembered and implemented by library management. This is in fact what participative management is all about.

Newlands (1987 : 44) supports the point of view that staff numbers are very important when planning a public relations programme, as elaborate programmes with no staff to undertake them can actually be counter-productive.

(b) **Financial aspects** : Newlands (1987 : 47) points out, that in order to operate an effective public relations programme, accurate and realistic budgeting is essential. She adds that a limited budget will have a restrictive effect on the extent of the public relations programme. She suggests that one of the first tasks of the public relations officer or the chief librarian, will be to convince the authorities of the necessity for funds, which can be motivated by stating the advantages of a public relations programme.

A strong case for budgeting for PR is also made by Garvey (1980 : 139), who states that public relations is not an extra or a frill but an integral part of library operations and should therefore be a budgeted part of this operation in every type of library.

However, in this regard, Malan & L'Estrange (1981 : 33), observe that budgeting for public relations is still done on a very loose basis, although they agree that public relations budgets should be drawn up in exactly the same way as budgets for advertising and other activities. They add, with a note of encouragement, that planning for the first public relations

budget may be difficult, but every succeeding budget will be easier and more accurate.

Cutlip & Center (1971 : 224-225) suggest that during planning of the budget, consideration should be given to the objectives of the library as well as to those of the public relations programme. The extent of the long and short-term objectives to which the library aspires will be reflected in the extent and quality of the public relations programmes planned, which in turn, will be directly affected by the funds available.

While it is realized that securing a separate budget for PR will give the librarian some degree of financial freedom to plan for publications, entertainment, manpower requirements, special events to be held during the year, as well as to make provision for certain overheads, contingencies and other services, Usherwood (1982 : 162) sums up the generally stringent financial situation that most academic institutions face today, by stating that very few libraries have a separate budget allocation for public relations. The only recourse left for librarians is to persevere in their efforts to secure a budget by convincing the necessary authorities of the cardinal importance of the role of public relations in the academic library.

(c) **Technical aspects** : Planning for technological advancements, such as OPAC and networking, that will benefit users and make the library service more client-oriented should be a high priority in academic libraries.

(d) **Physical aspects** (Buildings, equipment, space allocation, furnishings, etc.) : In this regard, Newlands (1987 : 45) points out that attractive furniture that provide comfortable seating and other equipment are essential in creating a pleasant atmosphere which may lead to increased usage of the library ; signs and directions should be brief and concise.

The 1978 ALA standards for university libraries (ARL & ACRL, 1979 : 101-110) also state that the library should be attractive, inviting and carefully designed to promote operational efficiency and effectiveness of use. Specific factors include general environmental features that affect users, staff and collections (light, ventilation, safety features, temperature and humidity control).

(iv) **Structure** : The structure of a library determines to a great extent who will be responsible for PR related activities and how the library will be able to cope with the PR/planning processes. This is done by way of its staffing patterns and lines of communication, for example, the structure may be hierarchical indicating a tendency toward authoritarian management, or it could be one that encourages participation and hence result in more positive PR practices.

The public relations audit can be an excellent opportunity to 'capture a snapshot' of an organization (Weingand, 1987 : 47). It focuses on the decisions that must be made when drawing up a PR programme and is by no means an optional activity, but rather an essential of the planning effort.

2.3.3.3 Action strategies

Once the mission, goals and objectives of the library have been developed (which will determine **where** the organization is going), it becomes necessary to identify the various tasks which will accomplish these objectives (i.e. **how** to get there). This is where **action strategies** come into being (Weingand (1987 : 119). Each action will have a time/date limit by which it will be completed and the name of the person(s) who will be assigned the responsibility for completing it.

According to Malan & L'Estrange (1981 : 28-30), having listed the objectives, it becomes important to know what a public thinks of its organization. What do clients think about the library and its services ? What do library staff think of library management ?

The authors suggest that answers to such questions should never be based on guesswork as this will only lead to a crumbling foundation of a public relations structure. It may be possible to find some answers by talking to employees and members of the public. However, the authors warn that these will be sketchy and even unreliable. They propose that the only way to arrive at true and unbiased answers is to conduct opinion or attitude surveys.

The results of a well-structured survey will provide guidelines for future programmes of action - they would show where the library's strengths and weaknesses lie ; they would also bring to light practices that may have a negative effect on the library's reputation or that may prevent mutual understanding ; one may even find that while the library was producing an excellent service, the public were ignorant of its uses or even its existence.

Clearly, findings such as these will indicate to the public relations officer (if there is a special person appointed for this task) or to the chief librarian or other related personnel, what the approach should be in order to reach certain objectives. It may become necessary to amend certain policies, assign new priorities to certain objectives or even change certain objectives. According to Newlands (1987 : 40), the goal of the PR programme should always be the enhancement of services to the user, which should lead to increased use and awareness of the library.

Once a decision has been made as to the approach and plan of strategy, then it is time for the public relations officer to 'wage his/her campaign,' as well as to decide on the best technique of communicating the library's message to the public.

2.3.3.4 Evaluation

One of the P's of marketing suggested by Weingand, the postlude or evaluation, is one element that effectively links marketing/PR and the planning processes. It indicates whether planning and marketing efforts are on course, or whether a change in direction is necessary, or whether certain actions need to be repeated or whether they were adequately accomplished (Weingand, 1987 : 9). The process of evaluation includes obtaining information about the library's progress, with special reference to its mission statement, public relations audit, goals and objectives ; this information would allow the people involved in planning to make decisions about future directions.

It is important to evaluate each programme and PR project as it develops, through to termination. This would enable managers to make better decisions about the library - to identify aspects that need to be improved or made more cost-effective. Librarians could gain valuable insights by asking questions such as :

- how did it go ?
- what went well and why ?
- what did not go well and why ?
- what contributed to the success or failure of the activity ?
- was anything overlooked in planning the steps to this activity ?
- were there any results or effects that couldn't be anticipated ?
- could anything be done differently ?

- should additional or different strategies be adopted ?
- are the costs adversely affecting other objectives ?
- is the objective becoming unrealistic ? - should it be modified or eliminated ?
- is the objective still relevant in terms of the role of the library ?
- what improvements in planning, personnel utilization and publicity could improve future programmes ?

It could be said that evaluation may be a formal investigation or an intuitive assessment of an organization's goals and practices, but, like planning, it must be an on-going process. In support of this, Rice (1972 : 1) observes that public relations "involves a continuing appraisal of one's situation, one's attitudes, and one's progress toward well-defined goals." Weingand (1987 : 129-134) views evaluation as a symbiotic relationship that produces excellence for the organization : in effect, evaluation nurtures the planning/marketing/PR processes ; conversely, the processes also nurture evaluation - it is the "glue" that holds these processes together.

2.3.4 The correlation between planning and PR

It has been shown that planning forms an integral part of management and must be goal-directed. Planning for a PR campaign must be done within the framework of the overall promotional plan. In line with the strategic approach to planning, the library should treat personal publicity, advertising and other promotional activities as a co-ordinated effort within the total PR programme.

Promotional activities must also be co-ordinated regarding product planning, pricing and distribution. Promotion is especially interrelated with the distribution strategy. Thus, the concepts of public relations, planning, marketing and

communication become inextricably linked to the management function.

Therefore, at the time the PR campaign is planned, library management will presumably have made decisions in several areas. For example, the organizational goals will have been established and the role of PR in the promotional campaign will have been determined. Also, factors like the human, financial, physical and technical resources will have been discussed, planned and organized. Once these tasks have been completed, library management would then be able to select the media for the PR programme.

2.3.5 Advantages of planning for PR

Sannwald (1981 : 6) observes that there are a number of ways in which a library could benefit from a formal planning process :

- (i) Planning could help determine the mission and goals of the library, and in this way, as Weingand (1987 : 12) says, it could be used as a road map.
- (ii) Putting these ideas down on paper for scrutiny by the governing bodies, the administration, staff and the public allows discussions of the final consensus as to what the role of the library should be.
- (iii) Potential problems could be identified for clarification and decision-making by management.
- (iv) Planning would enable staff members to feel a sense of belonging to their organization.
- (v) They would also be able to participate in discussions on the future of the library and not just be informed of events

beyond their control ; this generates in them a feeling of having contributed to the planning and decision-making process and hence a sense of involvement in matters that concern them. I might add that this move would be an excellent one in terms of practising PR from the library management's point of view. In support of this, Weingand (1987 : 23) points out that when a person feels like a part of the process, then that person is willing to live with and implement the decisions that come about.

(vi) Effective planning is required to set the parameters as far as the other areas of management are concerned, such as, organization, implementation and control.

(vii) Planning helps communicate to those inside and outside what the library will be doing and where it hopes to be ; it thereby, eliminates ignorance on the part of users, the staff and the total organization, because direction, function and purpose are clearly stated.

Clearly, good planning and communication skills would pave the way for the public relations exercise. Likewise, a successful public relations programme and satisfied users would make good relations with others easier to build and maintain.

2.4 Summary of chapter

- This chapter begins with an examination of the nature of public relations as something that affects all human beings in one way or another.
- Because of the elusive nature of the term, various definitions have been looked at and some examined in detail. These definitions emphasize the dual nature of the concept of public relations :

- (i) the evaluation of the public's needs and wants and the adapting of one's policies to meet those needs ; and
 - (ii) keeping the public informed in order to win their support.
-
- PR has emerged as a distinctive management function, to be used to anticipate trends, to adapt to change, to implement planned programmes of action and to perfect the art of communicating with the public. In this regard, PR managers serve a boundary role : on the one hand, they must interpret policies and practices of management to the public ; on the other hand, they must translate the attitudes of the public to management.
 - In order to operate in a climate of diverse information needs, libraries need to know 'where to go' (which involves the process of planning) and 'how to get there' (which involves the process of marketing).
 - Strong emphasis has been placed on planning as a core management function and like other management functions, it begins with clear strategies and bottom-line objectives. However, although all the other functions of management are important in their own right, planning is fundamental to and implicit in all of them to a greater or lesser degree.
 - The concept of PR as merely a component of promotion has been challenged. It has been shown that this very narrow view of promotion and PR be extended to include its wider purpose of communication.
 - An examination of the traditional marketing process reveals the 4 P's, one of which is promotion. According to this concept, public relations is only a part of promotion. However, since for library purposes, none of the other P's of marketing such as product, price and distribution

appears to be as important as promotion, this study has attempted to re-examine the role of PR as the more dominant function in comparison with marketing. In this regard, the model offered by Skinner & Von Essen (1991 : 25) has been shown to be evolutionary.

- The concept of PR as a planned process with specific reference to planning for *library* public relations has been emphasized. The process of planning begins with the setting of organizational aims and goals, defining strategies and policies to achieve them, and then developing detailed plans to make sure that the strategies are implemented - these various stages of planning have been analyzed.
- Planning for library public relations should be an on-going process and one that forms an integral part of library management. Before any public relations programme can be undertaken, information must be gathered and facts extracted. Only then can an organization plan strategies for effective communication programmes.
- In order to plan effective PR programmes, the library must get to know user needs and preferences - the more a library understands its users, the better able it will be to formulate programmes to meet their needs.
- It has been shown that one of the first steps in planning a PR programme is to conduct a 'marketing audit'. However, it is suggested that academic libraries conduct a **PR audit** rather than a marketing audit since this is more appropriate for their needs in present times, and especially since they are service rather than profit-oriented.
- When conducting the public relations audit, the library should be realistic in terms of what it can accomplish with the resources at its disposal. Some examples of resources include financial, physical and human components.

- Throughout the chapter, it has been shown that planning is linked to the goals and objectives of an organization and action strategies have been analyzed to see how goals can be achieved.
- There are several benefits that a library could obtain by the planning process and these have been identified and explained.
- A strong case has been made for staff involvement in the planning and decision-making process as this creates a sense of loyalty to acceptance of the library on the part of employees. This would be a plus factor in terms of PR on the part of library management.
- The budget has been considered as an important factor in the planning process and one that will determine the extent and effectiveness of a PR programme and therefore provision for it has to be made.
- Finally, evaluation as a process of determining the ultimate success of the organization as a whole has been examined - a process that would help library managers identify aspects of library service that need improvement and to make better decisions about future plans. It has been compared to a 'map' that could be used to see if the correct routes have been selected and if the journey was made within the time span allotted.

In summary, it could be said that there is a clear and obvious link between the planning and PR processes. This is noted as follows :

- that in order to plan for a PR programme, it is necessary to examine the library's external environment and internal resources - this data becomes the public relations audit ;

- that the library's role (mission) and goals must be determined, and in order to aspire toward established goals, objectives must be created ;
- that strategies or plans for action will have to be formulated and promotional techniques will have to be adopted to implement these strategies ; and
- that a final review must be made of all goals, objectives and priorities to measure the success of the programme.

CHAPTER THREE

3. The relationship between public relations and communication

3.1 Introduction

Among other things, public relations has been described as the communication of one's message in a way that can be clearly understood by the intended recipients (Seitel, 1987 : 136). Since all libraries are involved in communication in one way or another, Weingand (1987 : 112) points out that public relations could be used as a tool to facilitate existing channels of communication between a library and its publics, and to set up a two-way flow of information and understanding.

Because of the significance of communication in the PR process, this aspect will be discussed as a function in its own right. Thus, in this study, strong emphasis is placed on the need for two-way communication because many forms of misunderstanding spring either from a lack of communication or from poor communication.

Information scientists and librarians must communicate with their users and sell their service. Jackson (1973 : 385) supports this by adding that the best information service in the world has no meaning unless it is used. This view is also shared by several other authors among them Van Niekerk and Weingand. Van Niekerk (1988 : 3) states that the term communication implies an active process, i.e. that libraries should not wait to be used, but should communicate their resources to their users ; after all libraries need users to survive, while Weingand (1987 : 110) maintains that information agencies should adopt an 'educative' approach that concentrates on communication of information so that users may become more knowledgeable and consequently better able to make more informed decisions.

The library should, therefore, play a dynamic role in maximizing the use of its store of recorded information for the benefit of its community. Librarians and information specialists should become more client-oriented and ask themselves how best can they interpret the library to the public ; after all, they are there for the users and they should realize that positive communication entails more than the mere handing out of books and information - it means showing sensitivity to users' needs.

From personal experience, and as Dixon (1988 : 11) points out, indifference or insensitivity to library users' needs unfortunately, still flourishes in too many libraries. Edsall (1980 : 19) warns that the person entering the library from need or habit - "or perhaps lured in by a new awareness of materials and services" - who is met with indifference by the librarian will react with disappointment and frustration or even anger ; this will lead to disinterest or even hostility towards the library, the very attitudes that most need to be overcome.

3.2 The process of communication

Communication, very simply, means that information is passed from one place to another. The word 'communication' is used to describe the "process of transferring meaning from one individual to another" (Hamilton & Parker, 1990 : 3-4 ; Mathews, 1983 : 2). Several authors, among them, Hamilton & Parker, (1990 : 5-8), Seitel (1987 : 135-137), Evans (1984 : 2-4) and Coulson-Thomas (1981 : 12) explain that messages are conceived, encoded and transmitted by a channel to one or more recipients, who decode it, interpret it and possibly react by sending one or more messages back, thus providing feedback.

This process of communication is simply illustrated in the diagram below :

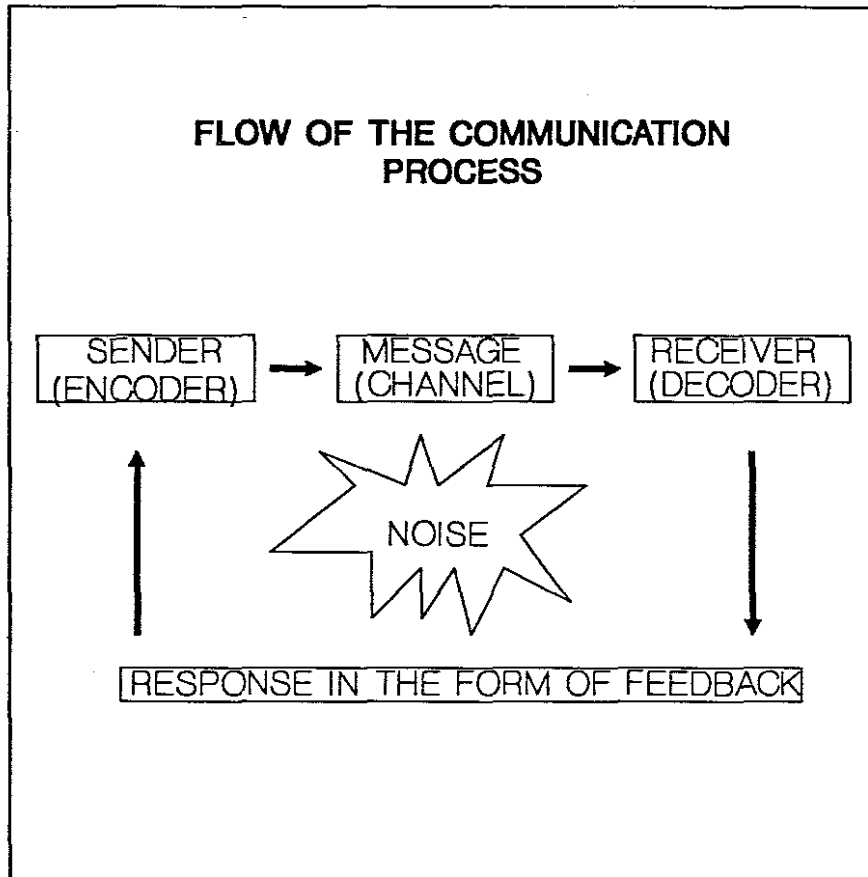


Figure 7

(Adapted from Stanton, 1992 : 435 ; Hamilton & Parker, 1990 : 6 and Stoner & Wankel, 1986 : 501, and substantially changed).

Communication can take place by various means, *inter alia* through a face-to-face meeting, a telephone call, a letter or a notice. Ordinarily, we look at communication as a process of *telling* others what we want them to know, what we want them to think, and what we want them to do. However, this alone does not ensure understanding.

From the literature, it is clear that communication should be seen as a four-part process - that of : asking, telling, *listening* and *understanding* (Hamilton & Parker , 1990 : 20 ; Seitel, 1987 : 135-137 ; Evans, 1984 : 2-4 ; Coulson-Thomas, 1981 : 12-15).

(i) Asking

Asking is necessary to get the communication process started and it applies to all levels. For example, asking patrons (by means of a questionnaire, interview, etc.) about their attitude to the library or their opinion on the services and facilities available in the library could prompt the kind of responses that will best enable one to determine whether the library is positively meeting user needs or satisfying their information requirements ; otherwise one would never know.

(ii) Telling

In order to be understood, one must first 'transmit' or tell one's message. For example, telling students about the rules and regulations surrounding the 'reserved book' or 'short loan' collection has a twofold purpose :

- (a) it informs the user of the existence of such a collection and its rules, and
- (b) it prevents user frustration when they cannot borrow items for use outside the library - because they have been told the reason for such rules.

(iii) Listening

If one wishes to understand what message others are trying to convey, one needs to *listen*. Listening encourages a person to find out how others are reacting to their message and what they understand about it. A librarian could, while conducting library instruction for example, listen to students' views.

Students in the arts discipline, for example, may be trying to convey the message that the library stock is quite inadequate as far as fashion magazines or books on artists are concerned.

Without listening to the students, the librarian would probably never realize that there is such a gap in the library collection or that there is a demand for such magazines or books.

(iv) Understanding

In order to understand most communications, one must be able to hear or read not only the words, but the meaning behind the words. It is possible to misinterpret a message ; more might be read into a message than is actually there. A meaning might be picked up that was not intended or an unfortunate choice of words could be misconstrued.

In the reference encounter, for example, it is important to understand what the user may be trying to communicate in order to avoid possible sources of error. If the librarian is not sure of the request being made, he/she should ask again or paraphrase the request in order to be able to provide the most correct or most suitable answer.

All these factors, if practised properly would be great plus factors for a library's PR programme.

3.3 The channels of communication

There are several possible channels of communication that libraries could use in dealing with the public. These are basically divided into two kinds - formal and informal (Hamilton & Parker, 1990 : 24).

(a) Formal channels

In every organization, provision is made for orders and directives to follow prescribed channels. For example, if the decision is made by the Council of Technikon to approve the extension of library hours over weekends, this message is normally communicated via the head of the library to the deputy librarian, who will in turn, probably appoint a librarian whose responsibility it will be to ensure that adequate notices, informing users of the extended hours, are put up at all service and other points where users will reasonably expect to find them.

Formal channels ensure that only certain people give orders and that there are no overlaps in authority.

(b) Informal channels

This occurs when people exchange information, ideas and suggestions on a personal basis. The so-called 'grapevine' is part of informal communication (Evans, 1984 : 2-4), in that it consists of the passing of specific information from user to user and group to group . For example, the librarian conducting a tour of the library with a group of students can communicate a wealth of information about library services, the location of special collections, the possibility of online searching, etc. in an informal way. Often, people attending such sessions will be asked to pass on the information to others who have not been able to attend the session - this kind of informal communication should be encouraged as it is constructive communication.

3.4 The different contexts of communication

Mathews (1983 : 2) identified the physical, psychological and sociological contexts of communication.

The Physical context

The physical context refers to external and internal factors. Issues such as visibility, signage, aesthetics and atmosphere are crucial to a library's PR. For example - Is the library visible and identifiable as such ? Are there signs that direct you to it ? Is the library listed in the telephone directory ? How does it feel inside the library ? Does the library have a user-friendly atmosphere ? etc.

Atmospherics

This term refers to the concept of designing the library building by considering those who use it. It also implies concern for the patron's psychological as well as physical comfort. The library should be a pleasant place where people will enjoy spending time.

Librarians and public relations personnel should, as Mathews (1983 : 7) suggested, ask themselves, do people come back to the library because it 'feels good' ? ; or do they stay away because it's such a cold and impersonal place to be ?

She maintains that it is the library's staff who create its atmosphere. With the unfortunate library stereotypes as seen in cartoons and TV commercials, librarians are reminded that they have to work "overtime to create a warm and positive psychological atmosphere" (Mathews, 1983 : 7). Staff attitude is, therefore, crucial.

The building must exude a welcoming feeling. This view is supported by Leerburger (1982 : 9) who states that to enter a building that looks forbidding and to be met by an unsmiling face or to get the feeling that one is intruding, will result in disaster.

Aesthetic considerations such as healthy plants and colourful posters also enhance the physical context of the library.

The materials

Materials in a library basically still consist of books, newspapers and periodicals. One should ask : are these materials presentable enough for people to want to use and/or take home ?

Librarians must also always bear in mind that library materials are there for the user and they must help patrons get what they need as quickly and as conveniently as possible, for example, if it becomes necessary to reshelve or relocate items elsewhere, signs should be used to direct users to the new location.

The Psychological context

The psychological context is of utmost importance and refers to the way librarians are perceived to be in their interactions with users.

Non-verbal communication

In the library context, non-verbal communication refers to issues such as eye contact - whether the librarian looks at the user or not ; body language, for example, head-nods - to indicate agreement or disagreement or to encourage the user to go on ; attitude - whether we face the person or turn away ; tone of voice and facial expression - a smile or a frown (Stanton, 1986 : 15 ; Mathews, 1983 : 2-7).

Mathews (1983 : 7) observes that although librarians spend a large part of their working day in verbal communication, they do not always seem aware of how their tone of voice may

encourage or discourage users.

It's not *what* we say, but the way we say it, for example, the familiar question, 'May I help you?' may be asked in a variety of ways and can be made to sound friendly or businesslike ; unfriendly, disinterested or curt.

The tone of the message can be as important as its factual content, i.e. how one says the message, may affect the way in which it is interpreted ; for example, a message communicated in a moment of urgency may differ from one transmitted casually ; in other words, if a message is urgent, it is possible to communicate this through the tone of the message.

Facial expressions can communicate a variety of reactions, for example, a gesture could be used to show frustration and impatience, or to reinforce a point made.

Librarians and other information professionals need to become more aware of various facets of human behaviour. Negative emotions such as resentment, frustration and reluctance can easily be transmitted to the public - this could result in very bad PR for the organization. Coulson-Thomas (1981 : 19) points out that "these important ingredients of communication need to be detected" and, I might add, more importantly, corrected.

Positive and Negative communication

In the library context, positive or 'confirming' behaviour may be expressed non-verbally, for example, by a nod of the head or a smile.

Psychiatrists and communication experts maintain that positive communication tends to make people feel good about themselves and this increases their self-esteem and self-worth.

Mathews (1983 : 9) observes that "although most library personnel are helpful and empathetic, and few are deliberately rude or overtly unpleasant, 'disconfirming' behaviour does occur in libraries."

The following are subtle ways by which librarians express negative, or 'disconfirming' behaviour :

(a) Librarians appear indifferent to the user, for example, they do not look up from their work when the patron approaches, but instead carry on with whatever they are doing, only paying partial attention to the patron.

(b) Librarians avoid eye contact, have blank facial expressions or are silent when a reply is expected. They sometimes walk away even before the patron has completed his/her request, making it very uncomfortable for the latter.

(c) Librarians team up and chat together, or worse still, continue their conversations even though the patron has approached them for assistance or is waiting at the service desk [which, incidentally, should under no circumstance, be left unattended], thereby sending extremely negative signals and conveying that the patron is not that important and can, therefore, wait.

(d) Librarians fail to listen carefully and consequently give a reply that is not relevant to the patron's request.

In summary, negative behaviour indicates a lack of interest in, or concern for, other people. It can make patrons feel that they are bothering the library staff with their queries.

The questions that we librarians must constantly ask ourselves are the following :

(i) Are we sending negative vibes to our users which discourage them from asking for help ?

(ii) Do we inundate them with our words of wisdom and prescribe what they *should* read ? (Mathews, 1983 : 9-10)

It is important that librarians talk to patrons in a friendly, conversational tone of voice and make them feel comfortable about asking questions and about using the library.

Personal and face-to-face communication

This is where people come into direct contact with each other as opposed to, for example, speaking across telephone lines. Here a whole range of visual factors such as facial expression, poise and deportment come into effect.

Dixon (1988 : 11) points out that the persons [librarians or assistants] at the circulation, information or registration desk may well establish the service image of the entire library. Libraries should, therefore, select people for these areas who have an approachable, friendly attitude, and who are trained in and are familiar with all aspects of the library's operations, so that they would be able to respond to user queries with intelligence and confidence.

Communication with faculty

Librarians at educational institutions should seek personal contact with faculty to discuss available and needed library services, for it is through such contact that they (librarians) would be able to keep abreast of new developments, for example, introduction of new courses, new directions in research, or potential problem areas that may arise concerning the library.

Communication with students, for example, the reference encounter

Reference work is an essential part of library service where librarians personally assist users who need information.

In order to assist, the librarian must find out what the user really wants to know and it is important that good rapport be established during the reference encounter. Now that computers and database searching have become integral features at academic and larger public libraries, Leerburger (1982 : 9) suggests there is a growing need to work more directly with patrons to educate them in the use of these newer services. In return, librarians will find that direct communication will give them a better understanding of the needs and problems that users and potential users may have.

The librarian should summarise or paraphrase the patron's request in order to ensure being on the right track, and should continue 'interviewing' until the specific request being made is understood.

Careful listening enables one to identify keywords and main ideas. Patrons should be made to feel as comfortable as possible. When approached by users, librarians should be friendly and should show an interest in the subject. The librarian should remain objective about the content of the question, as a good interviewer does not express any moral or ethical judgement nor approve or disapprove of attitudes and ideas, but accepts what is said.

Communication through correspondence

The contents and manner of correspondence can also be a vital factor in the library's PR programme.

Any type of library, whether special, public, or academic cannot function without rules involving such matters as circulation of books, borrowing privileges, the hours of opening, interlibrary-loans, overdue charges and so on. All these messages are conveyed in some form of correspondence.

Dixon (1988 : 12) suggests that correspondence be used to create a favourable impression and reflect a client-oriented approach and since overdue notices do not always go down well with users, Edsall (1980 : 29) suggests that "we sugar them a bit" - with a friendly remark or two.

Every effort should be made to keep official correspondence on a cordial and friendly level. Forms and letters should be revised to make them sound less formal and impersonal. Letters from the library to prospective employees are important too.

Use of the telephone

The telephone manners of the library staff are an integral part of the public relations programme. Calls should be answered in a polite, friendly, efficient tone of voice and long delays in answering should be avoided. For many people the telephone is the initial communication with the library. It is, for example, essential to identify the library when answering the phone.

First impressions are important and staff who answer the telephone must be concerned about the image of the library that they convey by their voice and manner. Care must be taken not to keep the caller on hold for longer than is necessary. It can be extremely frustrating for the telephone caller, especially when trunk dialling, to be kept holding the line while waiting to be put through to a particular extension. People who answer the telephone should, in such circumstances, make every effort to determine the caller's needs or take down his/her number and arrange for the staff member concerned to

return the call as soon as possible.

Another frustration occurs when enquirers have to call the library several times, only to receive an engaged signal over and over again. In this regard, library management can help both staff and users by making frequent checks of telephone traffic to ensure that the library has sufficient lines to cope with demands made on the service through the telephone. If there are extraordinarily busy hours during which the library staff simply cannot handle telephone calls adequately, rather than give curt, impatient answers, it might be better to have a recorded message that the library cannot take incoming calls at certain times because of the great number of patrons in the library, and a request that the individual call back later for prompt service.

Personal calls should be kept to a minimum. There is nothing more annoying than to be kept waiting while a member of staff finishes off his/her conversation.

With regard to listing of phone numbers, Rice (1972 : 51) points out that one of the simplest of communication channels, which many libraries overlook, is the telephone directory. Too often the library is listed only once under its formal name.

A patron must feel very frustrated if he cannot remember the library's full name and does not find another listing under "library" or "university libraries", etc. Thus it would be worth listing one's library telephone number under a few alternative places in the directory where a person might reasonably look. The positive PR effects these listings may produce are likely to outweigh by far the cost considerations involved in such multiple listings [which, incidentally, are R26,00 per additional listing].

The significance of 'telephone PR' is highlighted by Rice (1972 : 52) when she says that renewals, simple reference questions, inquiries about the time of closure at night and other similar library business should be given the same consideration as on-the-spot service.

It is clear that consideration of all these factors would most certainly contribute to more satisfactory personal service, which is what good PR entails.

The Sociological context

The social dimension of communication refers to such things as the interaction between patrons and staff and the roles people play ; for example, librarians are often stereotyped as old, grey-haired and bespectacled ; sometimes as nags (Mathews : 1983 : 13), and therefore unapproachable.

Mathews (1983 : 13) suggests that in the librarian-client relationship, we must be aware of the feelings, background and educational levels of the people who come to us for help. While we may not think of ourselves as superior, we may convey that impression by busily working at the desk when a user tiptoes up to us saying how sorry he/she is for interrupting, and that he/she needs some help. Psychological research shows that this 'attitude of superiority' reinforces the other person's feeling of inadequacy. It makes many people feel inadequate to have to ask for help.

Therefore, in our role as information providers, Mathews (1983 : 13) suggests that we aim to reinforce the user's perception of us as members of a helping profession. In addition to supplying information, we can ask patrons for suggestions which will help us to better serve them. This view is supported by Kenney (1964 : 263) who says there is a need for librarians to be friendly. "Attitudes, conscious and

unconscious, toward fellow human beings call for scrutiny."

Librarians frequently communicate their status by the use of jargon (Mathews, 1983 : 13) ; for example, to many patrons a periodical or journal is simply a magazine or when we talk of de-sensitizing our books, the user is only interested in 'checking them out'. Users feel embarrassed and inadequate if they do not know the meaning of terms such as 'de-sensitize', 'interlibrary-loans' or 'online catalogues', etc. We should therefore, as Garvey (1980 : 20) also suggests, not use jargon when assisting users without giving them a brief explanation. Our aim should be to provide them with the information they are seeking, quickly and efficiently.

Hoey (1973 : 376) observes that enquirers quite often do not ask the specific question which is worrying them but something more vague. He adds that information departments should consider it "a real gain, a real step forward when such a client feels able to confide his thoughts in them ... Under no circumstances should they set out to make him feel small by ... giving him a snap answer but, rather, gently help him to make his decision."

Libraries, like other social institutions, have rules and regulations, for example, 'reserved items' may have to be signed at the counter and may be for in-house use only ; or 'reference items' may not be meant for circulation because of their value, fragility or rarity ; if these rules are reasonable and are well explained, most patrons will accept and abide by them. Dixon (1988 : 12) maintains that rules and regulations should be made "to ensure fair service to the greatest number of library users and not for the convenience of the library only." It is therefore important for libraries to revise rules and regulations in order to keep current with changing needs.

The problem patron

Some common types of "problem patrons" include, inter alia, perverts, loiterers, vagrants, and those who are intoxicated, mentally unbalanced, abusive, violent or on drugs.

Mathews (1983 : 24) explains that libraries are often considered a 'haven' for the unemployed, the lonely and the mentally disturbed, probably because libraries are perceived as un-threatening places that are concerned with maintaining a good public image.

While there are no simple solutions to these problem situations, Mathews (1983 : 24) points out that as librarians, our primary concern should be for the safety of staff and patrons in the library. She advocates two general principles which can be applied to most troublesome patron situations :

- (i) To stay calm and keep control ; speak and act firmly and let the person know that you are in charge and will not tolerate his/her behaviour ;
- (ii) Call in a security officer who has the power to arrest.

Overdue books

Edsall (1980 : 30) is of the opinion that the problem of overdue, lost or stolen material is "often aggravated by the library's negative actions in combating it."

This point of view is fully supported by Dixon (1988 : 12) who suggests that maybe we should have another look at our own attitude and the library's regulations, "rather than view the borrower as a 'criminal'". Thus, while stolen materials are a very real problem in libraries, considerable tact and diplomacy are required when dealing with these situations ; perhaps a gentle warning by the chief librarian or the campus

security officer may serve as a deterrent in the future.

In this regard, Robinson (1984 : 8) firmly believes that "the single most important ingredient in creating an effective complaint handling program is management commitment" ... which begins with the recognition that maximizing **patron satisfaction is the corner-stone of library service. Patrons are needed if libraries are to survive**, and it is "much easier to retain existing patrons than to develop new ones." He adds that complaints are inevitable and even if it were possible to render a perfect service, human nature is such that people would still complain. In view of this, complaint handling should become an integral part of a library's public service programme.

Complaints can also become a powerful analytical tool for capturing user feedback on the various services provided - in this way librarians would get to know what services are lacking or where improvements could be made ; if people do not complain, we would never know any better.

3.5 Barriers to communication

Failures in communication may occur because the **medium** of communication (for example, newsletter, poster, etc.), may be mistaken for the **process** itself (i.e. **sending of the message** which was to have been **received by the decoder** who was to have **responded with feedback**). For example, it may be taken for granted that the notice that was circulated or the poster that was put up, was communication in itself ; it should, perhaps, also have been supported by a verbal explanation (i.e. **telling** your audience what your message is about).

Feedback, which informs the sender that the message has been received and has or has not been understood, may have failed to arrive at its destination. The failure to respond to a

message could be attributed to factors such as, the recipient's illness, or the recipient being away on holiday, or the message being lost in transmission.

Emotions may block communication, for example, one's feelings and prejudices could be so strong that they drown one's understanding of what the other person is trying to communicate (Stanton, 1986 : 17-19 ; Coulson-Thomas, 1981 : 81-82).

Coulson-Thomas (1981 : 81) points out that for effective communication to take place :

- the **correct message** must be transmitted ;
- to the **appropriate audience** ;
- by the most **suitable channel** of communication ; and,
- the **timing** must be **right**.

In the academic library context, an example of the above would be the announcement of a book exhibition to be held in the library. Accurate details of date, time and venue must be supplied to the publics who would be most interested, i.e. students and lecturers ; the announcement must be made by means of posters, information flyers and/or the campus newspaper ; and, it must be made well in advance so that users will have sufficient time to prepare themselves for the exhibition in terms of finance should they wish to purchase items at the exhibition, other commitments, etc.

If these factors have not been considered, failures in communication are likely to occur. Where these failures in communication occur, the most significant result is lack of understanding, i.e. we fail to understand the thoughts and feelings of others and they do not understand our meaning or intentions. When people do not understand, friction and frustration are likely to occur.

3.6 Overcoming communication barriers

In communication, 'noise' tends to occur, for example, pointless statements or inconclusive remarks, most of which are unnecessary and can be eliminated if we think carefully about what we want to say, why we want to say it, and how best we can get it across before we begin asking or telling (Stanton, 1992 : 435 ; Hamilton & Parker, 1990 : 23).

The most understandable communication is of no value if the people to whom it is addressed do not listen to it. So, for example, if we are talking to a group of new students during orientation, explaining the services and facilities of the library, the best way to rivet their attention, is to talk about things that concern them. Talk about the 'reserved book collection' which they will be required to use fairly early in their studies in order to successfully complete their assignments.

Before one can communicate, it is necessary to find out how the other person feels about the subject ; sometimes people are emotionally unable to accept or understand what you say (Stanton, 1986 : 18) because of fear or suspicion perhaps. For example, many people are afraid or even suspicious of using a library's online catalogue for whatever reasons. It is best to encourage them to talk about it. Librarians should strive to establish rapport with their audience(s).

Misunderstanding often occurs because the words librarians use are long and confusing ; this can be overcome if we write and speak simply and effectively. Our public relations exercises should be planned with this in mind.

We obviously cannot expect users to remember everything we say to them in one go. Experience shows that when we communicate information simply, the user is more likely to better understand it. Mental digestion is much faster and more

complete. Thus, during library instruction, for example, if we want our communication about the library to be properly understood, we should perhaps have a class over two or three sessions, rather than cram students' minds in one session.

Good communication requires that we take steps to ensure that our listeners bear in mind the points we most want them to remember. Since people tend to forget most of what they hear in a relatively short space of time, we must make use of repetition - the more times we hear something, the more likely we are to remember it. Any study skills programme would teach us that association with familiar ideas is an excellent way of securing retention. If we link a new idea with something we already know, it will be much easier to remember it.

From the above, it is clear that there could be many potential barriers to communication. One cannot effectively remove barriers without first identifying the nature of the barrier and seeing where and how they have arisen. The next step would be corrective action (Coulson-Thomas, 1981 : 81).

Finally as Coulson-Thomas (1981 : 82) points out, satisfactory communication does not "just happen" - it cannot be taken for granted - it must be constantly worked at and improved.

3.7 Summary of chapter

- This chapter has concentrated on examining the second part of the dualistic nature of PR, viz. the function of keeping the public informed through an effective system of communication.
- Good communication is seen as the essence of PR work.
- Librarians should become more client oriented, however, indifference or insensitivity to library users' needs still

seem to flourish.

- Factors such as the basic principles of communication, seen from the physical, psychological and sociological perspectives and including issues such as atmospherics, the different types of communication (verbal, non-verbal, etc.), the use of the telephone, the issue of difficult patrons, the problem of overdue books, reasons for failures in communication and methods of overcoming communication barriers have been examined at some length.
- The formal and informal channels of communication are discussed to some extent.
- Barriers to communication and possible ways to overcome these are covered in some detail.
- The literature suggests that high standards be set with regard to correspondence and that telephones be answered promptly, politely and clearly. Staff who work at main service points in the library should be well trained in the art of dealing with the public, as it is often said that it is they who largely determine the image of the library in the eyes of the public.
- Since all libraries are involved in communication with their users, the need is recognized for academic libraries to play a dynamic role in optimizing the use of their stores of recorded knowledge, facilities and services. This aspect shall be dealt with in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. The purpose and functions of University and Technikon libraries

4.1 Introduction

As indicated in chapter two, in order to give any organization a sense of direction, strategic planning becomes a necessity. Such planning for any programme of action begins with a clear-cut statement of organizational aims and objectives. "Most organizations now recognize the importance of strategic planning to their long-range growth ... and they function better as a result of it and become more responsive to a changing environment" (Stoner & Wankel, 1986 : 116). The academic library should be no exception. Once it has made the decision that an organized planning effort is fundamental to its effectiveness, the climate is right for discussion of its purpose and functions.

The importance of and the need for public relations become evident upon examination of the role of the academic library as stated in the following two documents with reference to university and technikon libraries respectively, viz. : the Inter-University Library Committee, Community of University Principals Report, 1982 and the Committee of Technikon Principals' Operational Philosophy for Technikon Librarianship, Release 1.1.

These are South African statements, representing state-of-the-art scenarios in academic libraries, and therefore have great relevance to this study.

4.2 The University Library

At its meeting in 1982, the Inter-University Library Committee (IULC) of the Committee of University Principals (CUP)

"discussed certain negative symptoms at various universities in an attempt to identify possible deeper-rooted problems that should receive its attention" (De Bruin, 1985 : 2-3). The IULC noted the following about universities and their libraries in South Africa :

- that "there appears to be a lack of definition, understanding and appreciation of the **role of the university library** and its professional staff among library users, the university authorities and libraries themselves" ;
- that, "in order to resolve these uncertainties, university librarians should reach agreement about the role of the university library and its professional staff on the university campus" ;
- that such agreement should be well documented and would provide a useful set of guidelines to librarians, to the IULC and to individual university authorities ;
- that the document should state the role of the university library in exact detail (De Bruin, 1985 : 3).

The above statement emphasizes the need to define the role of the academic library in the planning process. This clearly illustrates the relevance of Figure 6 which consists of the following steps :

- defining the mission of the library ;
- formulation of the organizational goals ;
- establishing objectives ;
- conducting the PR audit
- working out action strategies ; and
- implementing PR programmes.

This document was finally prepared and submitted to the IULC meeting in May 1985. This statement reflected the carefully considered viewpoint of the IULC of the CUP concerning the optimal role that the library service should fulfil in the university, and, included the following :

(i) **The library is of central importance to the university** and information is regarded as an important resource, indispensable to successful teaching and research in the university.

(ii) The university library is the focal point in the university, where relevant information supporting teaching and research is best collected, stored and disseminated.

(iii) Increased emphasis on more independent study and research activity by students demands effective library services and greater user proficiency in collecting and processing information.

(iv) **Incomplete deployment of library services provokes users to satisfy their information requirements elsewhere.** This leads to ineffective systems and unnecessary and costly duplication of work (De Bruin, 1985 : 5).

The purpose of such a statement describing the optimum role of the university library was to :

- **promote an awareness of the role and place of the library service** within the university ;
- give an indication of the level of functioning of the library service ;
- promote consensus on the level of service that could be

expected of the library.

4.2.1 The role of the library in relation to teaching

A. Library service to the lecturer :

(i) In order to support the lecturer's teaching function, the library must familiarize itself with the general aspects of the university's teaching programme - this would enable the library to :

- *be aware of existing and potential user needs ;*
- *plan and offer services and facilities to satisfy needs ;*
- *ensure that library staff are able to communicate meaningfully with the lecturer about his/her information requirements.*

(ii) *The library must help the lecturer keep abreast of recent relevant literature by way of current awareness services and by optimal availability of its services and facilities.*

(iii) *It is the library's responsibility to ensure that lecturers are familiar with all services and facilities offered by the library and to ensure that they know how to make optimum use of these.*

(iv) *The lecturer must also be encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards the library.*

(v) *The library, together with the lecturer, is responsible for the development and maintenance of a balanced collection of the information sources required for teaching (De Bruin, 1985 : 6).*

B. Library service to the student :

The library supports the student in his/her studies by :

- (i) *making optimal availability of general services and facilities ;*
- (ii) *providing active assistance with locating, identifying and supplying information ;*
- (iii) *giving advice about the bibliographic presentation of assignments, theses, etc. in conformity with lecturer's instructions ;*
- (iv) *ensuring that all students are made aware of library services through orientation exercises ;*
- (v) *developing skills in the student for optimum utilization of the library for studies ; and*
- (vi) *promoting a positive attitude towards the library among students (De Bruin, 1985 : 7) .*

These points again refer to the basic definition of PR, that in any PR exercise, an effort should be made to become aware of user needs (both actual and potential) and to plan and attune one's services to satisfy these needs. This, in effect, means that a PR audit should be conducted in order to identify, understand and satisfy user needs. Appropriate strategies will have to be formulated to meet these needs.

In the academic library context, it is also important that the library communicate with lecturers about their information requirements and keep them (lecturers) informed of the relevant literature, services and facilities so that they are best equipped to carry out their teaching function. With

regard to students, the library should promote an awareness of its services and facilities by means of orientation programmes, group discussions and tours of the library.

4.2.2 The role of the library in relation to research

(i) The library supports the researcher by being familiar with the university's research policy, goals and philosophy. In this way the library can *become aware of actual and potential information requirements and accordingly plan and offer its services.*

(ii) The library supports the researcher in the research process by :

- helping him/her ascertain the present state of art as reflected in information sources ;
- *providing information about recent publications concerning developments in research methods and techniques ;*
- *offering professional advice on the use of retrieval systems required for successful research.*

(iii) It is the library's responsibility to *ensure that the researcher is familiar with all services provided by the library and to develop in the researcher a positive attitude towards the library* (De Bruin, 1985 : 7).

In order to win the co-operation and understanding of researchers, the library should, by means of its well-trained staff, attempt to secure the most up-to-date information in the field of research by means of SDI services, online searching, etc. Any researcher would be impressed if he/she

could obtain through the library, for example, comprehensive and otherwise 'difficult-to-obtain' information from overseas databases, etc. One satisfied researcher is likely to inform another of his/her success through the library, and that person yet another. In this way, a positive image could be established for the library.

4.2.3 The role of the library in relation to community service

The library supports the university's formal community service programmes by *making available its services and facilities to individuals and groups not attached to the university.*

However, this never occurs at the expense of its primary users.

In this way, rather than not making them available at all, the library (for example the E.G. Malherbe Library, University of Natal, Durban) exercises a low key PR by making its resources available to community service programme participants who are often not paid and registered students at the university, while at the same time acknowledging its primary responsibility to those who are.

4.2.4 The role of library service in librarianship and information science

The university library maintains close links with national and international librarianship and information science and is, in this regard, responsible for the following :

(i) *monitoring all relevant developments in librarianship and information techniques and advising the authorities about possible improvements that should be introduced ;*

(ii) conducting applied research in the field of librarianship and information science ;

(iii) *making available its facilities and actively contributing to field-work programmes of students of librarianship and information science ;*

(iv) the examination of and possible participation in co-operative systems (for example, SABINET) and programmes with a view to :

- optimum availability of information to users ; and
- effective running of library services (De Bruin, 1985 : 8).

In this regard, the library owes it as a PR responsibility to its users to keep abreast of recent developments in librarianship and to secure optimum availability of information by participating in co-operative networking schemes such as SABINET, INCH AND DIALOG.

4.2.5 The general role of the library in the University

(i) The library makes its services and facilities familiar and available to university staff other than lecturers, students and researchers.

(ii) In relation to university authorities, the library is responsible for budgeting for and using all resources which it might require for its operations.

(iii) In support of its function, the library seeks the co-operation of related services such as the computer services division, audio-visual services, student affairs, bookshops, other universities and technikon libraries, all this with a

view to improving services for its users.

(vi) The library contributes to the personal development of the student by providing information relevant to other student activities (over and above study), for example, sport and by encouraging healthy reading habits (De Bruin, 1985 : 8).

In order to win their support and co-operation, the library has to interact with various other publics (for diagram of publics see figure 8). Thus, for example, the library would have to report on information such as expenditure for the past year to bodies like government agencies, trustees and donors - all with a view to improving services to users.

It is clear that the library is considered to be the nucleus of the university since it houses recorded knowledge and information of the past ; and, since its primary purpose is to facilitate availability, retrieval and dissemination of such information, an efficient library service becomes essential to the teaching and research functions of the university.

4.3 The Technikon Library

An examination of the Committee of Technikon Principals' Operational Philosophy for Technikon Librarianship Document (Release 1.1) reveals the significant role of the library within the technikon. The document which also points out the need for public relations in the technikon environment, includes the following :

(i) Technikon libraries do not operate in a vacuum but function as an essential constituent within the larger framework of the technikon.

(ii) It is recognized that **service to users is the ultimate objective of technikon libraries** and **user needs will therefore have to be anticipated and will need to be met.**

(iii) "*Technikons strive after excellence in the practice and advancement of technology in their tuition, research and development, and service to the various industrial communities.*" (Operational philosophy ... [undated] : 6).

Within the context of the basic definition of PR, it once again becomes clear that service to users is the prime objective of academic libraries. Thus, in order to achieve this objective, since technikon libraries are essentially concerned with contributing to the training of technologists-in-the-making and to the information preparedness of technologists in commerce and industry, user needs in these areas will have to be identified and steps taken to meet these needs (Operational philosophy ... [undated] : 6).

(iv) In identifying the needs of technikon library users, it must be remembered that the specific nature of the educational process at technikons is of primary importance, i.e. it is not information or knowledge per se which is the issue, but rather its practical application. In this regard, "research and

development" is a particularly apt concept that is applicable to technikon. Thus, one of the most significant functions of the **technikon library**, is that it **serves as a primary resource for the student, providing a directly accessible body of technology information** (Operational philosophy ... [undated] : 7).

In this regard, as an exercise in PR, *there must be a high level of interaction and co-ordination between faculty and the library in order to maximise the educational opportunities* because the library functions as an extension of the instructional processes in the classroom (Operational philosophy ... [undated] : 8).

(v) The library should promote applied research and one way of *developing the right kind of collection* for this is to supplement stock with reports of research results, which would also serve as models of what technikon research ought to be and what it ought to achieve (Operational philosophy ... [undated] : 13).

(vi) *The library becomes the facility for contact with ideas and also facilitates academic renewal by revealing advancements in commerce, industry and technology.* It teaches information technology as work and life skills (Operational philosophy ... [undated] : 8).

It should, therefore, be the responsibility of the library to *equip students to become effective information workers ; and to teach them to become self-reliant in obtaining information.* In order for this to happen, libraries should ensure that access to their holdings is such that it facilitates easy retrieval.

(vii) It has been acknowledged that cataloguing and other information access *systems may even have to be re-designed in order to provide optimum benefit to the researcher* (Operational philosophy ... [undated] : 13).

This could be an excellent way of customizing one's system in order to meet user needs and indeed a great plus factor for PR.

(viii) "The single most important distinction between technikons and universities is that technikons practise career-oriented education" (Operational philosophy ... [undated] : 6). Consequently, one of the aims of the technikon is to place qualified students in the job market after having ensured that they will be productive immediately.

(ix) Thus, the essential role of the library would be to make its contribution by making technological information, rather than purely theoretical information, available to the researcher.

(x) The practice of technology is, therefore, an essentially creative action and one of the most important inputs in the process is made by the library (Operational philosophy ... [undated] : 12).

It is to be noted that under each of the various categories examined, certain words/phrases have been **italicised** and/or commented on as reflecting core public relations concepts. These words/phrases serve to reinforce the idea that public relations is the key mechanism through which most of the practices advocated in these documents could be implemented in order to achieve anticipated goals.

In summary, it could be said that **university and technikon libraries play a pivotal role** in the academic environment with regard to the **provision of books, information and other documentary records** to support the students' programme of instruction and education, as well as to **encourage and develop** the use of libraries and the habit of reading.

They are also responsible for the **collection, retrieval, and preservation** of materials and for **making these accessible** primarily to faculty and students.

By way of comparison, the functions of the **public library** as stated by various authors such as Benge, Wheeler & Goldhor (quoted in Newlands, 1987 : 20) are :

(1) To **collect** material of a wide spectrum having ascertained the needs of the community.

(2) To **preserve** the material with a view to building a comprehensive collection.

(3) To **organize and process** the material in such a way so as to **facilitate easy access** and retrieval.

(4) To **disseminate** all information - to which Newlands, quite appropriately, adds

(5) To **create outreach services** in order to **make users aware of the library**.

Essentially the functions of both academic and public libraries appear to be very similar ; the main difference probably being in their aims. The primary aims of the public library, as stated by the American Library Association, 1956 (Williams, 1988 : 90), are "to facilitate informal self-education of all people in the community, to enrich and further develop the subjects on which individuals are

undertaking formal education, to meet the information needs of all, to support the educational, civic and cultural activities of groups and organizations, to encourage wholesome recreation and the constructive use of leisure time" ; while the primary aim of the academic library is a fundamental one of teaching and research.

Malan (1978 : 27) offers the following scheme as a summary of the main functions of libraries in general :

Central objective : Information	
<u>AIMS</u>	
Primary aims Education Provision and / or Transmission of information	Subsidiary aims Recreation
<u>FUNCTIONS</u>	
Primary functions Collection Retrieval Preservation Making accessible Publicize Management	Subsidiary functions Selection, acquisition Description, indexing, etc. Storage, maintenance, etc. Circulating, retrieving, Reader's guidance Service, stock & information Publicity Planning, organization, Staffing, etc.

Summary of aims and objectives of libraries in general.
(Adapted from Malan, 1978 : 27)

Newlands' fifth point of creating outreach services, ties up with Malan's point about publicity and that of the IULC of making the user more aware of the library's services and facilities. To go back to Wilson's traditional definition (1972 : 119), this exercise in PR, i.e. creating outreach

services, should be a planned process that is directly concerned with the achievement of organizational objectives (Seitel, 1987 : 49) and should be aimed at specific **target markets** or groups (Stanton, 1992 : 15) in the university and technikon environment.

Some of the most important publics or target markets of an academic library are :

- (i) Governing bodies (for example, the University Senate, the Library Committee) and managers who set policy for the library.
 - They are interested in how well and to what extent policies are administered.
- (ii) Financing publics (for example, government bodies, sponsors, donors).
 - The library must favourably influence this group in order to secure the needed resources to carry out programmes.
- (iii) Special interest groups (for example, alumni, senior honorary staff members or Friends of the Library).
- (iv) The media (for example, radio, television and the press) could be used to advance information about library activities.
- (v) Most importantly, under- and postgraduate students, academic and non-academic staff (without all of whom university libraries and librarians would cease to exist).

From the above categories, it becomes clear that we have a hierarchy within the target market structure.

- (a) Firstly, one must consider the university/technikon executive and their interaction with top management of the library.
- (b) Secondly, we have the interaction of the library top management with middle management.
- (c) Thirdly, middle management's interaction with junior staff.
- (d) Lastly, the total library staff population and their interaction with :
 - the academic or teaching staff ; and
 - students and other patrons.

At each of these stages, there should be a free flow of communication, both upwards and downwards.

- (vi) Other publics include :
 - employee families
 - other libraries
 - book suppliers (from whom books, journals and other items are bought)
 - the library profession (from where librarians are recruited)
 - universities and technikons (that teach these recruits to become librarians)

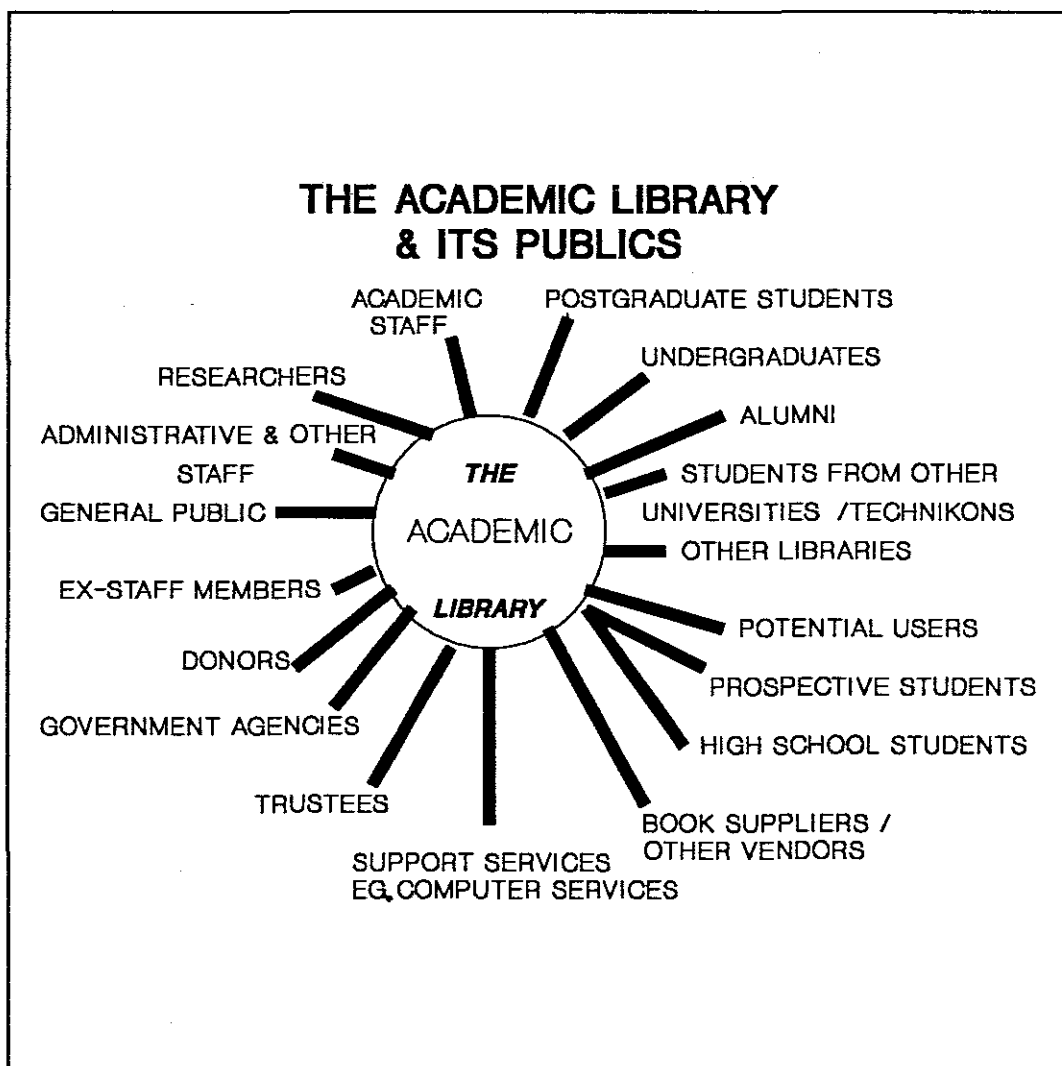


Figure 8

(Adapted from : Kotler, 1982 : 48)

It follows that in order to satisfy users, a proper understanding of the needs and expectations of the different publics is required. However, it is my observation (and indeed a prime motivating factor behind this study) that academic libraries have been particularly slack in identifying the needs and wants of their publics and also in making them aware of existing services and facilities. This situation can probably be attributed to a lack of any marketing/PR programmes.

One of the reasons for this could be that academic libraries have a 'captive audience' of students, researchers and academics and, therefore, have not felt the need to actively promote the library. In support of this, Kenney (1964 : 263) states that "too many college and university librarians think that public relations programmes are for public libraries. They believe, perhaps, that public relations is some sort of advertising employed by public libraries to get people to come to the library ... while on campus the faculty propels students into the library and the librarian does not have to waste time on advertising and public relations."

Kenney (1964 : 263) goes on to remind us that public relations is more than mere advertising, and it is never accidental. "It is the result of well-thought-out, planned and co-ordinated efforts ..." intended to influence the attitudes and opinions of the library staff, the administration of the university/technikon, the faculty, the students, and the community - its chief ingredient being good human relations.

In contrast, public libraries appear to be much more aware of the need to promote the library, probably because they have a wider audience and feel that they must go all out to reach them. However, Newlands (1987 : 21) does not seem to agree. She states the following in this regard :

- that the community has information requirements which need solving, and that ignorance exists on a large scale with regard to services and resources of a public library, particularly on the part of certain target groups which have no contact with the library ;

- that the public library's resources and services are not promoted sufficiently as there exists a marked ignorance in the community that public library facilities can satisfy most information, cultural or recreational needs which people from all social levels may have.

Newlands (1987 : 22) sums up by saying that a concerted effort is needed on the part of the public library to make the whole community aware of its value.

Much the same could be said for university and technikon libraries with their specific publics ; although, I would not agree with her statement that "public library facilities can satisfy **most** information needs." I would change "**most**" to "**many**".

4.4 The purposes and objectives of public relations in academic libraries :

From the examination of both the IULC document and the Operational Philosophy for Technikon Librarianship, the purposes and objectives of public relations within the academic library context become clear.

(i) To deal with the relations between the library and its various publics through a planned and continuous programme of action.

It is recognized that service to users is the ultimate objective of technikon and university (and indeed all other libraries) and user needs will therefore have to be anticipated and will need to be met [Paragraph 4.3 (ii), Operational philosophy ... [undated] : 6]. The only way this service to users could be developed is to **plan and offer services and facilities to satisfy existing and potential needs** [Paragraph 4.2.1 A (i), De Bruin, 1985 : 6]. This element of planning (suggested by the words "carefully considered") is evident in the coming together of the Committee of University Principals to decide on a document that would reflect their viewpoint concerning **the optimal role that the library should fulfil** in the academic environment [Paragraph 4.2, De Bruin, 1985 : 5].

The element of "anticipation" conveys the idea that the PR programme will have to be of a continuous character.

(ii) To **establish and maintain two-way communication** between the library and its publics, for example, by reaching employees (library staff) through a variety of internal means, such as, newsletters and meetings ; by co-ordinating relationships with external publics, such as academics, students, ex-staff and other libraries.

The effort that libraries should make to maintain communication between themselves and their publics is evident, for example, in the statement that **library staff should be able to communicate meaningfully with lecturers** (and indeed all other categories of users) **about their information requirements** [Paragraph 4.2.1 A (i), De Bruin, 1985 : 6].

(iii) To **develop public understanding and support** for the library as an invaluable and indispensable resource.

As was pointed out earlier, **the incomplete deployment of library services provokes users to satisfy their information requirements elsewhere** [Paragraph 4.2 (iv), De Bruin, 1985 : 5]. Therefore, the library should do everything in its power to ensure the understanding and support of its publics. With regard to the importance of the library as an indispensable resource, both documents acknowledge this fact in the following statements : that **the university library is the focal point and a resource of central importance indispensable to successful teaching and research** [Paragraphs 4.2 (i) and (ii), De Bruin, 1985 : 5] ; and, that **technikon libraries function as an essential constituent within the larger framework of the teknikon** [Paragraph 4.3 (i), Operational philosophy ... [undated] : 6].

(iv) To **stimulate public interest in and usage of the library.**

With regard to the lecturer, for example, his/her interest in the library could be stimulated by current awareness services as supported by the statement that **the library should help the lecturer keep abreast of recent literature** by way of such services [Paragraph 4.2.1 A (ii), De Bruin, 1985 : 6].

Students' interest in and usage of the library could be secured by **providing active assistance with locating ... and supplying of information, by giving advice about the bibliographic presentation of assignments**, etc. [Paragraph 4.2.1 B (iii), De Bruin, 1985 : 7], or in the case of the researcher by **offering professional advice on the use of retrieval systems required for successful research** [Paragraph 4.2.2 (ii), De Bruin, 1985 : 7].

(v) To **promote awareness** with regard to library services, for example, through the institution's 'printed voice', such as, annual reports, campus publications ; by co-ordination of relations with the media, writing of news releases.

It is well recognized in the IULC document that it is the library's responsibility to promote awareness of its services. This is accomplished by **ensuring that all students are made aware of library services through orientation exercises ; thus making optimal availability of general services and facilities thereby ensuring that lecturers and students (primary users) know how to make optimum use of these** [Paragraph 4.2.1 A (iii), De Bruin, 1985 : 6-7].

(vi) To **monitor awareness, attitudes and opinions** inside and outside the library by **conducting user opinion surveys and attitude studies** of key publics.

As indicated earlier, it is recognized that **service to users is the ultimate objective of most libraries and user needs will have to be anticipated and be met** [Paragraph 4.3 (ii), Operational philosophy ... [undated] : 6]. Thus, the library will have to do whatever is necessary, for example, conduct opinion surveys, etc. to determine the needs and attitudes of its key publics as well as the levels of awareness of the various services and facilities and to **make these optimally available to them** [Paragraphs 4.2.1 A (ii), 4.2.1 B (i), De Bruin, 1985 : 6-7].

(vii) To **analyze the impact of library policies and practices** on various publics.

It is accepted that in order to adapt and respond to changing needs, library policy on certain issues will have to be flexible. An example of such adaptation to meet user needs is obvious in the CTP statement that **cataloguing and other information access systems may even have to be re-designed in order to provide optimum benefit to the researcher** [Paragraph 4.3 (vii), Operational philosophy ... [undated] : 13] which would constitute an excellent move toward PR by making one's system more 'user-friendly' and more patron-oriented.

(viii) To **counsel library management on the formulation of alternative options, new policies or the amending of existing ones** ; and to **co-ordinate activities with governing bodies**, for example, the university's executive ; **and with the investment community**, for example, trustees, donors, sponsors and fund-raising personnel.

That PR could be used to counsel library management and other authorities becomes evident from the decision to reach consensus on **the role of academic libraries that would provide a useful set of guidelines to librarians, to the IULC and to individual authorities** [Paragraph 4.2, De Bruin, 1985 : 3], and from the statement that **the library should monitor all**

developments and information techniques and advise the authorities about possible improvements that should be introduced [Paragraph 4.2.4 (i), De Bruin, 1985 : 8].

Insofar as its interaction with the investment community is concerned, the library will have to employ all the PR skills it has as it is heavily 'at the mercy of' this particular public.

These factors above are supported by Briscoe (1921 : 47), Edsall (1980 : 6) and Cutlip & Center (1985 : 4) who have identified them to be the most important in any public relations programme.

Newlands (1987 : 29) observes that the exercise of public relations stimulates events in the following order :

- **awareness** of the existence of the library ;
- **interest** develops, which leads to **understanding** and to **support** ; which then stimulates
- **usage**, which is the ultimate objective reached through a logical chain of events.

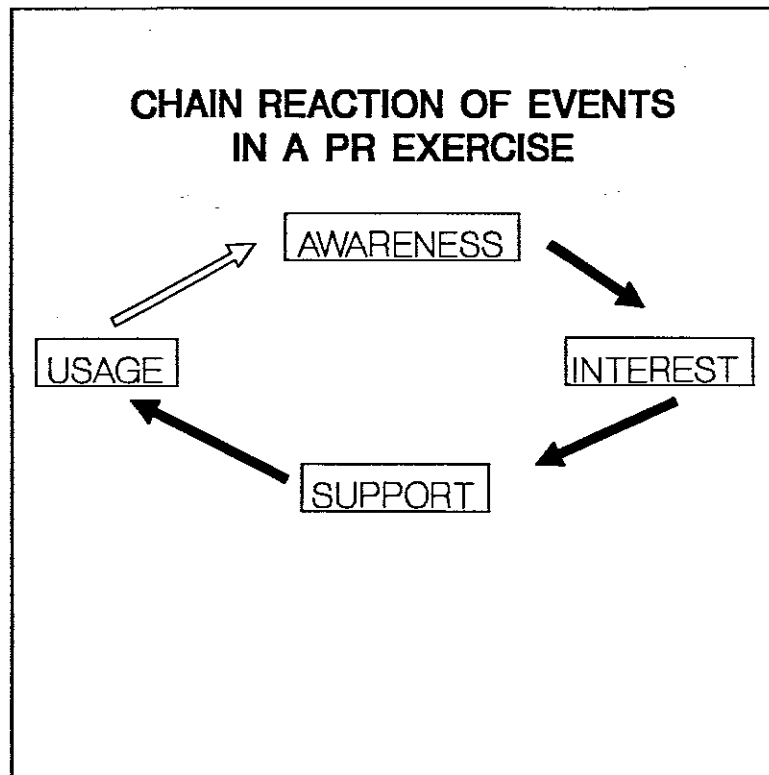


Figure 9

This is essentially a modification of the **AIDA** (**A**wareness-**I**nterest- **D**esire- **A**ction) marketing formula (Kotler, 1982 : 343), i.e. a library planning for the implementation of a public relations programme must first stimulate public awareness of its products and facilities - this would then lead to interest among its users, which, in turn, will lead to support for the library - and these would ultimately lead to usage of the library which is the prime objective of the exercise.

All the statements contained in the two documents examined are supportive of my theory which reinforces the role of PR as the driving force in managing academic libraries.

Therefore, since information transfer is vital to teaching and research, and since academic libraries are primary sources of information, they must be managed in such a way that users

will look to them as centres of informational expertise. They must be characterised by commitment to excellence in quality and service to users. This is where libraries could embark on public relations exercises to make this commitment to users a reality.

4.5 Summary of chapter

- It has been shown in this chapter that in order to give the library a sense of direction, strategic planning which involves a clear-cut statement of aims and objectives, becomes a necessity.
- The role of academic libraries, both university and technikon, were examined to establish the place of the library within these contexts. The documents that were examined in this chapter are authentic South African statements which reflect the carefully considered viewpoints of :
 - (i) the Inter-University Library Committee (IULC) of the Committee of University Principals (CUP) ; and
 - (ii) the Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP).
- There emerged from these documents, a unanimous consensus that the library was of central importance to the whole university/technikon structure.
- Within the context of these documents, the role of the library in relation to teaching, research, student interaction, community service and generally in librarianship and information science, has been examined in detail.
- Some of the goals and objectives of the academic library briefly are as follows :

- (i) to ensure greater user awareness of services and facilities [Paragraphs 4.2.1 A (iii), 4.2.1 B (iv), 4.2.2 (iii), 4.2.5 (i)],
- (ii) to make library services more responsive to user needs [Paragraphs 4.2.1 A (ii), 4.2.1 B (ii) and (iii), 4.2.2 (ii), 4.2.4 (i), 4.3 (ii)],
- (iii) to develop specific services and programmes in order to meet those needs [Paragraphs 4.2.1 A (ii), 4.2.1 B (iii), (iv) and (v), 4.2.2 (ii), 4.2.5 (iii), 4.3 (v)],
- (iv) to improve communication with students, staff members, administrators and trustees [Paragraphs 4.2.1 A (i), 4.2.5 (iii)].

All the above statements revolve around PR as the core function. The words "develop specific services and programmes to meet needs" implies a pro-active PR (as opposed to any other) role that academic libraries should play. The statements also provide justification for my view that PR can never be a component of promotion, but instead the converse applies, where promotion is a component of PR.

- It has been recognized that service to users is the ultimate *raison d'être* of these libraries, and consequently, there must be a high level of interaction between the library and its primary publics, for example, students, faculty and other staff.
- Some important differences in the roles of university and technikon libraries were noted, for example, in the case of the former, it is information, knowledge and research which is the crux of the matter, whereas with technikons, it is the practical application of these aspects that becomes more important.

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- The purposes and objectives of public relations in academic libraries have been compared with the purposes and objectives of public relations in public libraries, with a view to highlighting certain basic similarities and differences between the two. The similarities are, briefly, to collect, preserve, organize, process and disseminate material and information and to make users aware of them. The essential difference in objective between the public library and the academic library is to promote healthy recreation in the case of the former, and in the case of the latter, to stimulate productive research.
- Finally, since information transfer is the fundamental objective of academic libraries, and since academic libraries are primary sources of information and knowledge, libraries must be managed in such a way that they become indispensable information resources. This means that they would have to make every effort to establish themselves as such in the eyes of their users. One sure way of doing this would seem to become involved with PR on an on-going basis.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. The personalized approach to practising PR in academic libraries

5.1 Introduction

It has been stated in chapter four that service to users is the prime objective of academic libraries. Some of the other objectives that were highlighted in the IULC (De Bruin, 1985 : 2-9) and CTP (Operational philosophy, [undated] : 6-14) statements are :

- to ensure greater user awareness of services and facilities ;
- to make library services more responsive to user needs ;
- to improve communication with students, staff members, administrators and trustees.

These statements all point to the fact that academic libraries must become client-oriented and must involve themselves in personalized service to users. In terms of Weingand's (1987 : 120) staircase concept, having conducted the PR audit and defined the mission, goals and objectives of the academic library, what remains is to put strategies to work and in chapters five and six aspects of action strategies are addressed.

According to Weingand (1987 : 111), the two primary avenues or strategies (as I call them) of public relations are **personal contact** and **publicity**. Both aim to develop and maintain a high level of awareness among users. Since each aspect is important in its own right, it has been decided to examine the personal approach in this chapter ; leaving the publicity approach to be dealt with in the next.

According to Rice (1972 : 30-31) a library is basically in the book business and ingrained in the public's consciousness is the idea that the core, the heart and the very essence of a library is books. Sherman (1980 : 34) however, points out that libraries and librarians must make their mark by helping to satisfy important informational needs in users which supports a broader concept of what a library has to offer.

This achievement is largely dependent on how much effort a librarian puts toward a rich, **personal service** for patrons, service that not only meets the current needs of a particular clientele, but also has enough vision to anticipate future needs.

Thus, personal service must be seen to be an on-going process of planning to satisfy immediate needs of patrons as well as envisaging future ones. Therefore, how a library interprets its regulations to the public ; whether or not there is a sincere attempt to anticipate the emerging needs of users and to prepare in advance to meet them ; how frequently methods of operation are examined to verify their validity - are some of the basic elements of a potentially good public relations service.

5.2 Meeting patron needs

It has been suggested by Rice (1972 : 15) that when assessing the general attitudes of users towards the library in preparation to meet patron needs, the chief librarian and staff need to examine very closely three large patron categories :

- the people they are **currently serving**,
- those whom they **used to serve**, and
- those whom they have **never reached**.

The three R's of their efforts should be to **RETAIN** the patrons they have, to **RECRUIT** new patrons, and to **REGAIN** lost patrons (Rice, 1972 : 15).

According to Rice (1972 : 16), current patrons of the academic library may be divided very roughly into two groups :

- (i) "captive users" and
- (ii) "self-propelled users"

The bulk of captive users are students who require reading material for assignments, answers to simple reference questions, and assistance with in-depth research work (Rice, 1972 : 16).

There are also a reasonable number of academic library patrons coming in because they have personal reasons for using what the library has to offer, for example, the architect may want to consult a specialized directory, the engineer may want to design a lift, etc. - these are "self-propelled" users.

There are several ways of promoting the use of the substantial collections of university and technikon libraries, for example, the provision of a 'reserved book collection' in an academic library is often considered an absolute essential in order to make highly select reading material more easily and readily accessible to large numbers of users at any time.

It must be remembered that a primary reason for the library's existence is to facilitate information transfer to the user. Therefore, how effectively and how excitingly information resources are presented to the patron is vital to the library's existence - for example, the library should provide the most comfortable environment possible with the space and money available and create, wherever possible, special displays (discussed later) to highlight holdings and to stimulate impulse borrowing.

Aesthetic considerations should be extended : there should be sufficient provision of shelf space to give an open feeling - crammed shelves, narrow aisles and inadequate lighting tend to be disquieting. Provision should be made for tables for group work, individual study carrells, informal seating without desks, etc.

Confidence in one's product is an essential of successful PR work. In this regard Harrison (1982 : 16) points out that it must be realized that no library service will ever be perfect, but most have some features of which they can be justifiably proud, for example, one library may have attractive modern buildings ; another may be rich in special or rare collections ; a third may have efficient and well-trained staff who bring credit to the library ; while others may be strong in reference or online services.

Harrison (1982 : 16) reminds librarians always to reinforce success, never failure, i.e. to concentrate on publicising the aspects of one's service which one believes to be good, and to improve the shortcomings of other aspects before publicising them.

Another basic requirement would be to train staff for personal service. Librarians should develop self-confidence by becoming aware of what is going on within their libraries ; and at the same time establish competence within themselves by keeping current with what is happening in the library profession as a whole.

It is all a matter of anticipating needs, determining what we have available to meet those needs and helping to get our users and our materials together with a minimum of hassle.

5.2.1 Patron orientation

According to Kleinschmidt (1971 : 21), librarians should never assume that patrons automatically know how to find their way around sections, where reference books are kept, in what order the books are filed and so on.

Internal public relations activities could possibly help libraries provide greater patron access to services through the deliberate use of visuals and patron and staff orientation practices (Butler, 1976 : 8). For example, tours could be arranged for specific groups of users as per request, or for groups with specific needs.

Library orientation simply introduces and familiarises students, staff and other users with the physical layout of the library ; while library instruction seeks to teach them how to most effectively utilize library resources for research.

User instruction or orientation programmes can be an ideal opportunity to present the academic library in a favourable light to new students and staff and thereby motivate them to make maximum use of the library.

Self-guided tours could be arranged so that students, staff and possibly visitor members are given maps and audio-tapes containing information on the highlights of the library.

It has already been pointed out that the comfort of users and pleasant surroundings or concentration on atmospherics are considered to be essential elements of any public relations exercise.

Library access

Garvey (1980 : 18) suggests that there are certain basic questions which one must ask in establishing how accessible one's library is, for example :

- is it easy for people to find the library ?
- is it well sign-posted ?
- is the building clearly designated as "library" ?
- are the opening hours prominently displayed ? and
- is the library, including the parking area, adequately illuminated at night ?

Regular patrons may know where it is, but many potential patrons may not. To this end, directional signs should be posted on main routes to the library - (more will be said about directional signs under the section 'signs and signage' later on).

Personal experience shows that academic libraries need to take into consideration factors like what should patrons do with their dripping umbrellas and raincoats on a rainy day ? Is there a safe place where they can keep their baggage ? Has provision been made for the handicapped person who may want to use the library ? Is the building accessible to the person on crutches or in a wheelchair ? Is the library door wide enough to admit a wheelchair ? Are there reliable lifts to transport the handicapped person to the various floors in the library ?

5.2.2 Library staff orientation

There is a definite need for library staff to be trained in communicating effectively with the public. This view is confirmed by Butler (1976 : 42) who believes that a chief ingredient of PR is good human relations or personal selling (selling with two-way communication) and this fact is widely

supported in the library literature (Butler, 1976 : 42). The need for library staff to be more humane in their dealings with users is also emphasized by Shields (1970 : 5-7) who questions the value of publicity when the staff does not have true patience and professionalism in answering requests for public service.

Ireland (quoted in Butler, 1976 : 42) believes that librarians have failed to develop PR programmes for themselves and comments that libraries can have beautiful modern buildings and cheerful interiors, but users still have to face the people behind the desks, and sometimes they tend to be rigid and intimidating. As has been stated before, a change of attitude on the part of library staff is required.

Thus, since the chief ingredient of PR is good human relations, the chief librarian or library director should ensure that staff are well trained to deal with the public and that there are enough staff to cope with increased demands, especially at the desks or service areas at which users will present themselves (Harrison, 1982 : 16-17). It would therefore seem to be wise for any library director to invest a sizeable portion of the library budget to training and developing staff and making them an important part of the institution.

Malan & L'Estrange (1981 : 173) support the latter view by stating that employees who are loyal and proud of their organization will automatically be good ambassadors and public relations officials for the organization.

Hepner (quoted in Butler, 1976 : 47) suggests that good organizational climates can be acquired through staff training plans ; their involvement in library business through meetings, publications, memos ; through involvement in planning and decision-making ; and by treatment of employees as colleagues through good internal communication.

Thus, positive staff relations depend upon a strong communication process which requires that communication flows in many directions : from top management to bottom management and vice versa.

Staff members who deal with the public must be knowledgeable about activities throughout the library and must be able to communicate with other staff members, with library administrators, and with library users.

Since the issue/circulation desk is considered the focal point of a library, staff who attend this area need practical and efficient training in order for them to meet the needs of the public with confidence. Often, the members of staff who attend the issue desk area, are the only members of the library staff in sight to whom users turn for help and they (library staff) would do well to remember that politeness and willingness to assist, create a fund of goodwill that is not obtainable in any other way.

Elliott (1951 : 21), however, believes that the only way to bring together the patron and the book is through the provision of readers' advisory services. This would, of course, include today's modern concept of subject (reference) librarianship.

However, whatever the medium of communication is through which the library chooses to relate to its public(s), in the final analysis, as Oboler (1973 : 144) points out, **the real test of public relations, is service to the public**. He says that all the flossily decorated booklists and handbooks and elaborate displays and signs, cannot compare in importance to the way members of the library staff behave towards patrons. He adds, that it is ridiculous when an academic institution spends millions on its library building, furnishings, reading material and machinery, "only to have all this made naught by a two dollar an hour student assistant" who behaves

contemptuously to patrons in the library.

His recommendation is that it would well be worth any academic library administrator's time to be almost as careful in the selection of student and clerical assistance as of professional staff members.

Clearly, the basic training of library staff is a vital factor in establishing and maintaining a good public image of the library. Personal appearance, neatness of dress and courtesy all combine to give patrons a favourable impression of libraries and their staff, and these qualities should be encouraged and developed. One of the best ways to do this is to produce a staff handbook which can be presented to all new personnel when they join the service of the library (Harrison, 1982 : 17).

Such a handbook could contain basic information covering conditions of service, the status of the library within the academic environment, its mission statement, what it hopes to achieve for its users, and some reference to the importance it attaches to neat personal appearance, as well as a statement of how to be courteous to patrons at all times.

Other areas of staff training affecting good public relations are those dealing with communication, either through telephone or through correspondence (already dealt with in chapter three).

5.2.3 Academic staff orientation

As an exercise in PR, academic as well as other staff should constantly be informed of library happenings, preferably through whatever medium is commonly seen by the faculty and staff.

The campus newspaper is an obvious public relations tool in this regard (Sherman, 1980 : 219). The library should have either a regular column written by a library staff member, or a reporter should be assigned to the library.

Orientation lectures and library tours at the beginning of the academic year are also common public relations devices used in many academic libraries. A programme of orientation for new faculty members (and perhaps, a 'refresher course' for old members) could be worked out in consultation with the head of department or library contact person which, from personal observation at the University of Natal, Durban Library as well as the M.L. Sultan Technikon Library, has the added advantage of involving the academic staff in library use and in library operations.

With regard to the above, personal experience in a university and technikon library shows that one should not count on prior knowledge of how to use the library, whether by students or by academic staff. In a library such as that of the University of Natal, Durban, for example, some users find it difficult to locate books either because of the presence of two classification systems, or because of two forms of the catalogue, viz. a retrospective card catalogue and a partially computerised current catalogue. It should, therefore, not be taken for granted that the average patron understands how to find books in a library with such a complex system.

This may appear to most academic librarians as very obvious knowledge, but experience in academic libraries seems to justify bringing public relations down to a very simple level. It is sometimes difficult even for the library staff in very large libraries to be aware of the finer points of special collections in a library system.

Personal experience shows that encouraging academic staff to recommend purchases for the library, and then making these materials quickly and readily available, create among them (academic staff) a feeling of involvement, appreciation and, above all, credibility toward the library which, in turn, would nurture interest, confidence and support.

Thus, no matter how many millions are spent on staff or books or palatial buildings, academic libraries must continue to work towards good PR with their patrons. Library staff must sharpen their communication as well as interpersonal skills.

Libraries should be equipped with useful directional signs and understandable catalogue instructions. As Rice (1972 : 36) points out, library patrons who consistently cannot find what they are looking for have no recourse except to complain and we librarians must strive to give them as little as possible to complain about.

Inadequately resolved complaints may have several undesirable effects, for example, some patrons will stop using the library and there will be a subsequent decline in circulation statistics. Unhappy patrons will probably relate their experiences to friends - in this way a negative image can soon be established (Robinson, 1984 : 3-4). Robinson (1984 : 4) also points out that no library staff member should be surprised by a complaint, because not only are complaints inevitable, but patrons have a right to complain. In the context of PR, complaints can be a powerful analytical tool for capturing user feedback on the quality of the various services offered by the library and then taking action to correct the situation where necessary.

A few specific ways in which PR can be practised on a personalized basis shall now be examined.

5.3 The talking technique

This is a vital aspect of the work of a librarian. Usually at the beginning of the year, librarians at universities and technikons will be asked to talk about the library and its facilities to intakes of new students, to members of faculty, and often to outside bodies as well.

Such opportunities to promote the library should be welcomed with enthusiasm. The librarian should decide how best to get library and information services over to audiences and groups by oral means (Harrison, 1982 : 81).

Practice helps and the librarian should make it his/her business to obtain experience by attending professional meetings, by contributing to discussions and by joining committees both within and outside the profession.

5.4 Questions and answers

When a librarian is giving a talk describing his/her job, or covering the library's services, there may be many questions forthcoming from the floor.

Harrison (1982 : 89) indicates that there is an art in the answering of questions. It is bad practice, for example, to give what is virtually another talk when answering the very first question. Nothing puts an audience off more than this. People will be hesitant to ask second and third questions in case they let themselves in for second and third talks !

The art, therefore, would be to give succinct answers to questions - this would facilitate greater audience participation.

5.5 Discussions and seminars

Recently, the trend in libraries has been towards more audience participation and the popularity of the seminar method of presentation has been increasing (Harrison, 1982 : 89).

Informality is the essence of the seminar approach. From the outset the speaker must create rapport with the group. Harrison (1982 : 89-90) suggests that in the context of the library this could be achieved by asking people what **they** thought was the purpose of the library, or where **they** thought the library got its funding from, **do** they use the library, if not - why not, etc. ? - always placing the patron first before anything else, by asking their opinion on certain issues. This creates a sense of importance on the part of patrons.

Through this form of discussion, librarians could communicate many new ideas about the library and its services to the group and will have received important feedback from them which may enable librarians to improve future sessions and possibly even library practices.

This method of personal publicity could be viewed as an excellent PR opportunity - to clear up old misconceptions and build a new and favourable image of the library.

5.6 Tours of the library

Tours of the library could prove effective, for example, in terms of inter-library co-operation on a local or regional basis. In the academic library context, such tours often form part of a meeting at the host library. Apart from being viewed as a good PR gesture, members of the visiting group will, after the visit to the library, take back with them impressions not only of the building, its facilities, staff

and services, but also a lasting impression of how the group was received and of how efficiently or otherwise the visit was organized and the tour conducted. It is therefore, vitally important to give careful consideration to the planning and reception of such visits and guided tours.

At the end of the visit the opportunity should be taken to invite suggestions for improvement of one's collections and services.

5.7 The PR values of the personal approach

Elliott (1951 : 20) is of the opinion that personal publicity is supremely important and nothing else can take its place. It provides contact between the library staff and the user ; and the library stock and the user.

On the other hand, he points out that no amount of publicity will take the place of a good stock and an effective and willing service. Elliott (1951 : 20) reminds librarians that in spite of the fact that libraries are growing more complex, which means that librarians and libraries may be involved in numerous extra activities, **the fact that a satisfied patron is the most valuable asset must never be forgotten.**

Such a patron is one who knows that the library is willing and able to help. He/she will then tell friends about the good services offered, those friends would, perhaps, tell others and so on. This word-of-mouth publicity would bring forth very positive results for the library.

One would be inclined to think that if the public can be made interested in this way, and if it is possible to make the library a place where people turn when in need of information and inspiration, then this will pave the way for un-hindered patron support of the library.

However, Harrison (1982 : 16-17) contends that word-of-mouth recommendation from a satisfied user to a potential one is a slow process, and that is why librarians must consider adopting **active and formal PR programmes** to supplement, what he calls, the more passive, person-to-person recommendation.

He suggests that much can be learnt from the outside world with regard to the treatment of users, for example, one could observe the treatment one gets at a good bank, hotel or department store and compare the treatment with bad examples of such places. One could then apply the situation to one's library and ask is the same happening there : are enquiries dealt with at the right level, or are unqualified or inexperienced personnel grappling with abstract queries and leaving behind un-satisfied users ? ; or more seriously, are patrons being made to stand in queues as a result of staff gossiping with each other inside the service desk area ?

If these and other related questions cannot be answered satisfactorily, then the chief librarian has a task of staff organization and development ahead of him/her, because good selection and training would ensure that such a state of affairs would never happen ; and, as the saying goes 'good wine needs no bush' : a library that offers an efficient and prompt service is its own best recommendation (Harrison, 1982 : 16).

5.8 Summary of chapter

- This chapter examines the practical application of public relations techniques in academic libraries with special reference to the personalized approach to services.
- Since the very essence of a library is communication, which involves the imparting of information through an effective system of communication, a lot depends on :

- (i) how the library interprets its policies to meet user needs ;
 - (ii) how it adapts them to keep current with changing trends ; and
 - (iii) to what extent staff are trained to communicate with the public.
- The attitudes of library staff form an integral part of public relations, for it is their behaviour that determines to a large extent the name (good or bad) of an organization.
 - In this regard, chief librarians/library directors should take special note of Oboler's suggestion about the careful selection of staff at all levels, bearing in mind that the basic training of library staff is indeed a crucial factor in building a favourable image for the library.
 - Telephone etiquette has been dealt with in an earlier chapter, because together with the handling of correspondence, it constitutes an area of staff training that could secure good PR for the organization.
 - Other factors such as neatness of dress, personal appearance and courtesy, which directly affect PR have been given prominence in this chapter.
 - As far as patron orientation is concerned, since patrons are the most valuable asset that the library possesses, every effort should be made on the part of the library staff to familiarise them with the library's facilities and services if they are to make optimum use of them.
 - The question of library access has been addressed. This determines how accessible the library and its collections are to actual, and also, quite importantly, to potential patrons.

- With regard to services for academic staff, the issues of current awareness, book selection and orientation with a view to securing co-operation and support for the library have been discussed.
- Various practical methods such as the talking technique, questions and answers, discussions and seminars, orientation and tours of the library have been reviewed as excellent opportunities for PR. Suggestions on how to conduct these, as well as some hints of what **not** to do, have been discussed.
- These should all be viewed as opportunities never to be missed to promote the library, to clear up old mysteries and misconceptions about the library, to obtain feedback useful for improvements in service and to build a favourable impression of the library : which is what every library should strive for.

CHAPTER SIX

6. The publicity approach to PR

6.1 Introduction

The promotion aspects of public relations are legitimate devices to be used in communicating with people, but they are not in themselves public relations - they are a means to an end (as shown in Figure 5) and must be seen in perspective. In this regard, Kies (1974 : xiii) reminds us that **a public relations programme**, usually described in glowing terms as a separate function of the library's operation used to accomplish set objectives, **must be accepted as an integral part of the library's total programme** which involves all staff members and creates an awareness of the variety and scope in the way in which libraries communicate.

There are a number of promotional devices such as news releases, posters, etc. that a library could make use of in order to encourage and motivate library users and to facilitate the use of the library.

6.2 Print publicity

Print publicity is a basic tool of the public relations business, but much print publicity is poorly planned, poorly executed and poorly distributed (Garvey, 1980 : 71).

A major channel of communication that is significant to the success of the library is the library's own publications. Publications that should be included among the modern academic library's public relations tools are, inter alia, library bulletins, annual reports, reading lists, handbooks (students, faculty, or general), library use aids (usually one or two page leaflets) and bibliographies of special collections.

Generally speaking, the major tools of print publicity could be classified into three categories, viz. : newsletters, 'give-aways', and reports.

(i) **The library newsletter / bulletin**

(a) **The library newsletter**

An attractive, well-written newsletter can be a very valuable public relations tool. Rice (1972 : 59) states that the most valid reason for issuing a newsletter is because the chief librarian or library director feels that the library's message must reach the public through a direct channel. She adds that the library-issued newsletter has a major advantage over mass-media communications in that the library can tell its own story, in its own language and this can be done at the most appropriate time.

Special events can be announced much further in advance than newspapers are prepared to do. The newsletter can give behind-the-scenes views of life at the library which tend to humanize the institution and show that it is people-oriented.

(b) **The library bulletin**

The library bulletin, appearing in the form of a monthly or quarterly magazine, should be aimed at listing and annotating recent additions to the library, at including feature articles on the work of authors and adding paragraphs of library news such as staff changes, new library projects, changes in opening hours, etc. (Harrison, 1982 : 32).

(ii) **Hand-outs or 'give-aways'**

(a) **The basic information flyer or service leaflet**

Libraries should have printed a general leaflet or flyer outlining the scope of its services, and including a directory of library addresses and telephone numbers as well as details of opening hours (Elliott, 1951 : 24). Floor plans showing

locations should also be included. Garvey (1980 : 70), states that this flyer/leaflet is not just for clientele, but for staff referral as well.

(b) Another useful form of printed publicity are hand-outs such as **brochures**.

Rice (1972 : 23-24) suggests that every library should have simple informational brochures containing information about borrowing privileges, fines and fees, special collections (theses, government publications, audio-visual material), special events (exhibitions, workshops), individualised services (telephone reference, telephone renewals, assistance with bibliographies, interlibrary loan services, reserve section or short loans collections, etc.). It is a matter of providing library information that patrons need, and encouraging library use by informing specific audiences about specific materials of interest to them.

There should be a printed guide to the catalogue giving a simple explanation of the working of the catalogue and the classification scheme. "How-to" brochures are useful, especially for students who should be learning the system. From experience it is clear that most users want specific information to meet an immediate need, but, as Garvey (1980 : 21) points out, some are hesitant to ask for help for fear of appearing stupid. Thus, librarians should make every effort to ensure that users feel as comfortable as possible when seeking assistance or when using the library.

There is no single solution to the problem of making one's system understood, but there are several aids that may alleviate matters. Apart from brochures, information can be provided in loose-leaf binders, with pages covered, or it can be placed under glass on top of the catalogue. Such items could include : examples of catalogue entries explained ; the most sought or most confusing subject headings ; condensed DDC

or LC schedules for browsers ; and lastly, but most importantly, a reminder to ask the librarian for assistance if needed. This type of information enables patrons to skim and select those pieces of information that might satisfy their particular need. Information made available in this way also means that patrons can refer to specific items needing clarification and the staff can also refer to it when they need help in answering the query (Garvey, 1980 : 21).

The manner in which these brochures and leaflets are distributed is also important. Harrison (1982 : 37) states that often too little thought is given to the distribution of PR materials. He maintains that it is not just good enough to distribute them to library service desks, leaving users to pick them up at their whim. Instead, the librarian must consider more effective ways of distributing the library's publicity materials, such as before/after an orientation session or tour of the library.

The size of the leaflet is important. It should fit into envelopes of preferred size. This is because mailing can be one of the main outlets for library publicity (Harrison, 1982 : 37). It is thus vital that the library's mailing list be kept up to date.

(c) There are other library-produced materials with the exception of the annual report, that could be classified as **'give-aways'**, for example, bookmarks, reading lists, souvenirs of special anniversaries, memo pads - all of these devices could be used as invaluable PR tools to generate a friendly feeling toward the library (Rice, 1972 : 62-63).

Reading lists may be effective in pointing out some aspect of the library's collection unfamiliar to the average patron. Most libraries find it necessary to issue lists of recent additions and subject lists from time to time. They can be made attractive by careful design, by the use of a

recognisable library symbol/logo, by using catchy headings and by employing different colours for each issue (Harrison, 1982 : 33-34).

The bookmark may contain some information of lasting value which will incline the patron to keep it - the hours of service, a simplified version of the Dewey Decimal System, telephone numbers.

(iii) Annual reports

The annual report of a library is a public relations tool of prime importance. It presents the library with an excellent opportunity to sum up its accomplishments and to set forth its plans (Rice, 1972 : 65). Accomplishments such as a dramatic rise in circulation statistics or a considerable increase in the number of reference questions received and answered should be noted. Should there be any unsolved problems such as dwindling patronage in branches, mutilation of books, difficulty in recruiting qualified personnel - they should be mentioned too.

Rice (1972 : 66) remarks that probably the best annual report is one which achieves a delicate balance between eliciting compliments for a job well done and sympathy for problems recognized but yet to be solved.

Harrison (1982 : 29) attaches great importance to the physical presentation of annual reports by stating that since the annual report is the library's major PR document, it should be regarded as indispensable, and as such, care should be lavished on its physical appearance and presentation.

The layout should, if practicable, include illustrations and perhaps graphs showing usage over the months, etc. Colourful displays in the library should be photographed for possible inclusion in the annual report (Harrison, 1982 : 30). Other illustrations could include exhibition openings, library week

activities, certain important manuscripts or donations acquired, etc. It is interesting to note that library week activities which, in South Africa, were usually a part of public library programmes only, have now been included in those of academic libraries as well. Academic institutions such as the University of Natal, Durban libraries, the University of Durban-Westville Library and the M.L. Sultan Technikon Library, to name a few, have in recent years been more actively involved in this regard. They have embarked on special events during library week as a way of promoting the academic library.

It must however be pointed out, that although annual reports can have great historical value for posterity, Harrison's contention (1982 : 29) that it is the major PR tool is debatable. It can, undoubtedly, be a very useful promotional tool as observed by Edsall (1980 : 91), but it cannot be accepted as the most important one, as Newlands (1987 : 60) points out, because not one, but every component of a well devised public relations programme contributes towards the success of the programme.

6.2.1 Other channels of printed communication

Pro forma letters and cards

Printed postcards and pro forma letters are a necessary economy at any institution. In a library, they are used for reservations, overdue notices, for renewals of library cards, for informing users about the progress of their special requests, and for a number of other communications. However, as Harrison (1982 : 25) points out, some library users are extremely sensitive about the wording of such printed or duplicated communications.

He adds that cards informing users that reserved material is now ready for them at the library usually present no problem, for this is good news. However, it is in composing the text of postcards and letters requesting the return of overdue material or asking users to renew their library books or charging them for overdue books, that the greatest tact and care is needed.

Harrison (1982 : 25-26) recommends that librarians re-examine the number of printed communications that are sent out in the name of their libraries to see if these are really necessary or whether they can be replaced by a personalized letter - which will be much better from a PR perspective.

It must again be stressed that in all aspects of library service, staff must be geared to adopt at all times a positive rather than a negative attitude. In this regard, Harrison (1982 : 26) states that efforts should be made to create a library service that likes to say 'YES' to users as often as possible, and on those occasions when it has to say 'NO', then to say it as nicely as possible.

6.3 Visual presentations, displays and exhibitions

In the context of this study, the terms visual presentations and displays are used interchangeably.

Butler (1976 : 36) states that visual presentations are as important to a library as its atmosphere, lighting service and colour in that they focus attention on library resources and encourage people to use them. Thus, gathering books together on a current topic in a conspicuous place near the circulation/issue- desk, for example, so that individuals who are interested in them can spot them immediately, is a valid way of creating patron goodwill and improving circulation.

According to Garvey (1980 : 114) there are five major forms of library displays. These are defined as follows :

- (i) A **sign** is a notice to advertise something or give directions or a warning.
- (ii) A **poster** is a graphic design intended to attract attention and relate a message or story.
- (iii) A **bulletin board** is an area for posting notices.
- (iv) A **display** is an arrangement of related materials.
- (v) An **exhibition** is a bigger and more comprehensive form of display.

Most libraries are repositories of books, music, recorded tapes, maps, drawings, archives, and a host of other materials. This shows that they have great potentiality for the kind of audio-visual appeal that can be expressed through exhibitions, displays, etc. Garvey (1980 : 114-115) agrees with this point of view by proposing that display publicity be used as an important tool in helping the public to better see the library and to project information/ideas to the viewer and to fight patron alienation to the library setting.

In this regard, Harrison (1982 : 97) states that inside the building, the library should be in a constant state of display. The foyer should be welcoming, with a well-staffed information desk, a few display cases (frequently changed) to appeal to browsers with a few moments to spare, and bulletin boards with posters and notices neatly displayed. These displays are normally fun browsing through and patrons spot other books they didn't have an opportunity to look for, but may "buy" on impulse. Personal observation has shown that displays planned to coincide with certain themes and events, are, as a matter of routine, mounted at regular intervals at quite a few academic institutions such as the University of Natal, Durban libraries, the M.L. Sultan and Technikon Natal libraries. At the University of Zululand such displays are mounted by Library and Information Science students.

Thus, displays could be used to gain the goodwill and co-operation of users by familiarising them with library collections, thereby achieving the primary objective of promoting the library.

According to Garvey (1980 : 114-115), a primary purpose of displays is to offer suggestions about materials, services and programmes in which patrons might be interested, for example, displays near the circulation/issue-desk area can remind patrons of such information sources as indexes and directories, special collections, including audio-visuals, back issues of magazines, interlibrary-loans, telephone renewals, reference and reserve sections, etc. Another purpose is to inform patrons about library operations. Displays can be excellent vehicles for narrowing the communication gap. The materials that are used to create any type of display should be chosen for appearance, efficiency in terms of storage, versatility and durability, cost and anticipated life-span (Garvey, 1980 : 115).

With regard to venue, it is clear that in planning library buildings, consideration should be given to suitable auditoriums/halls for the purposes of conferences, meetings, lectures, displays, exhibitions and discussions ; and from events held in these venues, the maximum PR value should be extracted (Harrison, 1982 : 102). In this regard, the recent construction of the University of Natal, Durban Library is a typical example of an institution that has taken into account these criteria and the library is often a venue for hosting discussions, meetings and conferences at local and national levels (Personal observation).

6.4 Signs and signage

The main purpose of the various forms of library displays (of which signage is a part according to Garvey's definition

(1980 : 114-115), is to help patrons use the library as effectively as possible. In this regard, she suggests that as librarians our first priority is to direct people to the library ; that means the library should have a highly visible sign showing that it is a library.

Here, one needs to consider in particular, the potential user :

- How does he/she find the library ?
- Are there clear directional signs ?
- Is the library building itself labelled 'Library' ?
- Are the hours of opening posted in some conspicuous place, visible from the outside of the building so that if a potential patron arrives when the library is closed, he/she can easily find out when to return ?

Our second priority is to help patrons locate material, information sources or services that prompted their visit. Included in this category would be signs and floor plans to guide patrons efficiently, and explanatory displays to get them oriented.

Garvey (1980 : 24) maintains that signs are useful to both patrons and librarians since they help patrons use the library more effectively, without individual assistance. In addition, when assistance is required it can be requested more specifically and provided more readily by using the signs as a starting point.

Signs could take the form of graphic devices to attract attention - they could also be brightly coloured. Colour coding is another possibility, and stack numbers can be keyed in a certain colour for biographies, etc.

Signs should be placed where it will most benefit the user, for example, users must be informed of how reference sources and other collections are arranged. Signs could be affixed to

walls, doorways, ends of stacks, suspended from ceilings or propped on tables and counters. They should point out various departments and terminology should be as simple as possible. Signs should be posted at all junctions, elevators, hallways, and wherever there is a break in the classification sequence (Garvey, 1980 : 22-24).

It should be realized that some kind of assistance in the stacks is necessary. Thus, at the M.L. Sultan Technikon Library, where I am employed, provision is made, for example, for the display of the abridged Dewey schedule and a listing of the most popular subjects therein. Experience has shown that placing these signs 'on-the-spot', aids both browsers and patrons who have incomplete or wrong call numbers. As Garvey (1980 : 22) points out, it also makes it easier for any staff member in the area, including shelvers/stack attendants, to re-route some of the lost and misled patrons without a return trip to the catalogue or OPAC terminal.

It should be noted that signs should not only be used to inform and instruct, but they should also be used to give directions wherever there is a break in sequence, a change of materials, a physical barrier, etc. Thus, if the 'art reserve' collection is located in a separate area, patrons must be informed of the exact location. Such barriers will be overcome somewhat by welcoming devices such as introductory displays, floor plans and directional signs. Displays near the catalogue, for example, can interpret symbols appearing on the entries and offer suggestions ; displays near stacks can explain arrangements of separate collections and give cross-references to related materials (Garvey, 1980 : 116).

Another type of in-stacks directional aid involves materials that are not where patrons could reasonably expect to find them. Patrons looking for books on painting or fashion may go straight from the catalogue to the right number, but they might miss the best books unless they are informed that

oversize books, including those on painting and fashion are located elsewhere.

For example, at the M.L. Sultan Technikon Library, books on fashion design are not necessarily to be found with other related books in the arts collection, but because of their large size, are shelved in a separate collection. Likewise, graphic arts students at the University of Durban-Westville, could be referred to the separate Fine Arts section for more books on the topic ; music lovers at the University of Natal, Durban, to recordings and scores in the Music Library.

Areas around short stories, essays, poetry and play collections, etc. (of which there are substantial collections at academic libraries) call for signs to indexes, as well as a note as to what an index is, how it can help and where it is. Magazine and newspaper readers may need to know about periodical indexes, the availability of back issues and about any copies kept in store rooms.

Patrons may also fail to locate specific reference books because they may not know that some books are kept at the information desk ; for example, these may be books that are waiting to be collected by other library users. Patrons could ask the librarian, but no one may be on hand and patrons may assume that books not on the shelves have been loaned out or are in use in the library. These are all cases calling for references and signage in the stacks (Garvey, 1980 : 18-23).

In-stack referrals serve a dual purpose : that of helping patrons with immediate needs ; and that of "advertising" the existence of library **materials**, services and programmes of potential interest (Garvey, 1980 : 24). This signage is most effectively placed at the issue desk/readers' advisory area, where people can be told about specialised materials they may be unaware of, for example, music records, tapes, CDs (available, for instance, at the Music Branch library of the

University of Durban-Westville and University of Natal, Durban libraries). Here they could be told about other **services** such as interlibrary-loans where items not available at a particular library may be requested from another library, or photocopying of reference material that is only for in-library use, and indicating the availability of such facilities as telephones, staplers, pencil sharpeners, hand-outs, etc. Libraries would do well to remember that providing these aids is a matter of courtesy and is basic PR and they should do everything possible to secure the goodwill and patronage of users by these and other means. Patrons may also be interested in video **programmes**, demonstrations, classes and other events around campus.

With regard to the latter, some libraries (for example, the University of Natal, Durban libraries) have initiated a campus information service by means of which a terminal located in the library keeps patrons informed of goings-on on campus, even going as far as the menus for the day at the various cafeterias ! (Personal observation).

In order for patrons to gain easy access to materials, shelving in the library should be practical and users should be able to find their way about through adequate signage. Garvey (1980 : 118) observes that floor plans are a significant form of signage - not only do they provide a layout of the section, but they indicate types of materials available as well as terminology.

Regular checks should be made by staff to ensure that shelf guides are a true reflection of their content, due to the constant addition and or movement of books in a library.

Finally, it must be noted that there is little purpose in having good collections if people do not know about them or cannot locate them. Thus, as a primary public relations service, we owe it to our actual as well as potential patrons

to make our products readily available through the use of displays, signage, and other promotional activities.

6.5 The audio-visual approach

Video technology

Harrison (1982 : 118) recommends that the library profession make much more use of video technology in its PR programmes. In this regard, libraries at institutions such as the University of Durban-Westville, the University of Natal, Durban and the M.L. Sultan Technikon have embarked on the production of video programmes which are used during library orientation (Personal observation). These video productions are used to make users aware of the host of services offered by the library.

Films and tape-slide presentations

Films could be an ideal medium of presenting the library, its functions and services to large numbers of patrons at any one time. In this way it could be used as an excellent tool for PR. Unfortunately professional films are expensive to produce in terms of library budgets. It is almost beyond the means of an individual library to meet the production costs of a professionally made film. To overcome this problem, Harrison (1982 : 94) suggests that a collective effort be made either through library associations or through sponsorship.

In recent years a cheaper way of satisfying the visual approach to library PR has been by means of tape-slide productions, which can be made in-house. Given the right equipment, the necessary expertise and the co-operation of staff, the librarian can successfully make a number of such presentations for a fraction of the costs of a documentary film (Harrison, 1982 : 95). In this regard, libraries at the

M.L. Sultan Technikon and the University of Natal, Durban are examples of institutions that make use of tape-slide presentations in order to promote themselves and their services (Personal observation).

Other visual aids:-

In addition to films and tape-slide presentations, librarians can also make use of wall-charts, maps, posters and photographs, slides and transparencies. In using visual aids to promote the library, Harrison (1982 : 94) suggests that librarians let the pictures speak for themselves and not bore listeners with descriptions of things that they can see for themselves. According to Newlands (1987 : 55) posters with creative and effective designs usually display their messages to a large number of people and can therefore be regarded as a reasonably economical method of practising PR.

6.6 Relations with the media

Rice (1972 : 39) points out that libraries have an inescapable obligation to attract as many patrons as possible to use their facilities. Informing the public of where you are, what you have, and how it will benefit the patron is a continuing obligation of the library if it is to grow.

In determining how to attract patrons into the library, the chief librarian, his /her staff and library trustees should assess what channels of communication are open to them. In this regard, newspapers, radio and television can be considered as excellent mass media channels through which actual as well as potential patrons can be reached.

Harrison (1982 : 39) states that libraries have not had a very good image projected through the media of the press, radio, television and films. He adds that the aspects of library

service which have been publicised are precisely those which most librarians would prefer to be forgotten, for example, library cartoons in the newspaper or magazine (for example, The Cape Librarian, 1988 : 2) concentrate upon the repressive, such as commanding 'SILENCE' notices, while librarians themselves are inevitably portrayed as shabby, decrepit, myopic, absent-minded creatures.

It seems that a reasonable explanation for this kind of behaviour, according to Harrison (1982 : 39) is that, generally, editors are interested only in bad news which can be whipped up in a sensational manner ; good news is unexciting, and therefore is to be ignored. He goes on to say that editors, like librarians, are the servants of the public, and since they have to sell their wares to the public they naturally give the public what they want.

Harrison (1982 : 40) urges librarians to make every effort to produce stories to show how libraries have helped people. Library services to students and staff, to the community, to housewives, to businessmen, industry and commerce will all provide examples of human interest stories and thus form the basis of good PR and media material.

Direct advertising can be done in newspapers and magazines and on radio and television. The cost of doing this is certainly a factor to be considered.

As has already been pointed out earlier, newsletters produced for students and staff at universities and technikons can prove to be very useful PR tools.

Press releases

The press plays an important role in the formation of public opinion since it is one of the most general forms of mass

media and is circulated on a daily basis (Newlands, 1987 : 62).

The value of the press as a publicity tool becomes apparent when one considers the kinds of library news that merit a press release. The opening of a new library building, the inauguration of a new service, the visit of eminent persons, the opening of an exhibition, the hosting of a conference, etc. are all opportunities for the library to snatch up in order to promote itself and its services.

The "letters to the editor" section in newspapers provide an excellent opportunity for the librarian either to react to criticism of the library, or to promote its services. Acknowledgement from satisfied users regarding good service is good publicity for the library and should be well utilized (Newlands, 1987 : 63-66).

It must, however, be emphasized that not only good publicity should be made known to the library's public(s), but also bad publicity should be brought out in the open. In support of this, Rice (1972 : 41-42) states that bad news about the library should never be suppressed. This would be sure to undermine the trustworthiness of the library as a source of news. Every library has unpleasant incidents - bomb scares, molestations, robberies, etc. To alleviate distortion of facts, she suggests that in a crisis, several members of staff be discouraged from talking to reporters, since a single channel of communication (probably the chief librarian) is usually sufficient to keep the facts straight.

Press conferences

The press conference is something that librarians will convene only occasionally. The most common occasion for a press conference may be the impending opening of an important new

library building. These are normally arranged before the official ceremony. If the press conference includes a tour of the new building, this would be a great time to "advertise" the library (Harrison, 1982 : 42-47).

Newspaper stories and magazine articles

Harrison (1982 : 47-49) states that some librarians prefer to send out newspaper stories from time to time to selected editors. He adds that much good publicity can result from this activity and suggests that librarians keep a dossier of up-to-date photographs of library buildings and of the various services in action and that these should invariably include people. Such pictures are always more effective and convincing if taken spontaneously.

Finally, it must be noted that the development of good relations with editors will certainly lead to a positive flow of publicity for the library.

Radio and television programmes

It is not often that librarians will get a chance to appear on radio or television, but when they do get invited, they should seize the opportunity to boost the image of the library through these media (Harrison, 1982 : 51).

Radio offers an excellent channel of communication in many areas. Radio programmes include interviews, theatrical reviews, music, news, special events coverage and announcements. The library can fit into almost any of these categories if a creative approach is used.

Book reviews are usually taped in advance and cover a wide range of reading material in the hope of luring non-patrons

into the library. These days interviews are much more common than straight radio talks. The interviewer may give one or two hints beforehand about the questions he is going to ask. Answers should be as brief as possible.

Libraries are often acquainted with local authors (who may have done some of their research at the library) and can suggest them as programme possibilities to the radio station (Rice, 1972 : 46-47). This medium will reach individuals who often are not book-oriented.

As far as library publicity through the medium of television goes, appearances by librarians will almost always be in the form of interviews. Again, answers should be kept brief.

Harrison (1982 : 54) observes that librarians have not yet made sufficient use of radio and television in their PR programmes and he urges us to make more use of these compelling media. From a South African perspective, a recent programme on Agenda (20 September 1992) portrayed the important role that public libraries could play in squatter areas. Perhaps it is easier for public libraries to obtain such coverage on television because they would be able to link it to a social programme ; whereas for academic libraries, radio coverage could be more appropriate. The message that emanated from the above programme was indeed very positive, viz. that libraries would continue to play a role in the new South Africa, which amounted to pro-active PR. This is an example of an institution that was quick on the uptake ; while the NEPI (National Education Policy Investigation) was still in progress, already a public library seized the opportunity to get the message across that libraries were important. This could be linked to Skinner & Von Essen's statement (1991 : 25) that PR is there right from the start. Also the relevance of Figure 5 can be seen here with all other functions such as marketing, advertising, etc. stemming from the base function - PR.

It is interesting to note also that some academic libraries have on occasion been given radio coverage, for example, Mr. G.H. Haffajee of the University of Natal, Durban Library was interviewed on two occasions (28 and 30 August 1990) by Radio Lotus to discuss library matters (Personal communication).

Also, it is commonly known that at least one South African university library (UNISA) offers radio programmes to its students because of their geographical distribution.

6.7 Summary of chapter

- This chapter examines the practical application of public relations techniques with special reference to the publicity approach to services (as opposed to the personal approach which was examined in the previous chapter).
- There are a number of promotion devices such as news releases, displays, posters, etc. that a library could make use of in order to encourage and motivate library users and to facilitate the use of the library.
- Media such as print publicity and the various tools through which it can be exercised, such as library newsletters, bulletins, annual reports, bookmarks, service leaflets, etc., have been discussed at some length and their relevance to Figure 5 shown.
- These tools are considered to be very valuable PR tools in that they are intended to make users aware of the various services, special collections, special events and projects that the library offers or is involved in.

- Other channels of printed communication such as pro forma letters and cards, the telephone directory and correspondence (which, although they have been dealt with in an earlier chapter), have been briefly mentioned again because of their importance as ways of practising good PR. This is so because the utmost tact and diplomacy are required in dealing with the public.
- Visual presentations, including display publicity and exhibitions, have been discussed as important tools to project information or ideas to the viewer and to help the public see the library in a better light.
- Signs and signage which are intended to help patrons locate material, information sources and services are regarded as highly effective ways of getting patrons oriented to the library layout as well as to library operations.
- The importance of directional signs has been addressed. It has been noted that assistance in the stacks is necessary ; displays near the catalogues could offer explanations on its use.
- Signs should be placed where they would most benefit the user. In this regard, it has been acknowledged that there is little purpose in having good collections if people do not know about them or if they cannot locate them.
- The audio-visual approach, including video technology, films, tape-slide presentations and visual aids, such as wall-charts, posters, photographs and transparencies have been discussed as important aids in promoting the library.
- Relations with the media, including newspapers, radio and television have been discussed as excellent mass media channels through which actual as well as potential patrons can be reached.

- In conclusion, it could be said that librarians owe it to their users to make library products and collections readily and easily available ; neither libraries nor librarians would be in existence were it not for users.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7. A Survey of Public Relations Practices at University and Technikon Libraries in South Africa.

7.1 Introduction

As has been stated in chapter one, public relations affects almost all of us in our interaction with others. Chapter two points out that, within the library context, this interaction is essentially the art of relating to or communicating with one's public(s). As we are reminded in chapter three, all libraries are involved in communication to some extent or another and public relations could be used as a tool to facilitate this process. Chapter three also indicates that in order to plan for and implement any programme of action, strategic planning becomes necessary. However, in order to give the library a sense of direction, there should be a clear-cut statement of its aims and objectives, as has been pointed out in chapter four. Having determined the goals and objectives of academic libraries, chapters five and six show how strategies could be determined and be put into action, viz. by means of the personalized and publicity approaches.

It should also be noted that in the constantly changing socio-economic and political climates characteristic of academic libraries in South Africa, libraries ought to do everything in their power to allow users to make optimum use of resources and to try to meet and satisfy user needs. In view of this fact, I have been motivated to ascertain what exactly university and technikon libraries are doing to make users aware of the library and its services and to what extent PR is practised at these libraries.

7.2 Methodology

As mentioned in chapter one, a survey was conducted from July-October 1992, among all university and technikon libraries in South Africa, including the T.V.B.C. states which gave a total of 34 academic libraries.

A letter (Appendix 1) explaining the aims of the study accompanied the questionnaire that was sent to all these libraries.

A month after the questionnaires were posted, a 29.41% response had been received. A further period of two weeks was allowed for late arrivals as there was considerable interruption to postal services in a few areas due to various socio-political factors.

A follow-up letter proved highly effective, and a further 32.35% response was received.

The libraries that still had not responded to the questionnaire, were reminded by way of several telephone calls. Only then was it discovered that 8.82% of libraries had not received either the first or second letter. Questionnaires were then faxed to these libraries together with a copy of the letter.

Approximately two-and-a half months after the original distribution of the questionnaires, a further 17.65% of responses was received, bringing the total response up to 79.41% which was considered adequate for the purpose of the survey (see table 1 below).

In addition, telephone calls were made to and samples of written/printed correspondence were examined from three university and two technikon libraries in Natal, and two technikon libraries in other provinces to conduct an informal

study of oral and written communication in academic libraries. This was done in order to support my theory on the aspects of communication that academic libraries have to come to grips with.

7.2.1 Oral and written communication : informal study

Certain criteria were applied to test oral and written communication :

- the tone of voice and manner in which calls were answered, i.e. friendliness, helpfulness and or other qualities that were conveyed,
- efficiency of communication channels, i.e. whether the message was relayed properly or not,
- time taken for calls to be answered, and
- promptness of reply/return of call.

It was found that of the seven academic libraries that were tested, three libraries (42.86%) conveyed a sense of friendliness and helpfulness in their manner and voice. 28.57% did not relay the message properly and 14.28% did not convey the message at all. The time taken to answer calls was in the region of 30 seconds to 3 minutes. 57.14% redirected calls (at least twice) to other departments/persons in the library because they were not sure who to direct the query to. 28.57% even referred me to other libraries. Needless to say, there was considerable frustration on my part :

- (a) when libraries took 2-3 minutes to answer the call, and
- (b) when I was kept on hold while the call was being redirected from one department/person to another.

On the positive side, I must mention that one of the institutions that referred me to another, did so in such a polite manner that I did not mind the referral.

Apart from telephone etiquette, written correspondence, such as internal notices, annual reports, newsletters, information bulletins and pro forma letters and postcards from various local institutions, including three university and two technikon libraries, were examined to test for conciseness, clarity, ambiguity, tone, suitability of wording, user-friendliness, etc.

It was found that, generally, newsletters that were issued by libraries were of a conversational, user-friendly nature, informing their publics of news like new appointments, library hours, policies regarding certain collections in the library, conferences attended, visits/talks by librarians (locally and abroad), and innovations in the library, such as the introduction of new services.

Annual reports, like newsletters, are important PR documents of the library. From those examined, it appeared that this report details the events in the library, thus serving as a communication tool between the Chief Librarian/Library Director and the various publics of the academic library, such as university/technikon executive, the academic, library and administrative staff, alumni, other libraries, etc. Information bulletins were brief, providing a clear outline of services and collections of particular libraries.

Internal memos from three of the institutions mentioned were done in a somewhat haphazard way, for example, little consideration was given to layout and typography, which gave these memos a clumsy appearance. Also, the tone of the memo seemed abrupt in one instance, for example, the phrase used was "it has come to my attention that ..." which conveyed a sense of authoritativeness and possibly anger. This could have been phrased as follows : "due to certain circumstances, it would no longer be possible to ..." or "please be advised that ...". These kinds of phrases 'soften' the tone of the letter and avoid abrasiveness.

With regard to pro forma letters and postcards, on the whole, they seemed to be user-friendly, using words like "kindly return ...", "please ensure ...", "please contact ...", "we regret ..." which convey a sense of politeness or even diplomacy. However, at two of the institutions examined, the wording/tone of the postcards seemed rather abrupt, for example, with regard to overdue reminders, the very first line read as follows : "the following journals are overdue and the fine is increasing at a rate of ..." This sounds rather unfriendly and tactless. Written correspondence should reflect a user-oriented approach and, as has been pointed out by Edsall (1980 : 29) in the section on written correspondence (chapter three), since overdue notices do not always go down well with users, we should try to "sugar" them a bit.

Incidentally, upon examination of these samples of correspondence, it was discovered that two local institutions had exactly the same wording on one of their postcards. It makes one wonder who stole who's idea !

The informal testing of aspects of oral and written communication showed that these aspects justified a separate investigation from a more psychological perspective, and they were, therefore, not pursued any further. The present investigation concerned itself mainly with managerial aspects of PR such as the theoretical nature of PR in its various perspectives from a management, planning and communication point of view, the goals and objectives of academic libraries from a promotional point of view, and action strategies to put the above into practice.

7.3 Analysis of survey data

It should be noted that, although certain questions required a rating of responses on a scale of 1-6 (with 1 being the highest order of priority), the graphs are only indicative of responses/ratings actually received. Hence it may be found that the scale varies from graph to graph. Nil responses/ratings are reflected in the analysis below the graphs and are also included in the tables. Some percentages were rounded off to the nearest two decimal points.

With regard to questions that included a rating scale (responses reflected in graphs), it was decided to calculate the percentages based on the actual responses received for those particular questions. For other questions (responses reflected in tables), it was decided to calculate percentages based on the total response to the questionnaire itself.

Questions 1-4 were formulated with the aim of securing background information about the institutions that were being surveyed. Tables 1-6 provide an overview (lowest, highest and average) of the number of institutions that responded, the size of their bookstock, and the size of population served in terms of the ratios of academic staff : student : library staff. It was decided to use tables to best reflect the comparison of the above factors.

Question 1 : Name of your library ...

The names of the institutions to which the questionnaires were sent can be found in chapter one.

<i>Table showing number of questionnaires sent and responses received.</i>			
Institutions	Questionnaires sent	Responses received	%
Universities	22	17	77.27
Technikons	12	10	83.33
Overall	34	27	79.41

Table 1

An overall 20.59% of institutions (5 universities and 2 technikons) did not respond to the survey.

Question 2 : Size of bookstock ...

<i>Table providing an overview of the size of the collections of the institutions involved.</i>			
Institutions	average	highest	lowest
Universities	418785	1127415	30000
Technikons	28510	45000	14900
Overall	223648		

Table 2

The **bookstock** range varies considerably amongst universities and also amongst technikons. At universities, using the averages, the ratio of bookstock to students is approximately 25:1 and for technikons it is approximately 2.5:1. An overall average for academic institutions is 16:1. This reflects the vast difference in ratios of bookstock between university and technikon libraries, with universities being far higher than the average and technikons falling way below the average.

Question 3 : Size of population served ...

3.1 Students ...

Table showing the size of student population served.			
Institutions	average	highest	lowest
Universities	16616	119985	2500
Technikons	11670	52000	200
Overall	14143		

Table 3

Even though there is a difference in **student numbers** at universities and technikons, it is not as significant as the differences in the ratios of bookstock for universities and technikons.

3.2 Academic staff ...

3.3 Non-academic staff ...

Table showing academic/non-academic staff numbers.						
Institutions	average		highest		lowest	
	acad	non-acad	acad	non-acad	acad	non-acad
Universities	1133	928	11000	2922	200	50
Technikons	242	233	450	400	90	100
Overall	688	581				

Table 4

There is also a vast difference between universities and technikons in terms of **academic staff** numbers. As can be expected this will also be influenced by the size of the institution and the number of students. Although there is also a significant difference in **non-academic** staff numbers between universities and technikons, the difference is not quite as high as for academic staff.

Question 4 : Library staff

4.1 Total number of full-time staff ...

4.2 Total number of part-time staff ...

4.3 Total number of other library staff (eg. student assistants) ...

<i>Table showing numbers of full-time, part-time and other library staff.</i>									
Institutions	average			highest			lowest		
	f/t	p/t	other	f/t	p/t	other	f/t	p/t	other
Universities	79	12	16	222	36	65	24	0	0
Technikons	19	2	3	25	6	8	10	0	0
Overall	49	7	10	-			-		

Table 5

There is also a considerable difference in numbers of **full-time library staff** at universities compared to technikons, the ratio being about 4 : 1. The ratio of **part-time staff** at universities and technikons is 6 : 1. Universities also seem to have a greater number of **other library staff** in comparison with technikons.

Question 4.4 : Total number of staff who interact directly with users ...

<i>Table showing numbers of library staff who interact directly with users.</i>			
Institutions	average	highest	lowest
Universities	50	181	12
Technikons	12	18	4
Overall	31	-	-

Table 6

Of an average total of 91 (79+12, table 5) full-time and part-time library staff at universities, an average of 50 staff (table 6) interact directly with users (i.e. 54.94%) ; while at technikons, of an average of 21 (19+2, table 5) full-time and part-time staff, 12 staff (table 6) interact directly with users (i.e. 57.14%). Thus, it seems that the smaller the number of staff the higher the percentage of interaction with users, as can be noted from the analysis at technikons.

Also, when one compares the average number of **library staff who interact directly with users**, to the average number of students being served, the ratio is 1 : 456. With reference to universities the ratio is 1 : 332, and for technikons it is 1 : 972. There is a 293.00% difference in the ratios of library staff/user interaction between universities and technikons.

Question 5 : Do you think a University / Technikon library needs a PR programme ?

<i>Table presenting responses to a simple 'yes'/'no' type of question as to whether universities / technikons needed PR programmes.</i>		
Institutions	yes	%
Universities	17	100
Technikons	10	100
Overall	27	100

Table 7

The 27 institutions that responded to this question showed unanimous agreement that **academic libraries needed a PR programme.**

Question 6 : There are many varying definitions of PR. Please describe briefly what your Library's perception of the concept is ...

This question was an open-ended one. Most of the responses (some summarized/edited), were included and duplicates eliminated. The views expressed essentially involved the enhancement of the image of the library, the promotion of the library and its services through personal and other forms of publicity, such as advertising, and communication with various user groups. These become evident upon examination of the views expressed below.

- To highlight the facilities of the library service as an integral part of the academic process of technikon education and enriching the growth of students ;
- A tool used to create, maintain and promote a positive image of the library and information services, both locally and externally using a good device as the main vehicle ;
- A planned programme to promote the library among its users to make them fully aware of the whole spectrum of services provided ; To urge lecturers and students to make optimum use of the library ;
- Public relations belong in all libraries ; it is everybody's job, and cannot be considered a separate activity apart from the total library operation ;
- A strategic marketing plan or promotion scheme of the library in order to find out what its users need ; to inform the users about available services/resources ;
- To encourage functional integration with faculty and students on all relevant matters plus conscious evaluation of the state of the relationships (in a survey and quantitatively) and continual corrective counselling ;
- PR normally consists of actions directed outside the institution to create awareness of the work of the

institution ;

- Public relations is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its different publics ;
- PR is the attempt to present the library in the best possible way to users/potential users and involves various means of communication, for example, advertising what library offers, giving lectures, tours, etc. ;
- The proper/positive way of interacting with library users to avoid turning them away from the library and to create a positive perception of the library ;
- It is a communication effort to influence the various publics of the library favourably towards the library and its services ;
- To communicate our functions and role to the community at large and also to our clients in the institution. (Many of our students have limited library background) ;
- To promote the library through direct contact with users (students and lecturers) by the Subject Librarians ;
- To facilitate contact and the effective rendering of services and transaction of business between the library and its users as well as other relevant people and organizations and, in so doing, to assist in the achievement of the library's mission ;
- To advertize the library and its services by means of personal contact and information retrieval ;
- To provide good facilities and services that will advertize

themselves ; make those known where necessary ; keep top management and Council informed of goals, achievements and needs ; make use of promoting opportunities to various publics ; maintain good relations with other libraries, inter alia, by serving on regional and national professional library bodies ;

- The purpose of public relations is to heighten awareness of the library in the community, to promote its services and build a positive image of its informational role ;
- To introduce the library to its users and to orientate users how to use the library ;
- To promote/advertize the library's facilities and services available to the users ; attend to the needs and requirements of the users as well as the library staff ; promote a high level of inter-relationship between staff and users.

Public relations has been defined in chapter two as being of a dualistic nature, i.e. identifying user needs and wants, and keeping the public informed ; however, it appears from the above definitions that this dualistic aspect is not always recognized. PR is treated from either points of view, but rarely from a combined one.

Question 7 : In your Library, which of the following, do you practise ?

7.1 : A formal public relations programme (planned programme - deliberate effort involved)

7.2 : An informal public relations programme (no planned PR involved - done when necessary)

7.3 : No PR at all

Table providing an overview of whether libraries practise planned, unplanned or no PR at all.							
Question number		University		Technikon		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
7.1	Yes	8	47.06	1	10.00	9	33.33
7.1	No	9	52.94	8	80.00	17	62.96
7.1	No response	-	-	1	10.00	1	3.70
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
7.2	Yes	12	70.59	9	90.00	21	77.78
7.2	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
7.2	No response	5	29.41	1	10.00	6	22.22
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
7.3	Yes	-	-	1	10.00	1	3.70
7.3	No	8	47.06	5	50.00	13	48.15
7.3	No response	9	52.94	4	40.00	13	48.15
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100

Table 8

47.06% of the universities which responded to this question (7.1) indicated that they practise a **formal** public relations programme as compared with 10.00% of the technikons. 70.59% of universities practise an **informal** public relations programme as compared to 90.00% of the technikons. Overall 77.78% of the academic institutions practise informal public relations.

48.15% of the respondents to this question (7.3) answered in the negative, indicating that at least some form of public relations is practised at most university and technikon libraries. This is supported by the reply to question 7.2 (above) where 77.78% of the academic institutions indicated that they practise informal public relations.

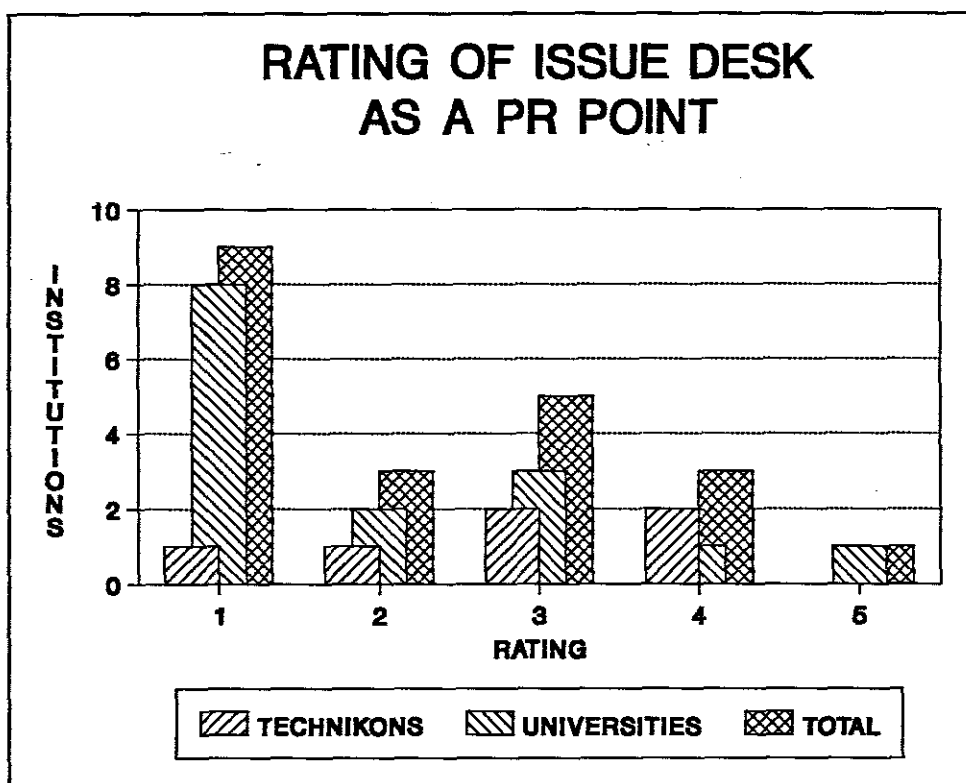
It is also clear that most universities and technikons (77.78%) practise **informal** PR to a far greater extent than they do **formal** PR (33.33%). The responses to these questions are very relevant to Wilson's (1972 : 113) widely accepted definition in chapter two, that PR should be a continuous and planned process. It is interesting to note that, overall, only

33.33% of academic institutions practise some form of formal public relations, as opposed to 62.96% who do not follow a formal programme.

Question 8 : If you have a PR programme, which are the major areas towards which your programme is aimed ?
(Please number the boxes on a scale of 1-6 with 1 being the highest order of priority).

For a clearer presentation of the responses to the aspects dealt with in Question 8, it was decided to use bar-graphs. At the end of these, it was decided to provide tables to show a comparison of the more popularly rated services, as well as to show the different ratings between universities and technikons.

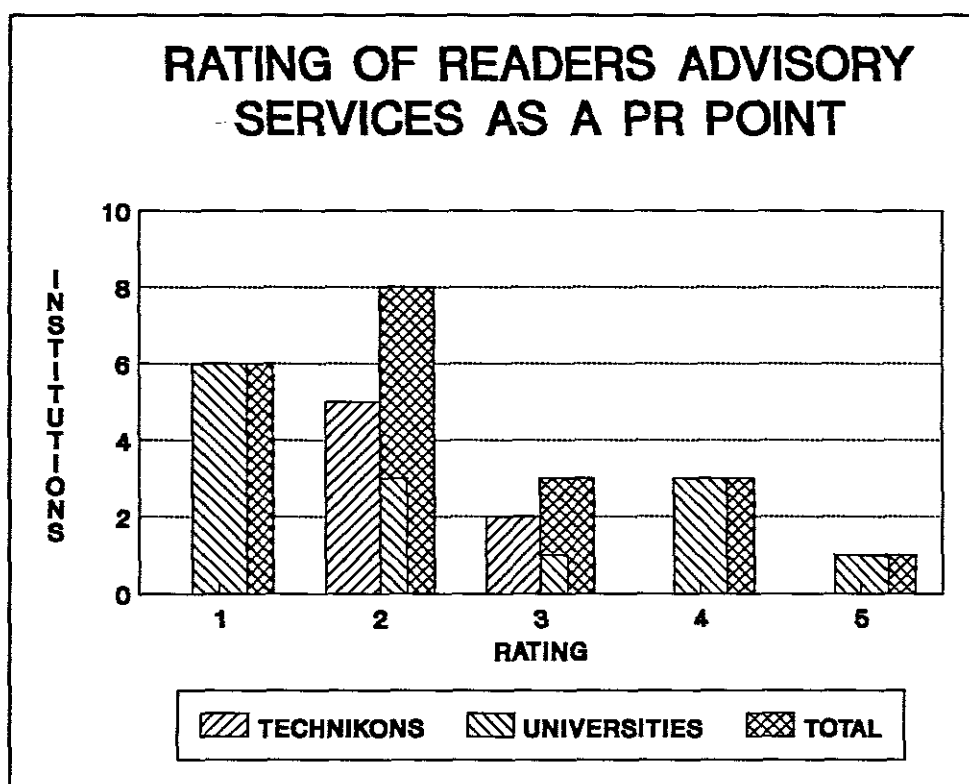
8.1 : Circulation / Issue Desk ...



Graph 1

A total of 42.86% of academic institutions (53.33% universities and 16.67% technikons) who responded rated the **Issue Desk** as quite an important area (high overall priority) towards which their PR programme was directed. 2 universities (11.76%) and 4 technikons (40.00%) did not respond to this question.

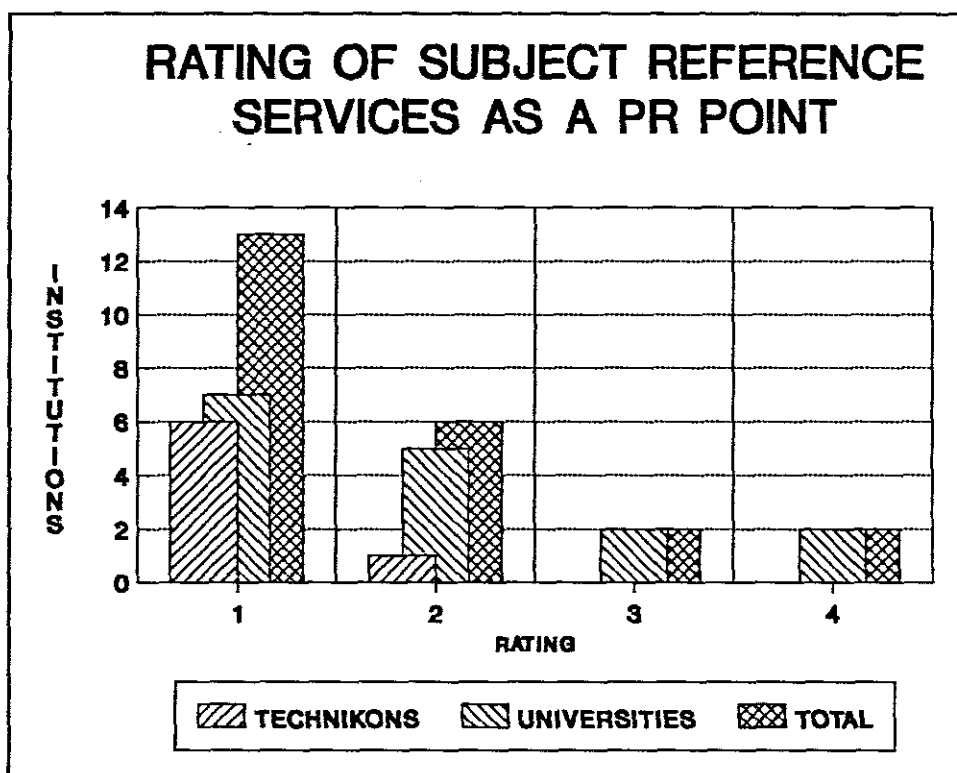
8.2 : Reader's advisory services ...



Graph 2

A total of only 28.57% of the institutions (42.86% universities) who responded rated the **Readers' advisory services** as an important area towards which their PR programme was directed. 3 universities (17.65%) and 3 technikons (30.00%) did not respond to this question.

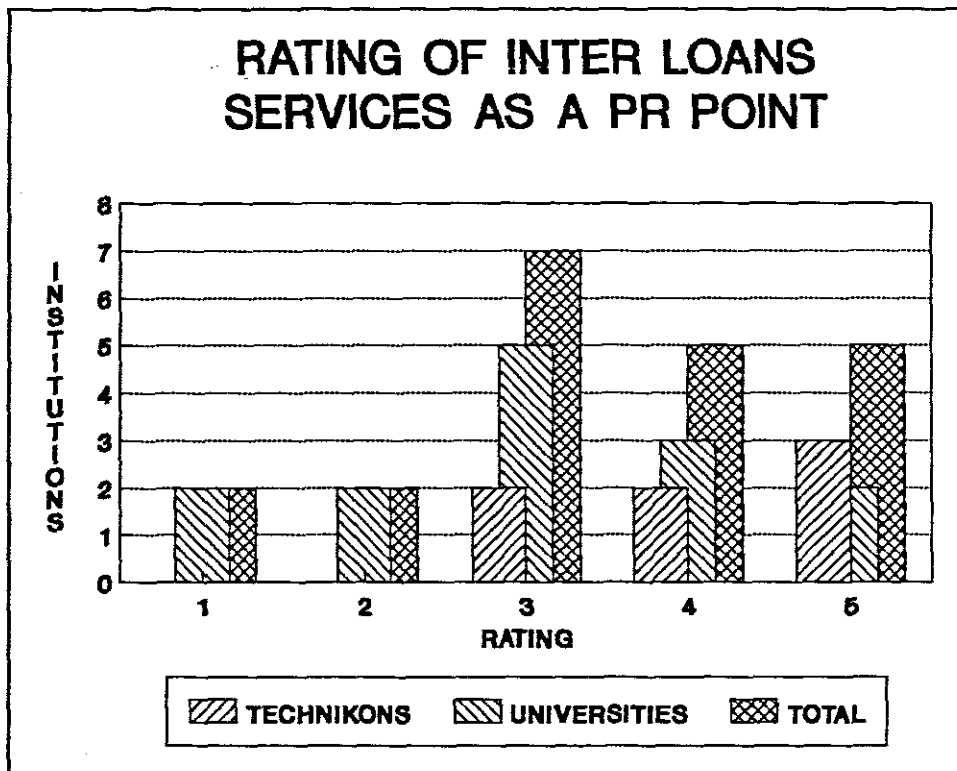
8.3 : Subject reference services ...



Graph 3

A total of 56.52% of academic institutions (43.75% universities and 85.71% technikons) who responded rated the **Subject reference services** as a major area (high overall priority) towards which their PR programme was directed. 1 university (5.88%) and 3 technikons (30.00%) did not respond to this question.

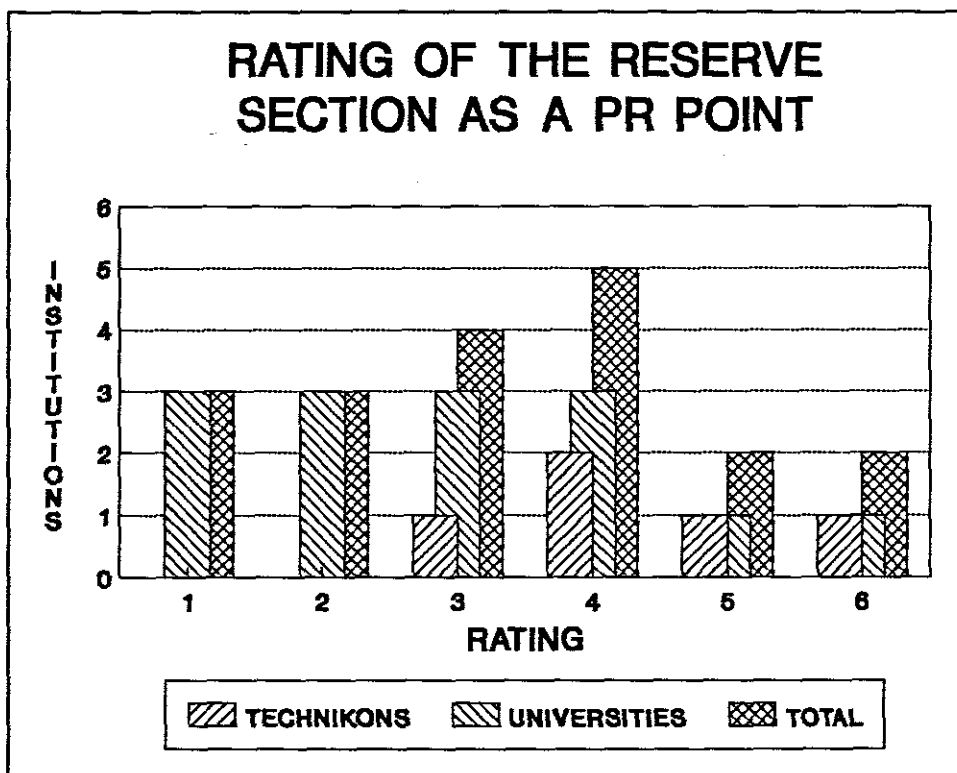
8.4 : Interlibrary-loans ...



Graph 4

Only 10.00% of academic institutions (14.29% universities) rated **Interlibrary-loans** as a major area towards which their PR programme was directed. 3 universities (17.65%) and 3 technikons (30.00%) did not respond to this question.

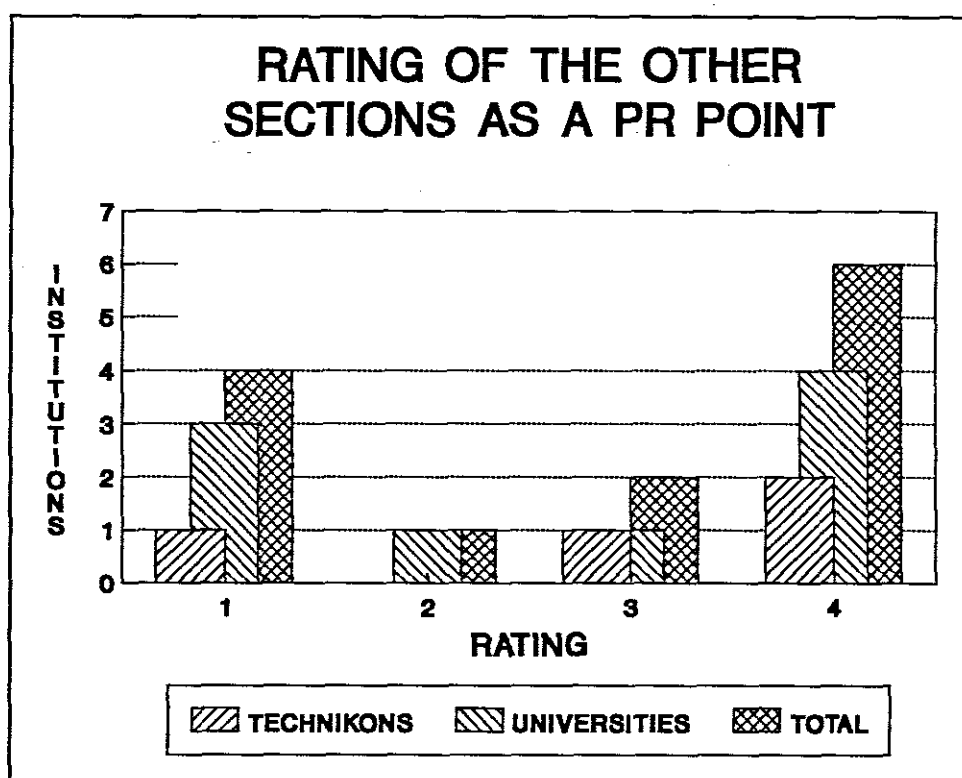
8.5 : Reserve ...



Graph 5

An average of 15.79% of academic institutions (21.43% universities) rated the **Reserve section** as an important area towards which their PR programme was directed. 3 universities (17.65%) and 5 technikons (50.00%) did not respond to this question.

8.6 : Other (specify) ...



Graph 6

A total of 30.77% of institutions who responded to this question rated 'other' areas such as :

- audio-visual (11.11%),
- bibliographic instruction programmes (22.22%),
- displays (20.00%),
- orientation (20.00%),
- PR with technical staff aimed at increasing service culture (20.00%),
- periodicals department (11.11%),
- research (11.11%),
- students and academic staff (33.33%),
- University Librarian's reception desk (11.11%);

as additional areas towards which their PR programmes are directed. 8 universities (47.06%) and 6 technikons (60.00%) did not respond to this question.

Thus, the 'other' areas to which universities seem to attach significant PR value are to student and staff programmes (33.33%) and bibliographic instruction programmes (22.22%) ; whereas technikons rate displays, orientation and PR aimed at service culture as having equal importance (20.00%).

The following tables (9-11) show, in order of importance, the major areas (overall, by universities and by technikons, respectively) towards which institutions direct their PR programmes :

Tables showing comparative rating of areas towards which institutions direct their PR programmes :

Overall

Subject reference services	56.52%
Circulation/issue desk	42.86%
Other	30.77%
Readers' advisory services	28.57%

Table 9

Universities

Circulation/issue desk	53.33%
Subject reference services	43.75%
Readers' advisory services	42.86%
Other	33.33%

Table 10

Technikons

Subject reference services	85.71%
Other	25.00%
Circulation/issue desk	16.67%

Table 11

Question 9 : How did you arrive at this practice ?

(Please tick as many boxes as are applicable)

9.1 : Brainstorming ...

9.2 : Observation of user behaviour ...

9.3 : Suggestions by staff members ...

9.4 : Suggestions by users ...

9.5 : Was an opinion survey conducted ? ...

9.6 : Other (specify) ...

Table showing the various methods used by institutions to arrive at certain PR practices.							
Question number		University		Techikon		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
9.1	Yes	7	41.18	5	50.00	12	44.44
9.1	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
9.1	No response	10	58.82	5	50.00	15	55.56
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
9.2	Yes	14	82.35	7	70.00	21	77.78
9.2	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
9.2	No response	3	17.65	3	30.00	6	22.22
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
9.3	Yes	15	88.24	5	50.00	20	74.07
9.3	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
9.3	No response	2	11.76	5	50.00	7	25.93
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
9.4	Yes	14	82.35	3	30.00	17	62.96
9.4	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
9.4	No response	3	17.65	7	70.00	10	37.04
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
9.5	Yes	5	29.41	2	20.00	7	25.93
9.5	No	-	-	1	10.00	1	3.70
9.5	No response	12	70.59	7	70.00	19	70.37
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
9.6	Yes	3	17.65	-	-	3	11.11
9.6	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
9.6	No response	14	82.35	10	100	24	88.89
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100

Table 12

Among the various techniques used to arrive at a PR practice, **suggestions by staff members** was rated the highest (88.24%), followed by **observation of user behaviour** and **suggestions by users** which were rated equally (82.35%) by universities, while for technikons, **observation of user behaviour** (70.00%), followed by **suggestions by staff members** (50.00%) were the significant options. An overall 44.44% of the respondents use **brainstorming** as a technique to arrive at PR practice.

It is interesting to note that only a low percentage (25.93%) of institutions that responded to the survey, use **opinion surveys** as a means of arriving at certain PR practices. Of this, 29.41% are universities and 20% are technikons ; while 17.65 % of universities use '**other**' means of arriving at certain PR practices. Examples of '**other**' include :

- discussions with other librarians,
- requests from academic departments,
- students' suggestion box,
- personal experience, and experience of librarians elsewhere.

To summarize the responses to question 9, it appears, overall, that academic institutions rely quite heavily on **observation of user behaviour** (77.78%) and **suggestions by staff members** (74.07%) to arrive at certain PR practices ; with **suggestions by users** (62.96%) and **brainstorming sessions** (44.44%) having third and fourth priority respectively. It appears that technikons lead in using 'brainstorming'sessions' (50.00%) as a technique, as opposed to 41.18% of universities that use it. It is disappointing that only 25.93% of academic institutions use **opinion surveys** to arrive at certain practices.

Question 10 : Which of the following activities are practised in your Library ? (Please tick as many boxes as are applicable)

10.1 : Compilation of bibliographies on various subjects

10.2 : Scanning journal articles for users ...

10.3 : Online searching for users ...

<i>Table indicating an overview of the more specialized services offered by academic libraries.</i>							
Question number		University		Technikon		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
10.1	Yes	13	76.47	8	80.00	21	77.78
10.1	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.1	No response	4	23.53	2	20.00	6	22.22
T o t a l		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.2	Yes	8	47.06	7	70.00	15	55.56
10.2	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.2	No response	9	52.94	3	30.00	12	44.44
T o t a l		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.3	Yes	16	94.12	8	80.00	24	88.89
10.3	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.3	No response	1	5.88	2	20.00	3	11.11
T o t a l		17	100	10	100	27	100

Table 13

Technikons seem to practise the **scanning of journals** to a much larger extent (70.00%) than universities (47.06%). One reason for this is probably because the clientele that demands this kind of service is smaller at technikons, and that therefore, library staff here get to know their needs more easily.

Technikons also appear to be more involved in the **compilation of bibliographies** (80.00%) than universities (76.47%). Even with regard to **conducting online searching for users**, although universities seem to be slightly more involved (94.12%), technikons (80.00%) are not far behind.

Question 10.4 : Regular distribution of ...

- 10.4.1 : information bulletins on various subjects ...**
- 10.4.2 : informative bookmarks (library hours,
loan policy, summary of classification
scheme) ...**
- 10.4.3 : pamphlets on various collections and
services ...**
- 10.4.4 : library annual reports ...**
- 10.4.5 : accessions lists ...**
- 10.4.6 : library newsletter ...**
- 10.4.7 : publisher's catalogues to academics ...**
- 10.4.8 : contents pages of journals to departments ...**

Table presenting an overview of the various forms of 'print' communication that libraries make use of in promoting themselves.

Question number		University		Technikon		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
10.4.1	Yes	6	35.29	4	40.00	10	37.04
10.4.1	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.4.1	No response	11	64.71	6	60.00	17	62.96
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.4.2	Yes	8	47.06	6	60.00	14	51.85
10.4.2	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.4.2	No response	9	52.94	4	40.00	13	48.15
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.4.3	Yes	13	76.47	7	70.00	20	74.07
10.4.3	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.4.3	No response	4	23.53	3	30.00	7	25.93
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.4.4	Yes	15	88.24	8	80.00	23	85.19
10.4.4	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.4.4	No response	2	11.76	2	20.00	4	14.81
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.4.5	Yes	11	64.71	8	80.00	19	70.37
10.4.5	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.4.5	No response	6	35.29	2	20.00	8	29.63
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.4.6	Yes	10	58.82	4	40.00	14	51.85
10.4.6	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.4.6	No response	7	41.18	6	60.00	13	48.15
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.4.7	Yes	16	94.12	10	100	26	96.30
10.4.7	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.4.7	No response	1	5.88	-	-	1	3.70
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.4.8	Yes	16	94.12	10	100	26	96.30
10.4.8	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.4.8	No response	1	5.88	-	-	1	3.70
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100

Table 14

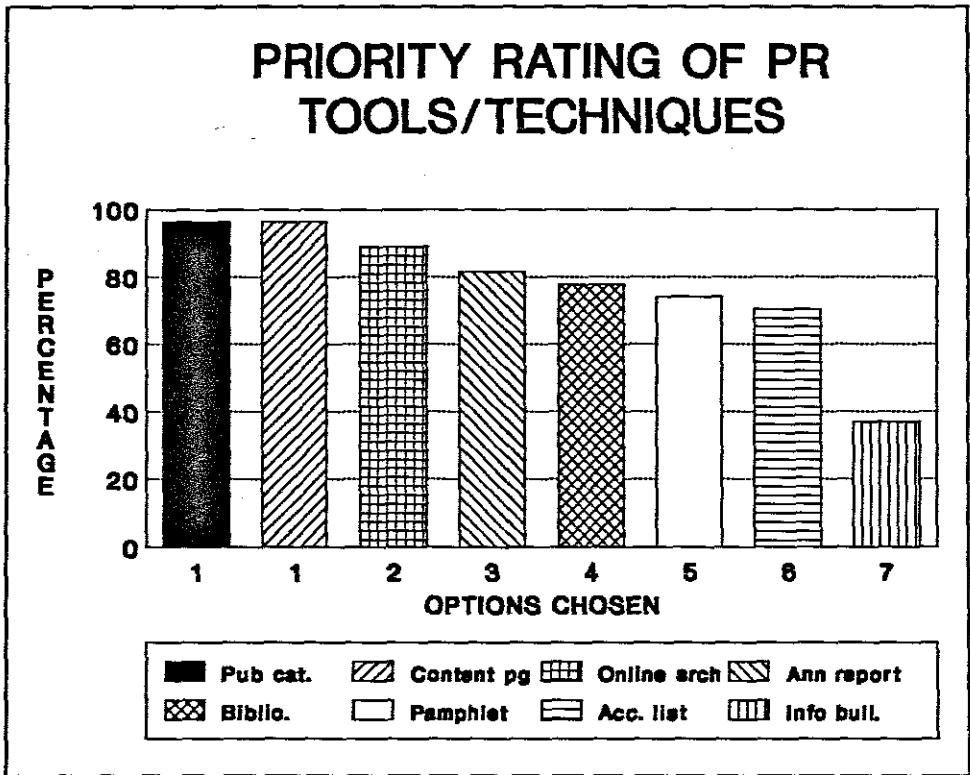
Of the institutions that responded to the survey, only 35.29% universities and 40.00% technikons (overall 37.04%) regularly distribute **information bulletins** on various subjects. It appears that technikons practise regular distribution of **informative bookmarks** to a larger extent (60.00%) than universities (47.06%).

With regard to the distribution of **pamphlets on various collections and services**, both universities and technikons seem to be involved to more or less the same extent (76.47% and 70.00% respectively). As far as the distribution of **annual reports** go, one would have expected it to be 100.00% ; however, it seems that an average of 85.19% of academic libraries distribute annual reports.

It appears that technikons are more involved with the distribution of **accessions lists** (80.00%) than universities (64.71%). Of the institutions that responded to the survey, only 51.85% regularly distribute **library newsletters**. One reason is probably the cost of producing them. However, academic libraries should seriously weigh this factor against the PR values of a useful publicity tool such as the newsletter.

It seems that the regular distribution of both **publisher's catalogues** and **contents pages of journals** to academic departments is a well established trend at universities (94.12%) as well as technikons (100.00%). Obviously librarians at both types of institutions are aware of the value of maintaining such constant liaison with academics in order to ascertain their research needs.

Graph showing comparative ratings of various services.



Graph 7

Graph 7 (above) shows high priority services to be the circulation of **publisher's catalogues** and **contents pages of journals** to academic departments, both of which are practised at 96.30% of academic institutions ; followed by the conducting of **online searches** (88.89%) and distribution of **annual reports** (85.19%). Next in the line of priority are the compilation of **bibliographies** (77.78%), distribution of **pamphlets** on various collections and services (74.07%) and distribution of **accession lists** (70.37%). It appears that the distribution of **information bulletins** is the lowest priority among academic institutions at an overall 37.04%.

Question 10.5 : Organizing of ...

10.5.1 : conferences ...

10.5.2 : workshops ...

10.5.3 : displays ...

10.5.4 : exhibitions ...

<i>Table reflecting extra PR activities that institutions might be involved in to promote their image in the public eye.</i>							
Question number		University		Technikon		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
10.5.1	Yes	4	23.53	3	30.00	7	25.93
10.5.1	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.5.1	No response	13	76.47	7	70.00	20	74.07
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.5.2	Yes	12	70.59	5	50.00	17	62.96
10.5.2	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.5.2	No response	5	29.41	5	50.00	10	37.04
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.5.3	Yes	14	82.35	10	100	24	88.89
10.5.3	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.5.3	No response	3	17.65	-	-	3	11.11
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.5.4	Yes	13	76.47	8	80.00	21	77.78
10.5.4	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.5.4	No response	4	23.53	2	20.00	6	22.22
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100

Table 15

Only 23.53% of universities and 30.00% of technikons are involved in the organizing of **conferences**. This, again, could be attributed to the cost factor that is normally associated with the organization and hosting of conferences. With regard to organizing of **workshops**, it seems that universities are involved to a larger extent (70.59%) than technikons (50.00%).

It seems that the organizing of **displays** is another area like

the circulation of publisher catalogues and contents pages, where both universities (82.35%) and, more especially, technikons set the trend. With regard to the organizing of **exhibitions**, technikons appear to show more initiative (80.00%) than universities (76.47%).

Overall, it seems that academic institutions are more involved with the organizing of **displays** (88.89%) and **exhibitions** (77.78%) than with **workshops** (62.96%), and least still, with **conferences** (25.93%).

Question 10.6 : Making provision for ...

- 10.6.1 : delivery of instructional material and equipment to lecture venues ...**
- 10.6.2 : notice boards for advertisements of coming events ...**
- 10.6.3 : conference facilities ...**
- 10.6.4 : videos and film shows ...**
- 10.6.5 : user suggestions box / system for feedback ...**

Table reflecting PR tactics that academic libraries could adopt to enhance their services.							
Question number		University		Technikon		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
10.6.1	Yes	3	17.65	4	40.00	7	25.93
10.6.1	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.6.1	No response	14	82.35	6	60.00	20	74.07
T o t a l		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.6.2	Yes	15	88.24	8	80.00	23	85.19
10.6.2	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.6.2	No response	2	11.76	2	20.00	4	14.81
T o t a l		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.6.3	Yes	8	47.06	8	80.00	16	59.26
10.6.3	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.6.3	No response	9	52.94	2	20.00	11	40.74
T o t a l		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.6.4	Yes	13	76.47	8	80.00	21	77.78
10.6.4	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.6.4	No response	4	23.53	2	20.00	6	22.22
T o t a l		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.6.5	Yes	9	52.94	5	50.00	14	51.85
10.6.5	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.6.5	No response	8	47.06	5	50.00	13	48.15
T o t a l		17	100	10	100	27	100

Table 16

Overall, only 25.93% of the respondents make provision for the delivery of **instructional material and equipment** to lecture venues. In contrast, an average of 85.19% make provision for **notice boards for advertisements** of coming events. With regard to the provision of **conference facilities**, technikons appear to be doing more in this regard (80.00%) compared to universities (47.06%). Both universities and technikons appear to make provision for **videos and film shows** to quite a large extent (76.47% and 80.00% respectively). As a service that is aimed at users, the response to the provision of **user suggestions boxes / system for feedback** is quite low (52.94% for universities and 50.00% for technikons).

As a way of increasing the library's PR role in campus affairs, it appears that most academic institutions make use of **notice boards for advertisements** of coming events (85.19%), followed by the screening of **videos and film shows** (77.78%). **Conference facilities** are provided at an overall 59.26% of institutions that responded to the survey; while 51.85% of these institutions make provision for **suggestions boxes** or other systems for feedback.

Question 10.7 : Orientation and instruction in the use of the Library for :

10.7.1 : students ...

10.7.2 : staff ...

<i>Table showing the extent to which orientation and instruction is carried out for students as well as staff.</i>							
Question number		University		Technikon		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
10.7.1	Yes	16	94.12	9	90.00	25	92.59
10.7.1	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.7.1	No response	1	5.88	1	10.00	2	7.41
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.7.2	Yes	15	88.24	10	100	25	92.59
10.7.2	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.7.2	No response	2	11.76	-	-	2	7.41
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100

Table 17

As could be expected, quite a high percentage (92.59%) of academic institutions are involved in **orientation and instruction** in the use of the library **for students as well as for staff**.

10.7.3 : tours ...

10.7.4 : posters ...

10.7.5 : exhibits ...

10.7.6 : formal lectures ...

10.7.7 : audio-visual programmes ...

10.7.8 : online user-education programmes ...

10.7.9 : other (specify) ...

Table showing the various ways in which orientation and instruction is conducted.							
Question number		University		Technikon		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
10.7.3	Yes	15	88.24	9	90.00	24	88.89
10.7.3	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.7.3	No response	2	11.76	1	10.00	3	11.11
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.7.4	Yes	6	35.29	3	30.00	9	33.33
10.7.4	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.7.4	No response	11	64.71	7	70.00	18	66.67
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.7.5	Yes	6	35.29	2	20.00	8	29.63
10.7.5	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.7.5	No response	11	64.71	8	80.00	19	70.37
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.7.6	Yes	14	82.35	8	80.00	22	81.48
10.7.6	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.7.6	No response	3	17.65	2	20.00	5	18.52
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.7.7	Yes	9	52.94	6	60.00	15	55.56
10.7.7	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.7.7	No response	8	47.06	4	40.00	12	44.44
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.7.8	Yes	6	35.29	1	10.00	7	25.93
10.7.8	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.7.8	No response	11	64.71	9	90.00	20	74.07
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.7.9	Yes	5	29.41	2	20.00	7	25.93
10.7.9	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.7.9	No response	12	70.59	8	80.00	20	74.07
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100

Table 18

From the range of activities that could be used to enhance

orientation programmes, it seems that **tours** are, overall, the most popular (88.89%) ; followed by **formal lectures** (81.48%) and **audio-visual presentations** (55.56%) ; while only 33.33% use **posters** and 29.63% **exhibits** to aid the conducting of orientation and instruction.

'Other' activities such as radio programmes, library and information skills workshops, informal lectures, intensive individual or small group instruction by staff on request, etc., overall, form only 25.93% of the content of orientation programmes.

Question 10.8 : Wearing of name tags by staff members so that they may be more easily identifiable to patrons ...

<i>Table showing the extent to which library staff are 'personalized'.</i>								
Institutions	No.	% Yes	No.	% No	No.	% No response	Total	Total %
Universities	5	29.41	1	5.88	11	64.71	17	100
Technikons	2	20.00	-	-	8	80.00	10	100
Overall	7	25.93	1	3.70	19	70.37	27	100

Table 19

An average of only 25.93% of academic libraries practise the wearing of **name tags** by staff members so that they are more easily identifiable to patrons. Gauging from this response, academic libraries do not seem to care significantly about humanizing their service.

Question 10.9 : Meetings / liaison between ...

10.9.1 : Library management and university executive ...

10.9.2 : Library management and other Library departments ...

10.9.3 : Library staff and faculty ...

10.9.4 : Library staff and student bodies ...

10.9.5 : Library staff and interest groups ...

Table presenting an overview of the various lines of communication that could be used to promote liaison between the library and some of its more important publics.							
Question number		University		Technikon		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
10.9.1	Yes	15	88.24	8	80.00	23	85.19
10.9.1	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.9.1	No response	2	11.76	2	20.00	4	14.81
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.9.2	Yes	16	94.12	7	70.00	23	85.19
10.9.2	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.9.2	No response	1	5.88	3	30.00	4	14.81
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.9.3	Yes	15	88.24	10	100.00	25	92.59
10.9.3	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.9.3	No response	2	11.76	-	-	2	7.41
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.9.4	Yes	12	70.59	5	50.00	17	62.96
10.9.4	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.9.4	No response	5	29.41	5	50.00	10	37.03
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.9.5	Yes	10	58.82	5	50.00	15	55.56
10.9.5	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.9.5	No response	7	41.18	5	50.00	12	44.44
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100

Table 20

Of the institutions that responded to the survey, a high overall percentage, i.e. 85.19%, conduct **meetings / liaison between library management and university/technikon executive** as well as **meetings / liaison between library management and other library departments**. There also seems to be a very high level of interaction **between library staff and faculty**

(92.59%) .

In contrast, for a service that is aimed at serving user needs, one would have expected 100.00% interaction between the library staff and student bodies, however, only 62.96% were involved in communication at this level. An even lower percentage of interaction prevails between library staff and interest groups (55.56%) .

Thus, it appears that on the levels of interaction between the library and other bodies, liaison between **library staff and faculty** predominates at academic institutions (92.59%) ; in contrast the interaction between **library staff and interest groups** seems to receive the least priority (55.56%) .

**Question 10.10 : Promotion of the Library by staff members
through ...**

- 10.10.1 : talks ...**
- 10.10.2 : presenting of papers ...**
- 10.10.3 : slide shows ...**
- 10.10.4 : videos ...**
- 10.10.5 : other (specify) ...**

Table showing the extent to which academic libraries are involved in personal promotion of the library and promotion by means of audio-visual and other means.

Question number		University		Technikon		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
10.10.1	Yes	12	70.59	7	70.00	19	70.37
10.10.1	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.10.1	No response	5	29.41	3	30.00	8	29.63
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.10.2	Yes	9	52.94	3	30.00	12	44.44
10.10.2	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.10.2	No response	8	47.06	7	70.00	15	55.56
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.10.3	Yes	4	23.53	3	30.00	7	25.93
10.10.3	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.10.3	No response	13	76.47	7	70.00	20	74.07
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.10.4	Yes	8	47.06	3	30.00	11	40.74
10.10.4	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.10.4	No response	9	52.94	7	70.00	16	59.26
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
10.10.5	Yes	4	23.53	4	40.00	8	29.63
10.10.5	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.10.5	No response	13	76.47	6	60.00	19	70.37
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100

Table 21

Of the institutions that responded to the survey, the giving of **talks** by staff members appears to have a high overall priority (70.37%) ; followed by **presenting of papers** (44.44%) and promotion through **videos** (40.74%) and **slide shows** (25.93%). 29.63% chose '**other**' methods which staff members use to promote the library.

Examples of 'other' activities include :

- CAI (computer-assisted instruction),
- direct contact with staff members of every faculty through

Subject Librarians,

- Friends of the Library which is a supportive society,
- representation of library on Senate/Senate committees by University Librarian,
- setting up exhibits on various international, national and local events, and
- visits to departments.

Question 10.11 : Please specify other activities your library may be practising ...

This question aimed at eliciting a holistic overview of all possible activities that libraries may be practising (even those that I might have omitted or not thought of). Some responses have been edited and duplicates eliminated.

- Initiating items in student newspaper and reacting to reports and letters in same. Supplying information to local press and radio at their request and ours ;
- Initiating information retrieval course ;
- Making our library venues available for staff meetings, class discussions outside regular lectures, student committee meetings and lectures by visiting lecturers ; write letters of welcome to all new staff members and invite them to the library ; write congratulatory letters to staff who have been promoted ;
- Media liaison - internal university publications as well as public media ;
- Publication of articles and notices about the library in internal university publications, scientific journals and newsletters of professional bodies (SAILIS) ;

- Students' projects are displayed at certain times in the library's exhibition room ;
- Subject reference librarians liaise with academic staff and post-graduate students (primarily Masters & Doctoral level) b.m.o. formal correspondence to invite users to make use of their services, to explain services and facilities available and to identify research and information needs ;
- Using information technology programme for public relations ;
- Very proactive service is being offered.

From the above it appears that academic libraries are becoming aware of the value of PR in promoting their services and facilities more actively than before.

**Question 11 : Which of the following directional signs does
your Library make use of ?**

- 11.1 : Location of OPAC terminals ...**
- 11.2 : Location of issue desk ...**
- 11.3 : Location of bookstacks ...**
- 11.4 : Location of periodicals ...**
- 11.5 : Location of card catalogues ...**
- 11.6 : Location of photocopying facilities ...**
- 11.7 : Location of receptionist/secretary ...**
- 11.8 : Location of subject/reference librarians ...**
- 11.9 : Location of interloans department ...**
- 11.10 : Summary of classification scheme used ...**
- 11.11 : Floorplans ...**
- 11.12 : Other ...**

Table indicating an overview of the various directional signs that are used by academic libraries in order to provide guidance to users.

Question number		University		Technikon		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
11.1	Yes	7	41.18	4	40.00	11	40.74
11.1	No response	10	58.82	6	60.00	16	59.26
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
11.2	Yes	13	76.47	8	80.00	21	77.78
11.2	No response	4	23.53	2	20.00	6	22.22
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
11.3	Yes	15	88.24	7	70.00	22	81.48
11.3	No response	2	11.76	3	30.00	5	18.52
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
11.4	Yes	15	88.24	8	80.00	23	85.19
11.4	No response	2	11.76	2	20.00	4	14.81
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
11.5	Yes	11	64.71	4	40.00	15	55.56
11.5	No response	6	35.29	6	60.00	12	44.44
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
11.6	Yes	16	94.12	7	70.00	23	85.19
11.6	No response	1	5.88	3	30.00	4	14.81
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
11.7	Yes	7	41.18	3	30.00	10	37.04
11.7	No response	10	58.82	7	70.00	17	62.96
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
11.8	Yes	14	82.35	7	70.00	21	77.78
11.8	No response	3	17.65	3	30.00	6	22.22
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
11.9	Yes	16	94.12	5	50.00	21	77.78
11.9	No response	1	5.88	5	50.00	6	22.22
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
11.10	Yes	12	70.59	8	80.00	20	74.07
11.10	No response	5	29.41	2	20.00	7	25.93
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
11.11	Yes	9	52.94	-	-	9	33.33
11.11	No response	8	47.06	10	100.00	18	66.67
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100
11.12	Yes	4	23.53	1	10.00	5	18.52
11.12	No response	13	76.47	9	90.00	22	81.48
Total		17	100	10	100	27	100

Table 22

With regard to questions 11.2-11.4, one would have expected an affirmative response of 100.00%. However, an average of only 77.78% use directional signs to indicate the location of the **issue desk**, 81.48% to indicate the location of **bookstacks**, and 85.19% to indicate the location of **periodicals**. Questions 11.1 and 11.5 are related in a sense, in that if libraries have fully computerised their catalogues, they presumably would not still have signs pointing to the card catalogue, and vice versa ; if they are still on the card system of catalogues, they would not have signs pointing to the location of OPAC terminals. The result was a fairly low percentage (40.74%) in the case of location of OPAC terminals, and 55.56% in the case of the card catalogue. On reflection, it appears that there might have been an omission on my part in that these particular questions were not made mutually exclusive to institutions.

Universities appear to be quite good at indicating the location of **photocopying services** (94.12%) compared to technikons (70.00%). This is probably because universities generally have larger numbers of students and therefore provide for more photocopiers than technikons; also, they are physically more widely spread out than technikons and hence the greater awareness for signage. An overall of only 37.04% use directional signs to indicate the location of **receptionist/secretary**. This could be an important area from a PR point of view - it is a source of help in any institution ; first impressions of the library could easily stem from here and it is disappointing that such a low percentage of libraries remember to highlight this area.

As a primary source of help and PR in the library, one would have expected 100.00% affirmative response to question 11.8 ; however, an overall of only 77.78% of the respondents use directional signs to indicate the location of **subject/reference librarians**. Of this, 82.35% are universities and 70% are technikons. One reason for this may be that some

academic libraries do not have such a service as yet, although, from personal observation, most places do.

With regard to **interlibrary-loans**, of the institutions that responded to the survey, 94.12% universities and 50.00% technikons use directional signs to indicate the location of the interloans department. One reason for the high percentage at university libraries is probably because it is a service that is well established because of many of its users being engaged in research ; whereas at technikons, from personal observation, not that many staff members/students are engaged in research.

More technikons seem to indicate the **classification scheme** used (80.00%) compared to universities (70.59%). Since the Dewey system is used by most libraries, it should be pointed out to users so that they know that books are arranged according to a system that they may already be familiar with.

Floorplans are very essential from a PR point of view. They convey to the user, at a glance, the layout of the library without him/her having to seek personal assistance. Yet, of the institutions that responded to the survey, only 52.94% of universities make provision for floorplans. It is disappointing that technikons have not taken an initiative in this regard.

'**Other**' directional signs to indicate the location of various services and facilities are used by 23.53% universities and 10.00% technikons.

Examples of 'other' include :

- electronic notice board for study collection (recommended books),
- location of lecture and study rooms,
- location of various departments in main library,
- signs pointing to the library on the campus, and

- signs for information points.

It would appear, overall, that the need for directional signs is recognized by the majority of institutions that responded to the survey, although one would have expected more attention to be paid to signs indicating location of OPAC terminals, bookstacks, subject reference librarians, etc. Directions to **periodicals** (85.19%) and **photocopying facilities** (85.19%) followed by directions to **bookstacks** (81.48%) appear to be the more popular or more important ones used by university libraries to a greater extent than technikons. The following areas have been given more or less equal prominence, viz. the **issue desk** (77.78%), **subject reference librarians** (77.78%), **interloans facilities** (77.78%) and the **classification scheme** (74.07%).

Question 12 : In your opinion, does the Library regard public relations as an important management function ?

Table showing the rating given to PR as a management function.								
Institutions	No.	% Yes	No.	% No	No.	% No response	Total	Total %
Universities	15	88.24	1	5.88	1	5.88	17	100
Technikons	9	90.00	-	-	1	10.00	10	100
Overall	24	88.89	1	3.70	2	7.41	27	100

Table 23

Public relations is seen as an **important management function** to a greater extent (90.00%) by technikons than universities (88.24%). Only 1 university library (5.88%) did not view PR as an important management function.

The reasons given by the various institutions for regarding public relations as an important management function

include :

- The management are the key persons involved especially when face-to-face communication is entered into. They are the body responsible for steering the PR process in particular ways ;
- Because we believe in participative management and in outreach programmes as well as liaison with faculties, etc. ;
- To enunciate goals and activities for a PR programme ;
- To market and promote the library and all its functions. Building a library is very expensive, therefore it must be used ;
- To improve our public image and to make our patrons more aware of our services. To assist our users to use our collection more effectively ; to find out what our users need ; to liaise better with academic staff ;
- Our whole service hinges on it being well promoted and well used ;
- The relationship between users and library is the critical performance/success factor, i.e. this relationship is presupposed for any further success ;
- To encourage effective use of the library and to achieve the library's set objective ;
- The library management regards the positive image of the library as important and it is essential that users are aware of the wide range of services available to them ;
- Public relations is the part of the overall management task

which concerns itself with the management of the relationships between the library and its different publics, both internal as well as external ;

- Because we strive towards service excellence ;
- Management does its utmost to promote positive PR by motivational talks, encouraging staff to attend relevant courses (for example, interpersonal communication) and by making funds available to promote a user-friendly service ;
- It is the only way to promote the library and to enhance its services ;
- Staff are encouraged to have contact with users and other departments and organizations as required to facilitate the functioning of the library and training is also provided in this area ;
- Through PR one markets the potential of services ;
- It is only by this means that one can get the backing and support of especially influential parties ;
- The library, which is user-oriented by nature, requires funding and support in order to maintain the provision of services ;
- As "manager" of the library , I believe we need all the support we can get to enable us to fulfil our function ; engendering support is therefore important to us ;
- At one library, the management recognizes that there are two broad categories of PR communication :

- a) internal communications which is concerned with the communication between the management and library staff;
- b) external communications between the library, students as well as the rest of the wider community ;

Within both these categories, PR is dominated by print communications (library newsletter, press releases, brochures and guides) because of the geographical dispersal of its students, followed by audio-visual communications (signage, videos, radio programmes, exhibitions), and staff liaison skills. These methods are used to increase and encourage usage of the library's services and facilities, enhance user skills to satisfy literature and information needs and to increase the awareness of the library both within and beyond the university ;

- Because PR programmes can support effective library use management devotes a significant amount of time and energy to the function.

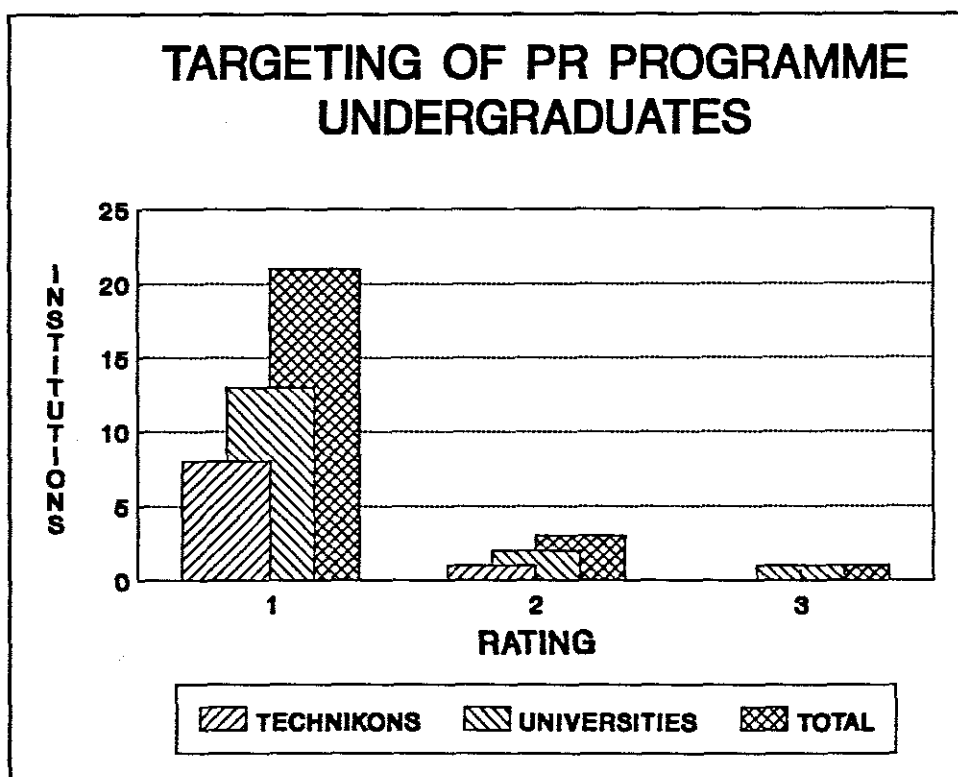
From the above, it seems that phrases like 'management are the key persons ... responsible for steering the PR process', 'public relations is the part of the overall management task that concerns itself ... with the relationships between the library and its different publics', 'it is only by this means that one can get the backing and support of especially influential parties' show that academic libraries do realize the importance of PR as a management function. These phrases are also supportive of my theory.

Question 13 : Is your public relations programme directed towards :

(Please number the boxes on a scale of 1-6 with 1 being the highest order of priority)

13.1 Undergraduates ...

Graph showing the targeting of PR programmes towards undergraduates.

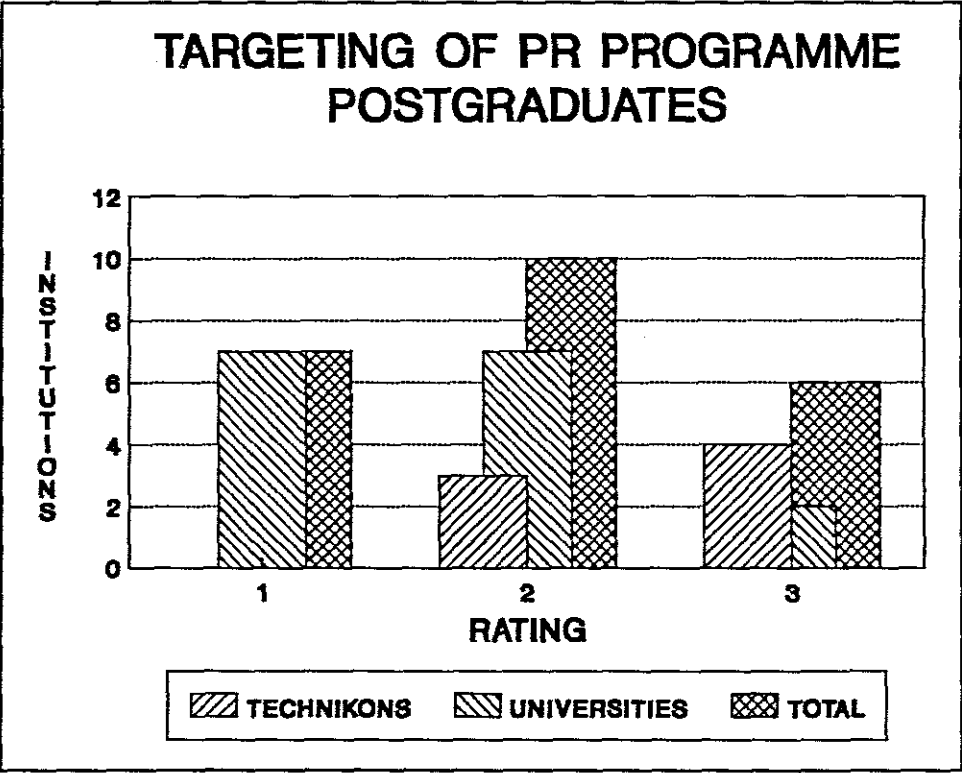


Graph 8

An overall 84.00% of academic institutions rated the directing of their PR programme towards **undergraduates** as quite a high priority. Of this, 88.89% are technikons and 81.25% are universities. This is in keeping with one's expectations as one of the most important markets of academic libraries are undergraduates and they should, therefore, receive a large portion of 'PR attention' on campus. One university (5.88%) and one technikon (10.00%) did not respond to this question.

13.2 Postgraduates ...

Graph showing the targeting of PR programmes towards postgraduates.

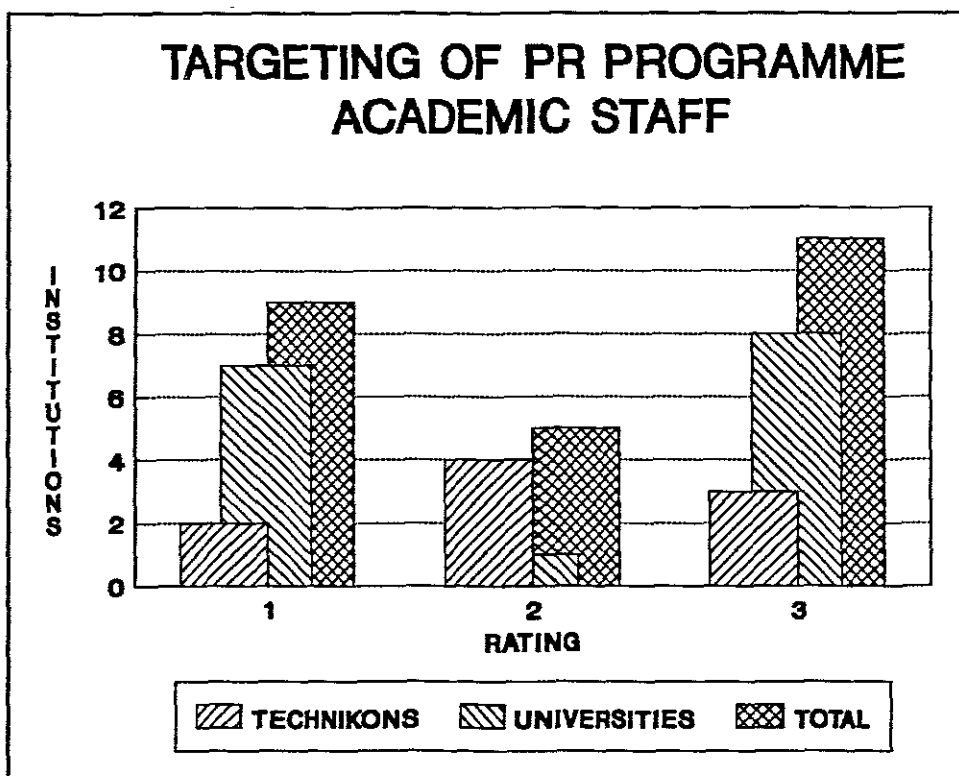


Graph 9

43.75% of universities rated the directing of their PR programme towards **postgraduates** as a high priority ; while 42.86% of technikons rated the directing of their PR programme towards postgraduates as a secondary priority. This is probably because universities have a higher proportion of postgraduates compared to technikons, hence the rating as only secondary priority by the latter. 1 university (5.88%) and 3 technikons (30.00%) did not respond to this question.*

13.3 Academic staff ...

Graph showing the targeting of PR programmes towards academic staff.

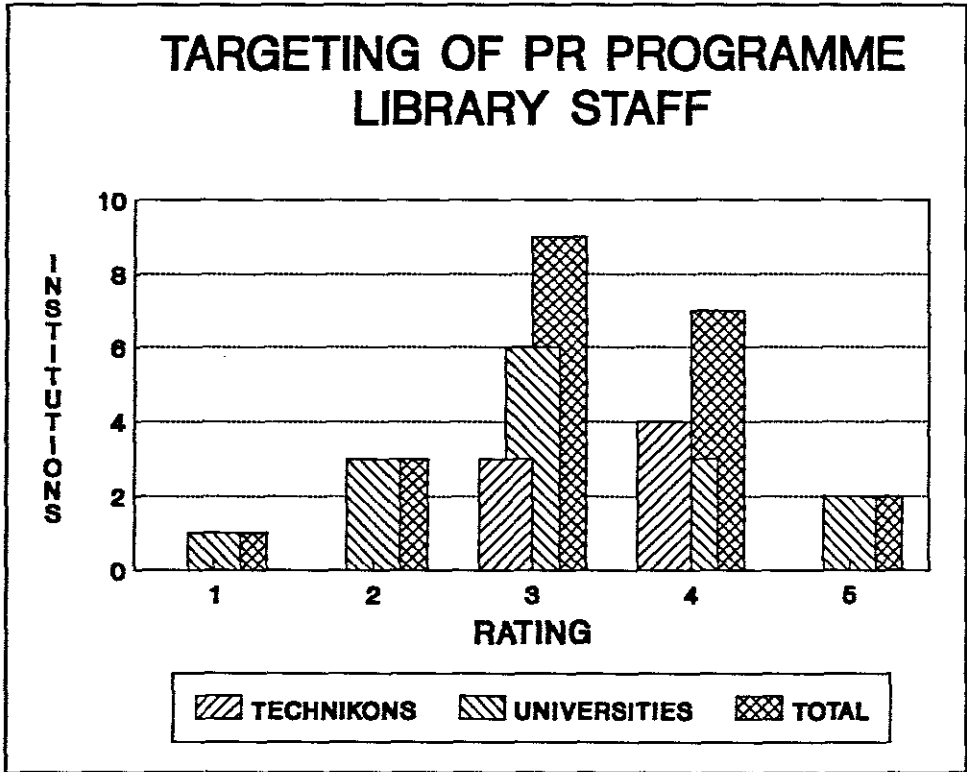


Graph 10

43.75% universities and only 22.22% technikons rated the direction of their PR programme towards **academic staff** as a high priority. The reason why university libraries take the lead here is probably because they have a larger academic staff body and therefore feel the need to conduct more formal PR ; whereas technikon libraries, with a smaller academic staff ratio, probably conduct more informal PR. 1 university (5.88%) and 1 technikon (10.00%) did not respond to this question.

13.4 Library staff ...

Graph showing the targeting of PR programmes towards library staff.

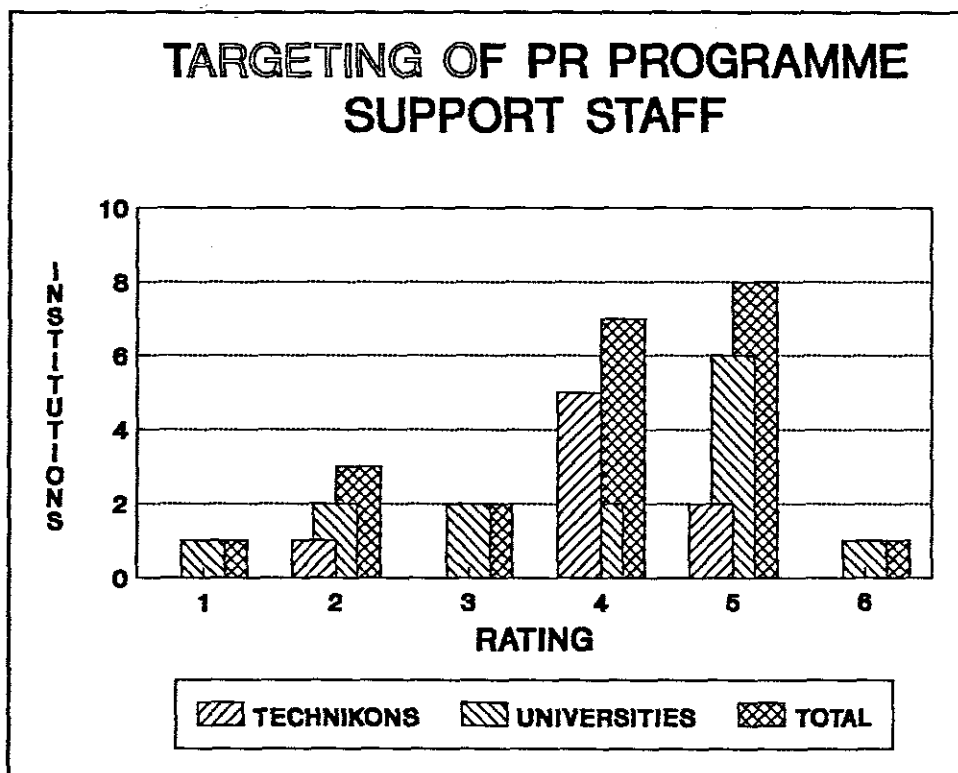


Graph 11

It is rather disappointing to see such a low rating (6.67%) by universities of their PR programmes towards **library staff**. 42.86% of technikons rated Library staff as a third area of priority towards which their PR programme was directed. It should be remembered that the library staff play an integral role in the total PR programme of the institution and therefore deserve more in the way of 'PR attention.' 2 universities (11.76%) and 3 technikons (30.00%) did not respond to this question.

13.5 Support staff (eg. personnel, finance) ...

Graph showing the targeting of PR programmes towards support staff.

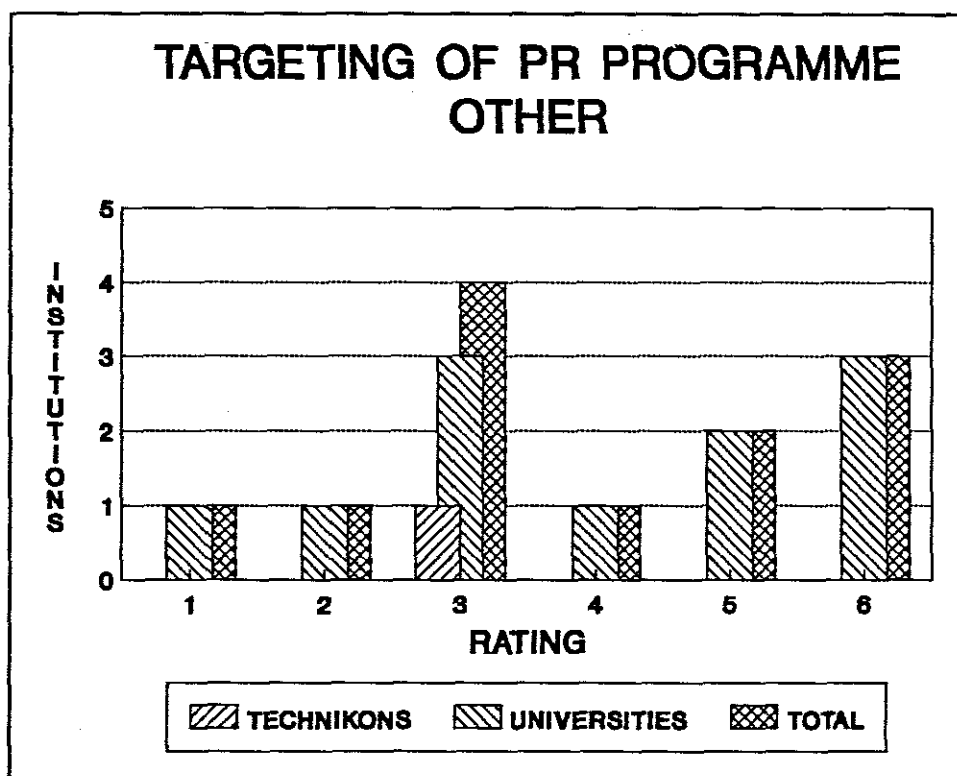


Graph 12

A total of 4.55% of institutions (i.e. 7.14% of universities) rated the direction of their PR programme towards **support staff** as a major priority. Of the responses to this question, 12.50% of technikons rated it as secondary priority. 3 universities (17.64%) and 2 technikons (20.00%) did not respond to this question.

13.6 Other (specify) ? ...

Graph showing the targeting of PR towards 'other' areas.



Graph 13

8.33% of academic institutions direct their PR programmes to 'other' publics such as : external users (including external institutions and institutions which are in no way connected to the university), schoolchildren, visitors, external markets (students from other universities and technikons, members from other institutions, corporate and private members from the community). 6 universities (35.29%) and 9 technikons (90.00%) did not respond to this question.

Thus, the order of importance in which the majority of academic institutions appear to direct their PR programmes is as follows:

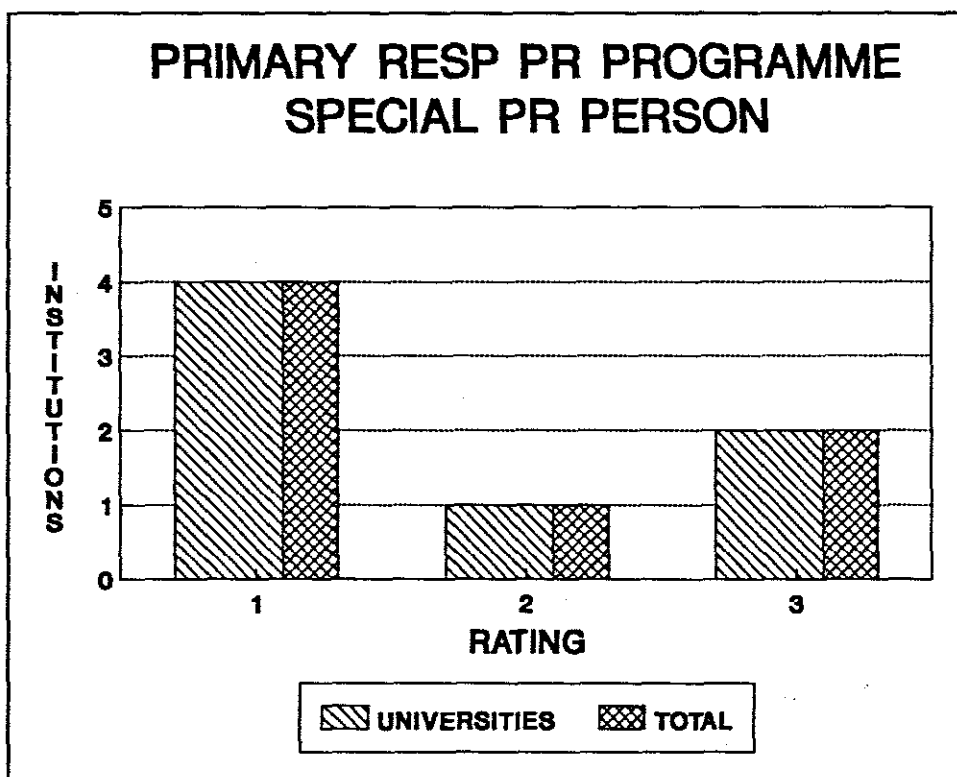
- undergraduates : 84.00%
- academic staff : 36.00%

- postgraduates	: 30.43%
- 'other' eg. external users	: 8.33%
- library staff	: 4.55%
- support staff	: 4.55%

Question 14 : Who is primarily responsible for public relations in your library ?

14.1 special PR person ...

Graph showing the rating of a special PR person as being primarily responsible for PR.



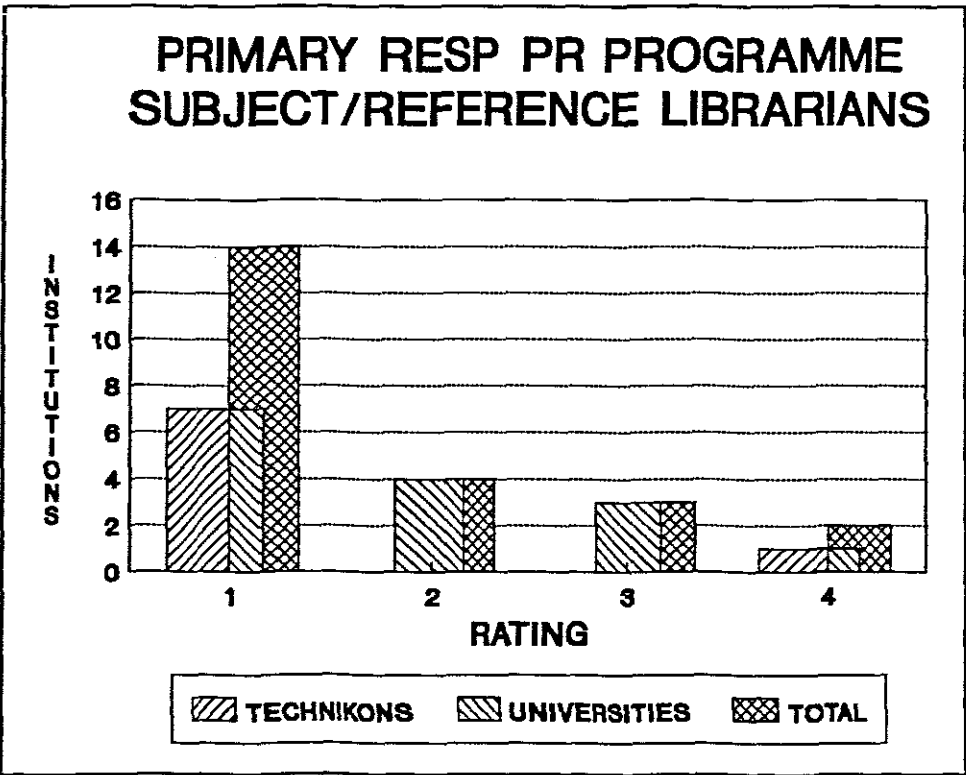
Graph 14

A total of 57.14% of universities rated the **special PR person** as being primarily responsible for PR in their libraries. It follows that technikons with a much smaller library staff do not have special PR persons appointed to this position. 10 universities (58.82%) and 10 technikons (100.00%) did not

respond to this question.

14.2 subject/reference librarians ...

Graph showing the rating of subject/reference librarians as being primarily responsible for PR.

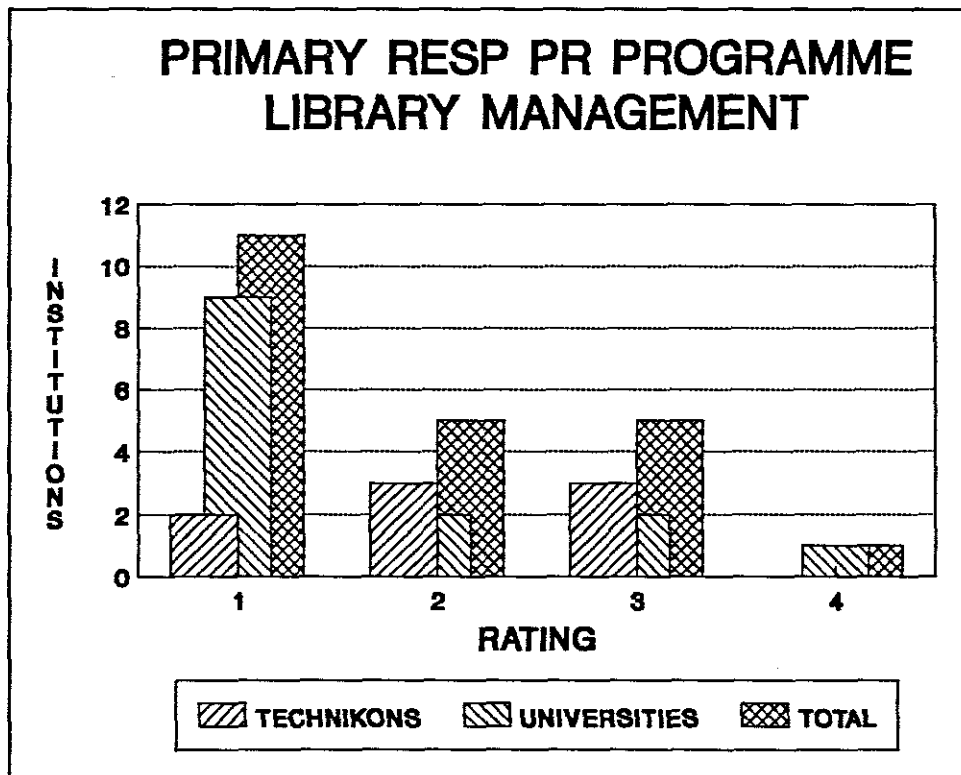


Graph 15

Subject/reference librarians were rated 46.67% by universities and 87.50% by technikons as being responsible for PR to quite a significant extent in their libraries. The low percentage rating by universities could be attributed to their having special PR people and library management as being responsible for PR to a fairly large degree. 2 universities (11.76%) and 2 technikons (20.00%) did not respond to this question.

14.3 library management ...

Graph showing the rating of library management as being primarily responsible for PR.

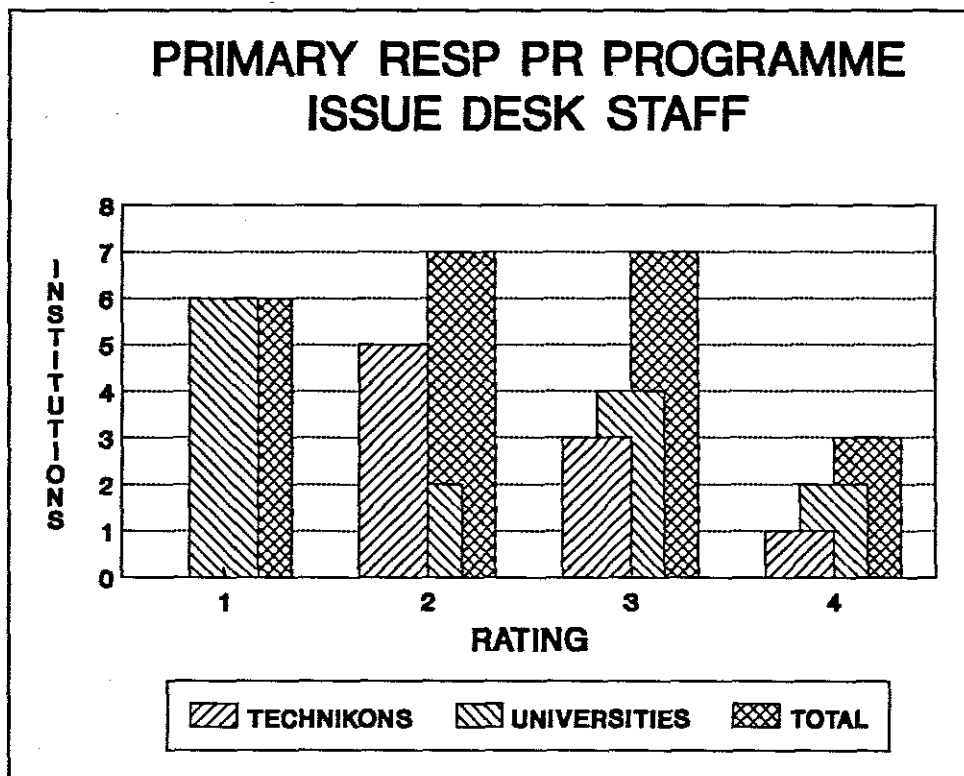


Graph 16

Universities (64.29%) seem to give a higher overall rating than technikons (25.00%) of **library management** as being responsible for PR to a large degree in their libraries. 3 universities (17.64%) and 2 technikons (20.00%) did not respond to this question.

14.4 issue desk staff ...

Graph showing the rating of the issue desk staff as being primarily responsible for PR.



Graph 17

42.86% universities rated the **issue desk staff** as being responsible for PR to a significant extent in their libraries ; while 55.56% of technikons rated them as being responsible for PR only to a secondary degree. 3 universities (17.64%) and 1 technikon (10.00%) did not respond to this question.

14.5 other (specify) ...

Of the institutions that responded, 50.00% of technikons and an overall 16.67% of academic institutions rated '**other**' areas as being responsible for PR to a large degree in their libraries ; while 75.00% of universities rate 'other' areas as

being responsible for PR only to a minor degree. 13 universities (76.47%) and 8 technikons (80.00%) did not respond to this question.

Examples of 'other' include : the director, and all staff who must accept this as an integral part of their work.

The overall rating of PR as a primary responsibility of certain areas emerges as follows (in order of importance) : **subject reference services** (60.87%), **special PR person** (57.14%), **library management** (50.00%), **issue desk staff** (26.09%), 'other' areas such as director and all other staff (16.67%).

It is interesting to note that the highest rating (64.29%) was given to library management as being responsible for PR to a significant extent at universities, while at technikons, the highest rating was given to subject/reference librarians (87.50%). What is also interesting is the fact that universities gave subject/reference librarians almost the same rating (46.67%) as issue desk staff (42.86%). It appears, therefore, that at university libraries, the issue desk staff are responsible for PR to more or less the same extent as subject/reference librarians.

**Question 15 : To what extent is your University's /
Technikon's PR department involved in promoting
the Library ?**

Responses (some edited) with regard to the involvement of PR departments in promoting the library include :

- The department is involved only in as much input as is supplied by the library to them ; only on request from the library ;

- The PR department helps with the issuing of brochures about the library ;
- Not yet fully and formally involved except for one or two articles on library events. To a limited degree ;
- There is no direct involvement, however, the PR department is always willing to assist in PR actions launched by the library ;
- Not at all, except that we use their in-house newsletters for promoting the library, news, etc. ;
- The PR department is responsible for :
 - a) liaising with the PR person in the library to coordinate the coverage of newsworthy items in the media for example, press, tv & radio and publications ;
 - b) to publish items about the library services and staff in the bulletin (in-house journal) and the student newspaper ;
 - c) to attract potential donors for bequests or financial donations ;
 - d) organize cultural functions in the library ;
- They occasionally help by making announcements on the radio and including our activities in the university's newsletter ;
- The library is considered to be a prestige facility and VIP visitors are usually brought here. The library's special features are generally included in public campus tours ;
- Invariably visitors to the technikon and especially technikon management, request to be shown the library. This is invariably that department's (PR department's) duty ;

- The library is included in the general public relations programme carried out by the University's PR department, and is also represented by a fund-raising body ;
- Library also figures in fund-raising drives and publicity material of university ; The department assists with press releases, photographs and fund-raising ;
- The PR department is happy to publish anything on the library in their publications for wider dissemination - however, no initiative has been forthcoming from the library ;
- The library is part of the services provided to students by the university and is therefore indirectly included in their PR/marketing programme. They are not directly involved in the PR of the library ;
- Schools have tours, but that is more promotion of the university as a whole ;
- Due to staff shortage, PR has been conducted on a small scale [by the PR department] ;
- The PR post is vacant at present, but in the past good co-operation existed between the PR department as well as the Director of Development/Fundraising operations. The library is often a place visited by outside sponsors and visitors. Good relations also exist between the library and the co-ordinator of student development ;
- There is excellent support (when required) for library PR operations ;

The degree to which the PR departments of universities and technikons included in the survey are involved in promoting their libraries, varies considerably. It seems that such a

department could be a very useful 'ally' of the library in terms of coverage of newsworthy items in the media, attracting potential donors, getting involved in other fund-raising activities, publishing in in-house journals, etc. However, it is clear that libraries should also co-operate and take the initiative insofar as keeping this department informed of goings-on in the library world. It is only in this way that the library could hope to secure the valuable support of this department in any PR/marketing endeavour.

Question 16 : Do you have a separate budget for public relations ?

<i>Table presenting an overview of the budget for PR.</i>								
Institutions	No.	% Yes	No.	% No	No.	% No response	No.	Total
Universities	2	11.76	14	82.35	1	5.88	17	100
Technikons	-	-	10	100	-	-	10	100
Overall	2	7.41	24	88.89	1	3.70	27	100

Table 24

Of a total of 16 university libraries who responded to this question, only 11.76% have a **separate budget** for PR. This means that 88.89% of libraries overall (i.e. 82.35% universities and 100.00% technikons) do **not** have a separate budget. However, despite the stringent financial times that they find themselves in, academic libraries ought to get serious about PR and remember that it is an integral part of library operations ; and, as has already been pointed out by Garvey (1980 : 139) in chapter two, it should be budgeted for. Some of the responses to the open-ended question regarding the percentage of the total library budget allocated to PR, include the following :

- Although one particular library does not have a separate budget for public relations, financial provision is made for

audio-visual programmes, exhibitions and displays as part of the budget for educational technology. Similarly, a budget is drawn up for the scheduling, production and printing of brochures, pamphlets etc. ;

- It is linked to other budget votes ;
- The budget which covers conferences, stationery, etc. is also used for the purpose of PR.

Question 17 : How, in your opinion, would you rate your Library's PR program ?
(Please tick the appropriate box)

Excellent[]Very good[]Good[]Satisfactory[]Fair[]Poor[]

<i>Table representing a comparative rating of their PR programmes by universities and technikons.</i>						
Question 17	University		Technikon		Overall	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very good	-	-	2	20.00	2	7.41
Good	3	17.65	1	10.00	4	14.81
Satisfactory	9	52.94	2	20.00	11	40.74
Fair	4	23.53	3	30.00	7	25.93
Poor		-	2	20.00	2	7.41
No response	1	5.88	-	-	1	3.70
T o t a l	17	100	10	100	27	100

Table 25

Of a total of 26 libraries that responded to this question, 16 were universities and 10 were technikons. The majority of universities rated their PR programmes as '**satisfactory**' (52.94%), with another 23.53% of them rating their programmes as '**fair**', and 17.64% as '**good**'. None of the universities rated their PR programmes as 'very good' or 'poor'. The

majority of technikons (30.00%) rated their PR programmes as 'fair', with an even percentage of them (20.00%) rating their programmes as 'very good', 'satisfactory' and 'poor' and only 10.00% as 'good'.

It is interesting to note that at least 4 of the university libraries in South Africa that have special PR persons who are primarily responsible for PR at their institutions, rate their programmes as only 'satisfactory' ; while, at least two technikon libraries who do not have special PR persons appointed, rate their programmes as 'very good'. One of these stated that their programme was the best their users have seen.

Question 18 : Do you have any general comments / suggestions on your PR programme that you wish to make ?

Some of the responses (some edited) to the request for general comments on their PR programmes include the following :

- It can only improve ;
- There are plans to upgrade annual reports and lists of new acquisitions. More liaison with academic departments is planned ;
- It is believed to be necessary to place PR programmes on a much more formal basis ; it should be formalised, budgeted for and be integrated with the university's PR ;
- It is an on-going process requiring constant attention, revision and improvement ;
- Financial constraints and consequent staff shortages have reduced the number of services offered, for example,

scanning of journal articles for academic staff no longer possible. PR promotions extended to the wider public in support of appeals for funds ;

- Constraints such as budget cuts, staff shortage, increased student numbers, do make tremendous inroads on this kind of programme. We hope, nevertheless, in the near future, to have a well organized PR programme ;
- The programme will be expanded as an integral part of a broader marketing strategy currently under development ; The library is preparing a guideline policy towards PR practice ;
- One institution aims to appoint a person specifically for that purpose, the person could work at their information desk to direct and help in the training of users and refer them to the reference librarians for reference type questions ;
- The importance of a well planned PR and marketing plan is realized, especially to support general strategic plans for the future. Due to lack of staff it has not been possible to put as much energy and effort into PR programmes as would have been desired, and we hope to continually improve our efforts in future.

From the above, it appears that academic librarians are now gradually realizing the need to place PR programmes on a much more formal and planned basis in terms of integrating it into the university's/technikon's PR programme and budgeting for it, and this is how it should be as shown in my theory. It is true that financial constraints have made inroads on vital services, however, other academic libraries should take the cue from one institution who's comment appears above, and extend PR programmes to the wider public in aid of appeals for funds. This could be done, for example, by encouraging visitor

membership of the library, having regular book-sales, etc.

7.3 Summary of chapter

- In view of fact that academic libraries ought to do everything in their power to ensure user satisfaction and optimum use of resources, this chapter has attempted, by means of a survey, to ascertain what PR practices university and technikon libraries are involved in to make users aware of the library and its services ; and the extent of these practices.
- The analysis of the responses to the questions covering various aspects of a PR programme showed that all the respondents recognize the need for a PR programme. It appears as if academic librarians are gradually beginning to realize the need to place PR programmes on a more structured basis in terms of incorporating it into the university's/technikon's PR programme and budgeting for it, although, at the moment, only 33.33% practise formal PR.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the state of public relations at South African university and technikon libraries with a view to effectively promoting academic library facilities and services.

According to the definitions of PR examined in chapter two, it has been stated that it should be a continuous and planned process. It involves identifying user needs and wants on the one hand ; and keeping users informed, on the other. To reach the goal of effectively promoting academic libraries, it has been suggested that a PR audit (rather than a marketing audit) be the focal point in academic library operations. Findings reveal that all the respondents recognize the need for a PR programme, however, only 33.33% practise formal PR where planning is involved, hence indicating only a small percentage of compliance with the definitions examined in chapter two. This implies that the concept of the PR audit is still alien to academic libraries which shows the hypothesis to be correct. An analysis of the statements of the Inter-University Library Committee (IULC) and Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP) supports my theory that PR is vital to academic libraries.

With regard to the empirical research, a listing of approximately 40 public relations activities was developed based on a review of the literature and personal experience. These activities were included in a questionnaire which was distributed to 34 university and technikon libraries in South Africa, including the T.V.B.C. states. A total of 27 responses (79.41%) from libraries serving between 200 and 119985 users was received.

The following general conclusions may be drawn from the research.

- The fairly good response rate (79.41%) seems to indicate a high level of interest in PR among academic librarians. An overall 100.00% of respondents indicated that university and technikon libraries do need PR programmes ; 88.89% regarded PR as an important management function.

- An overall 33.33% of academic institutions reported that they practise formal (planned) PR programmes (it could be assumed that those who did not respond to this question do not have planned programmes) ; while the majority (77.78%) indicated that they practise informal PR where planning is not necessarily involved. Only 3.70% of academic libraries have no PR at all, thereby indicating that most practise PR to some extent at least. Although academic librarians seem to understand the importance of planning for PR, as their definitions of the concept reveal (question 6), very little planned effort appears to be involved in their PR practices.

- The majority of respondents (74.08%) rated their PR programmes in the range of 'satisfactory'-'fair'-'poor' ; while 14.81% rated them as 'good' and only 7.41% as 'very good'. This seems to imply that academic librarians recognize the need for improvement in this area.

- Only 7.41% of respondents indicated that they have a separate budget for PR, as opposed to an overall 88.89% who do not.

- Factors such as a library's budget, size of staff and population served, etc. do not seem to affect the practice of public relations activities in the sense that perhaps, one may expect only larger libraries to practise these activities and smaller ones not. The expectation that smaller libraries, with fewer personnel and resources, would state that they do not

practise certain activities listed in the questionnaire, was not evident in the data. The smaller libraries appear to be just as much involved in certain activities as the larger libraries with more staff and resources. In this regard, it is interesting to note that it was smaller libraries that rated their PR programme as 'very good'.

- It seems that financial constraints and consequent staff shortages have reduced the extent of and number of services offered. Also, the frequency of practise of public relations activities is affected by the amount of resources required to carry out an activity. At least five of the respondents to this question indicated that financial constraints have made inroads on their PR programmes, stating that they have had to cut down on essential services such as the scanning of journals to locate articles of interest to lecturing staff, etc. One library reported that although the library does not have a separate budget, financial provision is made for audio-visual programmes, exhibitions, displays, printing of brochures and pamphlets, production of library newsletters, circulars and other items of high quality, through a budget allocated to other departments on campus, such as the Department of Educational Technology, Department of Production, etc.

In order to gain insight into what PR practices academic libraries were involved in, activities appearing in the survey instrument were grouped under the following areas, each of which is followed by a general discussion of what the survey indicates.

(1) Activities or services that are intended to maximize user awareness of services and facilities

The responses received from the survey indicate that academic libraries should become more involved in :

- compilation of bibliographies,
- scanning of journal articles,
- conducting of online searches for users,
- regular distribution of :
 - information bulletins and pamphlets,
 - annual reports,
 - newsletters,
 - accessions lists,
 - publishers catalogues, and
 - contents pages of journals to academic departments.

For example, only 47.06% universities practise the scanning of journals, only 35.29% universities and 40.00% technikons regularly distribute information bulletins on various subjects, an overall of only 51.85% of institutions distribute library newsletters, etc. These percentages are all fairly low, and since these are all important PR tools and techniques of making users more aware of services, facilities and goings-on, the academic library should make a concerted effort to become more involved in these and other areas of PR.

The various services offered by academic libraries should also be explained in any materials introducing the library and its services to users, for example, tape-slide presentations prepared for new staff and students, and 'know-your-library' type pamphlets or booklets. As an added incentive to researchers, free online searches for a limited period of time would help spread the word on campus.

(2) Activities that would put the academic library in the limelight in the general field of librarianship and information science.

In order to keep abreast of literature and events, and in order to make a contribution to the field of librarianship and information science, academic libraries should actively

participate in the organizing of conferences, workshops, displays and exhibitions.

An encouraging trend is the recent emphasis by academic libraries on library week activities and book exhibitions, etc. Regional and statewide cooperative promotional programmes could effectively reinforce these programmes (Norton, 1984 : 293-295).

(3) Activities that are calculated to support the teaching, research and academic freedom function of the parent institution.

The library should make a contribution towards the teaching and research function of the academic institution by making provision for :

- the delivery of instructional material and equipment to lecture venues,
- notice boards for advertisements of coming events,
- videos and film shows,
- user suggestions boxes or other systems of feedback.

For example, quite a high percentage of academic institutions (85.19%) make use of notice boards to advertise future events ; however, a mere 50.00% of technikons and 52.94% of universities make provision for user suggestions boxes and or other systems of feedback as a way of interacting with users and identifying their needs. A suggestion box, as Swart (1990 : 2) points out, can elicit constructive comments. She adds, "putting up the suggestions with your answers on a notice board shows borrowers that you are paying attention to what they say."

(4) Activities that are calculated to improving user education

- The library should offer as many opportunities for users to learn how to use the library. This could be done through orientation and instruction exercises in the use of the library for both students and staff.

This function could be facilitated by means of :

- tours,
- posters,
- exhibits,
- formal lectures,
- audio-visual programmes,
- online user-education programmes, etc.

From the responses received, the favoured channels of communication in South African academic libraries seem to be (in order of preference) :

tours (88.89%),
formal lectures (81.48%), and
audio-visual presentations (55.56%).

It seems clear from the above that the personalized approach is preferred to the impersonal approach.

Library staff should seize any opportunity to publicise and promote the library through talks, presenting of papers, videos, slide-tape shows, etc. The idea is to tell everyone what your information services can do. If the university or technikon runs induction courses for new staff members, librarians should ensure that the library has a place on the programme. Another method of educating the user is by using introductory guides containing brief descriptions of services and how they could help the user. Displays and exhibitions could be organized to coincide with orientation sessions to interest users and also keep information services in the limelight, as Jackson (1973 : 386-388) points out.

(5) Activities designed to facilitate communication between library staff and their relations with others

- Communication and liaison should be encouraged by library staff at various levels in their interaction with others. For example, if library management wishes to secure lasting goodwill, and funding and support from the administrators, it should interact closely with the university/technikon executive. In this regard, there was a very positive finding in that 85.19% of institutions conduct meetings/liaison between library management and university/technikon executive.

- Also from the library staff point of view, public relations is a form of communication which is a two way process. If the librarian and his staff are to work efficiently as a team, arrangements must be made not only for the librarian to keep his personnel fully informed as to his intentions, but also for the prompt and regular feedback of information from staff to himself. Subordinates should constantly be informed about matters that concern them. They should be made to feel an important part of the library through mutual sharing of ideas. Superiors should be told of problems and developments that affect their responsibilities, i.e. communication should be top down and bottom up. In this regard, Kenney (1964 : 264) states that if the library has to have any good public relations programme, then it has to start within the staff. In building good relations with library staff, the library director must include staff in the planning and decision-making processes. The staff must be kept informed of library affairs, policies, decisions, new regulations, promotions, etc. The findings reveal that academic institutions have a fairly good level of interaction between library management and other library departments (85.19%).

- Methods of communication include regular staff meetings as well as newsletters, memos, notices on bulletin boards and participative discussion through lectures. If institutions are

not able to host conferences, meetings and courses, then staff who attend courses elsewhere, should be asked to circulate summaries of the proceedings to other staff, or else give a brief account of what they have learnt to a meeting of librarians. In this way the knowledge and expertise gleaned from the course can be spread more widely and more librarians will become PR conscious. Findings indicate that only 51.85% of institutions distribute newsletters, and fewer (23.53% universities and 30.00% technikons) are involved in the organizing of conferences. In contrast, on a more positive note, academic libraries appear more involved in the organizing of displays (88.89%) and exhibitions (77.78%). Also, as already indicated, there seems to be a satisfactory level of liaison between library management and other library departments, thus ensuring that lines of communication within the library are open.

- At another level, librarians at educational institutions should seek personal contact with faculty to discuss available and needed library services, for it is through such contact that they (librarians) would be able to keep abreast of new developments such as the introduction of new courses, new directions in research, or potential problem areas that may arise concerning the library. In this regard, there is a fairly high level of interaction/meetings between library staff and faculty (92.59%). The distribution of publisher catalogues and contents pages of journals to lecturers seem to be two of the most favoured channels of liaison between the library and academic departments, while 80.00% of technikons and 64.71% universities also regularly distribute accessions lists. Orientation and instruction in the use of the library by academic staff is conducted by 92.59% of the respondents.

- At yet another level, there is a growing need to work more directly with users, for example students, in order to educate them in the use of newer services. There is a very positive indication that 92.59% of academic libraries conduct

orientation and instruction in the use of the library by students. This kind of communication should give librarians a better understanding of the needs and problems that students and other potential users may have.

- The library should also involve itself in communication with student bodies and other interest groups on campus if it wishes to secure the co-operation of these groups in the future. It is disappointing to find that only 62.96% of academic library staff regularly meet with student bodies and an even lower 55.56% interact with other interest groups. Since libraries are service-oriented institutions, they should strive towards encouraging communication at all of the above levels.

(6) Activities designed to facilitate library use and minimise user frustration

It is vital that academic libraries with their complex structures make use of directional signs which would prevent user frustration and facilitate browsing. In this regard, the location of the following are some of the major areas that could be identified as requiring signage by the library :

- OPAC terminals, card or other catalogues,
- the issue/circulation desk,
- bookstacks, periodicals,
- photocopying facilities,
- receptionist/secretary,
- subject/reference librarians, readers' advisors,
- interlibrary-loans department,
- on the outside, the library should also be well signposted.

The user having reached the information service area, may find it useful to have a floorplan showing the layout of the various services. Each service should be signposted and

labelled so that the user knows exactly where he/she is. As has already been pointed out, librarians must bear in mind that library materials are there for the user and we, librarians, must help them get what they need as quickly and as conveniently as possible. If it becomes necessary to reshelve or relocate items elsewhere, use signs and direct users to the new location. Findings reveal that a fairly high percentage of academic libraries indicate the location of photocopying facilities (85.19%), periodicals (85.19%), bookstacks (81.48%), etc. ; while a disappointingly low number indicate location of receptionist/secretary (37.04%), or make provision for floorplans (33.33%), etc.

- From personal experience, it is recommended that librarians and other information professionals make themselves more easily identifiable. One way of doing this would be for library staff to wear name tags. However, only 25.93% of academic libraries actually practise this, showing that academic libraries do not seem to care significantly about humanizing their service.

Other factors not included in the survey instrument itself but dealt with elsewhere in the study, and which also deserve mention here are :

(i) Activities intended to improve communication with users

- At a time when universities and technikons, and their libraries, see themselves threatened by economic changes, enrolment declines, and changes in societal values, they must become even more concerned about whom they serve and how (Harwood, quoted in Weingand, 1984 : 106). Information scientists and librarians must communicate with their users and promote their service. Jackson (1973 : 385) supports this by adding that the best information service in the world has no meaning unless it is used. Therefore, library and information professionals should become aware of their

responsibility in satisfying user needs and maximising user satisfaction. Libraries should play a dynamic role in maximizing the use of its store of recorded knowledge for the benefit of users.

- Librarians should become more client-oriented and should realize that positive communication entails more than the mere handing out of books and information, and that, after all, they are there for the user.

- It has been noted that the persons [librarians or assistants] at the circulation, information or registration desk may well establish the service image of the entire library ; however, findings reveal that only 26.09% of the respondents rate the issue desk staff as being responsible for PR to a significant degree. Chief librarians and library directors would do well to take heed of Dixon's (1988 : 11) suggestion that they [issue desk staff] have an approachable, friendly attitude, are trained for the position and are familiar with all aspects of the library's functions, so that they could answer questions with intelligence and assurance.

- Facial expressions can communicate a variety of reactions. For example, frustration, anger, impatience can be communicated by a gesture. An abrupt termination of a conversation can also cause offence. Librarians need to become more aware of these factors, because if nothing is done to correct the situation, it could lead to very bad PR for the library.

- Librarians have on occasion been described as insensitive to user needs. In this regard, librarians should always look up from their work when the user approaches. They should give users their undivided attention. Librarians should not engage in private conversation with other staff when patrons approach them at the service desk for assistance. These mannerisms send out extremely negative vibes, and as both Dixon (1988 : 11)

and Edsall (1980 : 19) point out, librarians need to overcome this indifference or insensitivity to users' needs.

- The telephone manners of the library staff are an integral part of the public relations programme. As already stated, calls should be answered in a polite, friendly, efficient tone of voice. Library management should make frequent checks of telephone traffic to ensure that the library has sufficient lines to cope with demands made on the service through the telephone. Personal calls should be kept to a minimum - there is nothing more annoying than to be kept waiting while a member of staff finishes off his/her conversation.

- In our role as information providers, Mathews (1983 : 13) suggests that we should aim to reinforce the user's perception of us as members of a helping profession. Librarians should try to avoid the use of jargon when assisting users as this only makes them feel embarrassed and inadequate if they do not know the meaning of certain library terminologies. Also, misunderstandings can be overcome if we write and speak simply and effectively. In this respect, most of the samples of written communication that were examined indicated simple wording that was free of jargon.

- If we wish to communicate fully, i.e. to understand what others are trying to convey to us - we need to *listen*. Listening enables us to find out how others are reacting to our message and what they understand by it. In this regard, library staff need to listen, perhaps more than they speak.

- As far as verbal communication is concerned, it has been noted already that the librarian's tone of voice may encourage or discourage users. It is not *what* we say, but the *way* we say it, and, as information providers, we want to convey helpfulness rather than superiority or curtness.

Thus, communication skills are basic to all information work. The whole enquiry process is based on communication. Between the initial request for information and the ultimate presentation of that information back to the enquirer, a whole series of different communication processes take place, for example, eliciting the actual requirement from the client, making contact with potential sources of information, analysing the results of the enquiry, presenting the final outcome to the enquirer. The librarian has a responsibility as a representative of the library. Although on the surface, this is part of the information seeking and retrieval process, each step is also aimed at the important task of promoting the service. Responses reveal that a fairly high level of importance is attached to service points of academic institutions, for example, subject reference services (60.87%).

- As far as the handling of complaints go, Robinson (1984 : 8) states that complaints are inevitable and even if it were possible to render a perfect service, human nature is such that people would still complain. In view of this, complaint handling should become an integral part of a library's public service programme. Complaints, as noted earlier, can also become a powerful analytical tool to get to know what services are lacking or where improvements could be made. However, findings reveal that only 52.94% of universities and 50.00% of technikons make provision for systems for feedback.

(ii) Library equipment and facilities

- Furniture and fittings should be designed with maximum user comfort in mind. Lighting and ventilation are also an important consideration when designing a library. The atmospherics factor should ensure that the library is a pleasant place where people will enjoy spending time. Aesthetic considerations such as healthy plants and colourful posters also enhance the physical context of the library.

(iii) Visibility of library collections

- The library should draw the attention of users to its various collections by organizing regular book and other displays in the foyer area. There should be clear, eye-catching signs promoting these collections. In this regard, there is room for improvement as only 88.89% of academic institutions organise displays.

8.2 Recommendations

(i) If academic librarians in South Africa wish to gain the most from their efforts, they ought to seriously consider implementing complete and planned programmes which ensure that PR efforts are not wasted.

(ii) Information products and services must be planned and structured for change on an on-going basis.

(iii) Academic libraries should actively promote services in order to reach more potential users, encourage the use of the library's resources, and work toward becoming an indispensable source of information for its users.

(iv) Personal contact should be used as an effective method of promoting the library's services. This effort could involve staff members talking to faculty, students and other users about services that are available. Smaller libraries have an advantage over larger libraries in the sense that the smaller the number of library staff, the higher the percentage of interaction with users (see Table 4).

(v) Librarians should communicate regularly with users, verbally or by means of questionnaires, to find out how they [librarians] can improve their service.

(vi) Users should be greeted with a smile when they enter the library or approach the counter.

(vii) Librarians should not wait until a borrower asks for help, which many are reluctant to do, but instead should volunteer assistance.

(viii) Library personnel should be made identifiable to users.

(ix) A library newsletter, incorporating other information bulletins, should regularly be distributed to users.

(x) Orientation/user education should be offered on an on-going basis to individuals or groups of users according to specific needs.

(xi) Informative floorplans should preferably be displayed in the entrance foyer of a library.

(xii) All library staff should be made aware of the significance of their role as PR officers of the library.

(xiii) Staff should have at least a broad overview of what goes on in the different departments in the library.

(xiv) The help of the PR department of the university/technikon should be enlisted to lend momentum to the PR programme.

(xv) Academic libraries should aim to secure a separate budget as an integrated part of the PR programme.

(xvi) Library managers need to become more involved in PR activities.

(xvii) Rules and regulations should be reviewed with a view to promoting the most efficient use of resources by users.

(xviii) A basic library handbook should be made available to users at strategic points in the library.

(xix) The prompt processing of books to the shelves promotes good public relations among academic staff and increases the credibility of library staff in their eyes.

(xx) Suggestion/query boxes should be set up.

(xxi) Answers to queries should be posted on bulletin boards.

(xxii) A further investigation into the psychological aspects of oral and written communications should be undertaken.

8.3 Concluding remark

The promotion of good public relations is crucial to a successful library service. Yet, as Kenney (1964 : 263) points out, too often public relations is left to chance or is ignored altogether. However, in this day and age, information professionals can no longer afford to regard public relations as a peripheral activity, but should see it as a management function, intended to influence the attitudes and opinions of all library staff, the administration of the university/technikon, as well as the faculty and students, for in the final analysis, the well being of the library may depend on the goodwill of all, or at least the majority of the groups that make up its publics.

Many librarians now recognize that libraries exist to serve users. Therefore, information scientists and librarians must communicate with their users and promote their service. Today, it is generally acknowledged that academic libraries must join the PR trend started by public libraries.

Finally, it must be emphasized that good public relations is never accidental. It is the result of well-thought-out and coordinated efforts, the chief ingredient of which is good human relations.

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13 July 1992

Dear University Librarian,

Questionnaire on public relations practices

I am conducting a survey of Public Relations practices at University and Technikon Libraries in South Africa as part of my Masters dissertation in Library Science.

The purpose of this survey is to ascertain to what extent public relations is being practised at university and technikon libraries in South Africa.

I realise how busy your schedule is. However, your response to this questionnaire is vital to my research, and I should be grateful if you or your designate could complete it for me.

Kindly return the questionnaire to me before 7 August 1992.

Thanking you in anticipation for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Veena Jayaram (Mrs)

Questionnaire on Public Relations Practices at
University Libraries in South Africa

* Information required for main library programme only
(not branch libraries)

Background information

1. Name of your library :
2. Size of bookstock :
3. Size of population served :
 - 3.1 Students
 - 3.2 Academic
 - 3.3 Non-academic

Library staff

- 4.1 Total number of full-time staff :
- 4.2 Total number of part-time staff :
- 4.3 Total number of other staff (eg. student assistants) :
- 4.4 Total number of staff who interact directly with users : +...

Public relations

5. Do you think a university library needs a PR programme ?

[YES]
[NO]
6. There are many varying definitions of PR.
Please describe briefly what is your Library's perception of
the concept :
.....
.....
.....
.....
7. In your Library, which of the following do you practise ?
 - 7.1 a formal public relations programme [YES]
(planned programme - deliberate effort involved) [NO]
 - 7.2 an informal public relations programme [YES]
(no planned PR involved - done when necessary) [NO]
 - 7.3 no PR at all [YES]
[NO]

8. If you have a PR programme, which are the major areas towards which your programme is aimed ? *(Please number the boxes on a scale of 1-6 with 1 being the highest order of priority)*

- 8.1 Circulation / Issue Desk []
- 8.2 Reader's advisory services []
- 8.3 Subject reference services []
- 8.4 Interlibrary-loans []
- 8.5 Reserve []
- 8.6 Other (specify) []

9. How did you arrive at this practice ?
(Please tick as many boxes as are applicable)

- 9.1 Brainstorming []
- 9.2 Observation of user behaviour []
- 9.3 Suggestions by staff members []
- 9.4 Suggestions by users []
- 9.5 Was an opinion survey conducted ? []
- 9.6 Other (specify) []
-

10. Which of the following activities are practised in your Library ? *(Please tick as many boxes as are applicable)*

- 10.1 Compilation of bibliographies on various subjects []
- 10.2 Scanning journal articles for users []
- 10.3 Online searching for users []
- 10.4 Regular distribution of :
 - 10.4.1 information bulletins on various subjects []
 - 10.4.2 informative bookmarks (library hours, loan policy, summary of classification scheme) []
 - 10.4.3 pamphlets on various collections and services []
 - 10.4.4 library annual reports []
 - 10.4.5 accessions lists []
 - 10.4.6 library newsletter []
 - 10.4.7 publisher's catalogues to academics []
 - 10.4.8 contents pages of journals to departments []
- 10.5 Organizing of :
 - 10.5.1 conferences []
 - 10.5.2 workshops []
 - 10.5.3 displays []
 - 10.5.4 exhibitions []

10.6 Making provision for :

- 10.6.1 delivery of instructional material and equipment to
lecture venues []
- 10.6.2 notice boards for advertisements of coming events ... []
- 10.6.3 conference facilities []
- 10.6.4 videos and film shows []
- 10.6.5 user suggestions box / systems for feedback []

10.7 Orientation and instruction in the use of the
Library for :

- 10.7.1 students []
- 10.7.2 staff []
- through :
 - 10.7.3 tours []
 - 10.7.4 posters []
 - 10.7.5 exhibits []
 - 10.7.6 formal lectures []
 - 10.7.7 audio-visual orientation programmes []
 - 10.7.8 online user-education programmes []
 - 10.7.9 other (specify) []
 -

- 10.8 Wearing of name tags by staff members so that they may be
more easily identifiable to patrons []

10.9 Meetings / liaison between :

- 10.9.1 Library management and university executive []
- 10.9.2 Library management and other Library departments []
- 10.9.3 Library staff and faculty []
- 10.9.4 Library staff and student bodies []
- 10.9.5 Library staff and interest groups []

10.10 Promotion of the Library by staff members through :

- 10.10.1 talks []
- 10.10.2 presenting of papers []
- 10.10.3 slide shows []
- 10.10.4 videos []
- 10.10.5 other (specify) []
-

- 10.11 Please specify other activities your Library may be
practising :
.....
.....

11. Which of the following directional signs does your Library
make use of ?

- 11.1 Location of OPAC terminals []
- 11.2 Location of issue desk []
- 11.3 Location of bookstacks []
- 11.4 Location of periodicals []
- 11.5 Location of card catalogues []
- 11.6 Location of photocopying facilities []

- 11.7 Location of receptionist/secretary []
 11.8 Location of subject/reference librarians []
 11.9 Location of interloans department []
 11.10 Summary of classification scheme used []
 11.11 Floorplans []
 11.12 Other (specify) []

12. In your opinion, does the Library regard public relations as
 an important management function ? [YES]
 [NO]

Why do you say this ?

.....

.....

.....

13. Is your public relations programme directed towards :
*(Please number the boxes on a scale of 1-6 with 1 being the
 highest order of priority)*

- 13.1 Undergraduates []
 13.2 Postgraduates []
 13.3 Academic staff []
 13.4 Library staff []
 13.5 Support staff (eg. personnel, finance) []
 13.6 Other (specify) ? []

14. Who is primarily responsible for public relations
 in your library ? *(Please number the boxes on a
 scale of 1-5 with 1 being the highest order of priority)*

- 14.1 special PR person []
 14.2 subject/reference librarians []
 14.3 library management []
 14.4 issue desk staff []
 14.5 other (specify) []

15. To what extent is your University's PR department involved in
 promoting the Library ?

.....

.....

16. Do you have a separate budget for public relations ? [YES]
 [NO]

If yes, what percentage of the total Library's
 budget is allocated to PR ?

17. How in *your* opinion, would you rate your Library's PR program ? (*Please tick the appropriate box*)

Very good [] Good [] Satisfactory [] Fair [] Poor []

18. Do you have any general comments / suggestions on your PR programme that you wish to make ?

.....
.....
.....

19. YOUR LIBRARY'S CONTACT PERSON FOR THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

IS

Please indicate whether you would mind if the name of your Library were to be singled out in the results of the study :

YES [] I would mind.

NO [] I would not mind.

Please also indicate if you would like to receive a summarised copy of the results of this study :

YES [] I would like to receive the above.

NO [] I would not like to receive the above.

Thank you for the time taken to complete this questionnaire.

13 July 1992

Dear Technikon Librarian,

Questionnaire on public relations practices

I am conducting a survey of Public Relations practices at University and Technikon Libraries in South Africa as part of my Masters dissertation in Library Science.

The purpose of this survey is to ascertain to what extent public relations is being practised at university and technikon libraries in South Africa.

I realise how busy your schedule is. However, your response to this questionnaire is vital to my research, and I should be grateful if you or your designate could complete it for me.

Kindly return the questionnaire to me before 7 August 1992.

Thanking you in anticipation for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Veena Jayaram (Mrs)

Questionnaire on Public Relations Practices at
Technikon Libraries in South Africa

* Information required for main library programme only
(not branch libraries)

Background information

1. Name of your library :
2. Size of bookstock :
3. Size of population served :
 - 3.1 Students
 - 3.2 Academic
 - 3.3 Non-academic

Library staff

- 4.1 Total number of full-time staff :
- 4.2 Total number of part-time staff :
- 4.3 Total number of other staff (eg. student assistants) :
- 4.4 Total number of staff who interact directly with users : +...

Public relations

5. Do you think a technikon library needs a PR programme ?

[YES]
[NO]
6. There are many varying definitions of PR.
Please describe briefly what is your Library's perception of
the concept :
.....
.....
.....
.....
7. In your Library, which of the following do you practise ?
 - 7.1 a formal public relations programme [YES]
(planned programme - deliberate effort involved) [NO]
 - 7.2 an informal public relations programme [YES]
(no planned PR involved - done when necessary) [NO]
 - 7.3 no PR at all [YES]
[NO]

8. If you have a PR programme, which are the major areas towards which your programme is aimed ? (Please number the boxes on a scale of 1-6 with 1 being the highest order of priority)

- 8.1 Circulation / Issue Desk []
- 8.2 Reader's advisory services []
- 8.3 Subject reference services []
- 8.4 Interlibrary-loans []
- 8.5 Reserve []
- 8.6 Other (specify) []

9. How did you arrive at this practice ?
(Please tick as many boxes as are applicable)

- 9.1 Brainstorming []
- 9.2 Observation of user behaviour []
- 9.3 Suggestions by staff members []
- 9.4 Suggestions by users []
- 9.5 Was an opinion survey conducted ? []
- 9.6 Other (specify) []
-

10. Which of the following activities are practised in your Library ? (Please tick as many boxes as are applicable)

- 10.1 Compilation of bibliographies on various subjects []
- 10.2 Scanning journal articles for users []
- 10.3 Online searching for users []
- 10.4 Regular distribution of :
 - 10.4.1 information bulletins on various subjects []
 - 10.4.2 informative bookmarks (library hours, loan policy, summary of classification scheme) []
 - 10.4.3 pamphlets on various collections and services []
 - 10.4.4 library annual reports []
 - 10.4.5 accessions lists []
 - 10.4.6 library newsletter []
 - 10.4.7 publisher's catalogues to academics []
 - 10.4.8 contents pages of journals to departments []
- 10.5 Organizing of :
 - 10.5.1 conferences []
 - 10.5.2 workshops []
 - 10.5.3 displays []
 - 10.5.4 exhibitions []

10.6 Making provision for :

- 10.6.1 delivery of instructional material and equipment to lecture venues []
- 10.6.2 notice boards for advertisements of coming events ... []
- 10.6.3 conference facilities []
- 10.6.4 videos and film shows []
- 10.6.5 user suggestions box / systems for feedback []

10.7 Orientation and instruction in the use of the Library for :

- 10.7.1 students []
- 10.7.2 staff []
- through :
 - 10.7.3 tours []
 - 10.7.4 posters []
 - 10.7.5 exhibits []
 - 10.7.6 formal lectures []
 - 10.7.7 audio-visual orientation programmes []
 - 10.7.8 online user-education programmes []
 - 10.7.9 other (specify) []
 -

10.8 Wearing of name tags by staff members so that they may be more easily identifiable to patrons []

10.9 Meetings / liaison between :

- 10.9.1 Library management and technikon executive []
- 10.9.2 Library management and other Library departments []
- 10.9.3 Library staff and faculty []
- 10.9.4 Library staff and student bodies []
- 10.9.5 Library staff and interest groups []

10.10 Promotion of the Library by staff members through :

- 10.10.1 talks []
- 10.10.2 presenting of papers []
- 10.10.3 slide shows []
- 10.10.4 videos []
- 10.10.5 other (specify) []
-

10.11 Please specify other activities your Library may be practising :
.....
.....

11. Which of the following directional signs does your Library make use of ?

- 11.1 Location of OPAC terminals []
- 11.2 Location of issue desk []
- 11.3 Location of bookstacks []
- 11.4 Location of periodicals []
- 11.5 Location of card catalogues []
- 11.6 Location of photocopying facilities []

17. How in your opinion, would you rate your Library's PR program ? (Please tick the appropriate box)

Very good [] Good [] Satisfactory [] Fair [] Poor []

18. Do you have any general comments / suggestions on your PR programme that you wish to make ?

.....
.....
.....

19. YOUR LIBRARY'S CONTACT PERSON FOR THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

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Please indicate whether you would mind if the name of your Library were to be singled out in the results of the study :

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NO [] I would not mind.

Please also indicate if you would like to receive a summarised copy of the results of this study :

YES [] I would like to receive the above.

NO [] I would not like to receive the above.

Thank you for the time taken to complete this questionnaire.

13 Morewood Road
Clare Estate
Durban
4091

17 August 1992

Dear University Librarian

Reminder - Questionnaire on public relations practices

I am writing to you in connection with a questionnaire on public relations that was sent to you dated 13 July 1992.

I wish to re-emphasise that your reply is vital to my research and since your response has not yet reached me, I would like to know if it would be possible for you to furnish me with the information I require as soon as possible.

Just in case the original questionnaire has been misplaced, please telephone me on (031) 2692054, and I shall be glad to send you a second copy.

If, in the meantime, you have already posted your response, kindly ignore this letter.

Thanking you in anticipation for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Veena Jayaram (Mrs)

13 Morewood Road
Clare Estate
Durban
4091

17 August 1992

Dear Technikon Librarian,

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