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Aims and Scope

An EP Journal of Mass Communication and Society, a broad-based journal was founded on two key tenets: To publish the most exciting researches with respect to the subjects of Journalism & Mass Communication . Secondly, to provide a rapid turn-around time possible for reviewing and publishing, and to disseminate the articles for research, teaching and reference purposes.Journal Aim and Scope covers following research areas (but not limited to):

1. International Communication
2. Journalism And New Media
3. Journalism And Policy
4. Journalism And Regulation
5. Journalism Ethics
6. Journalism History

An EP Journal of Mass Communication and Society

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The Impact Of Information Communication Technology Act In Communication Studies

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A B S T R A C T

With the invention of Information and Communication Technology, libraries now use various types of technologies to aid the services they render. Everyday new technological advances affect the way information is handled in libraries and information centres. The impacts of new technologies are felt by libraries in every aspect. Computing technology, communication technology and mass storage technology are some of the areas of continuous development that reshape the way that libraries access, retrieve, store, manipulate and disseminate information to users.

Keywords: Information and Communication Technology, Information Centres, Mass Storage Technology, retrieve

INTRODUCTION

Over the past twenty seven years, academic libraries have been affected by changes in information and communication technology. The rate of changes is still accelerating in this area. The introduction of various information technology (ICT) trends has lead to reorganization, change in work patterns, and demand for new skills, job retraining and reclassification positions. ICT holds the key to the success of modernizing information services. Applications of ICT are numerous but mainly it is used in converting the existing paper-print records in the entire process of storage, retrieval and dissemination.

ICT presents an opportunity to provide value-added information services and access to a wide variety of digital based information resources to their clients. Furthermore mass communication field is using modern ICTs to automate their core functions, implement efficient and effective library cooperation and resource sharing networks, implement management information systems, develop institutional repositories of digital local contents, and digital libraries: and initiate ICT based capacity building programmes for library users.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought unprecedented changes and transformation to communication and information services, reference services, bibliographic services, current awareness services, Document delivery, Audio visual services and customer relations can be provided more efficiently and effectively using ICT, as they offer convenient time, place, cost effectiveness, faster and most-up-to-date dissemination and end users. The impact of ICT characterized on information services by changes in format, contents and method of production and contents and method of production and delivery of information products. Emergence of internet as the largest repository of information and knowledge, changed role of information professionals from intermediary to facilitator, new tools for dissemination of information and shift from physical to virtual services environment and extinction of some conventional information services and emergence of new and innovation web based.

Statement of the Problem

Considering the enormous benefits that are experienced in the impact of ICT in the field of communication the academicians still experience some obstacles or hindrances in the effective and efficient use of the ICT resources in the communication field(mass media). Today, ICT acquisition and implementation is facing a lot of problems. This research work is focus to expose some of the inhibiting factors that are hindering the impact of ICT.

Objectives of the Study

1. To ascertain the level of computerization/ automation of communication Libraries.
2. To determine the usefulness of ICT resources in libraries related to communication studies.
3. To determine the changes that has occurred with the coming of ICT in the education sector.
4. To determine the challenges associated with the application of ICT.

Research Questions

1. To what extent has information and communication technology been employed in the communication field?
2. What are the changes in the field of education after the adoption of ICT?
3. Do the people of the Libraries have the required knowledge and skills in using ICT resources?
4. What are the factors militating against the application of ICT ?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to ascertain the impact of ICT on media studies related academic libraries. The research work highlights the advantages or merit associated with ICT.

Scope of the Study

This research work is on the impact of ICT on media studies related libraries as a descriptive study.

Significance of the study

1. This study is expected to provide a basis for comprehensive information on information and communication technology procurement and application.
2. The study will established the existing gaps in the adoption of information and communication technology in the operations.
3. The output of this study will serve as a blueprint for information managers/information scientists, researchers, lecturers, students, and teachers to chart the right course of action for the use of information and communication technology in furthering education through implementation.

Methodology Research Design

The choice of the descriptive analysis as the research design for the project was necessitated by the nature of the study. This research is a descriptive research that gathered data from different sources in order to determine the current status of the issue under study from the respective institutions.

Findings And Discussions

Communication facilities are the basic requirements of every organization. In the age of ICT email, fax, etc are the common tools for fast a and smooth dissemination of the information.

Automated communication facilities

All the libraries related to communication field have all the facilities which are mentioned above. they all are using the technologies but with a varied degree of usage.

Reason for the use of ICT resource

1. To acquire information
2. To process information
3. To store information
4. To retrieve information
5. To disseminate information

Factors militating against the application of ICT

1. Inadequate funding
2. Automation at infancy level
3. No power supply
4. Technical know-how
5. Lack of search skills

Communication tools	Percent
Email address	100
World wide web(university website)	100
Fax facility	100
Telephone	100

Trends in the media studies due to adoption of ICT

Digitization of Books (E-Text Books) There is an increased trend towards creation of a digital repository of books t o c r eate a d i g i t a l l earning environment for students. The digital version of the books embedded with text, pictures along with video, simulations and visualizations help students learn the concepts in an interactive way. The National mission on Education through ICT plans to generate new online course content for UG, PG and Doctoral education.

Content Delivery using IT is purely a content driven play where educational content i s delivered through innovative use of ICT. There is an increased trend in higher education institutes to render content through Radio, TV and Satellite.

Open Education Resources Many Indian universities are contemplating Technology enabled free access of education resources. AICTE – Indian National Digital Library in Engineering & Technology (AICTE – INDEST) is a consortium set up by the Ministry of Human Resource to enhance greater access and generate annual savings in access of bibliographic databases. UGC has also launched its Digital Library Consortium to provide access to peerreviewed journals and bibliographic databases covering subjects such as arts, humanities, technology and sciences.

Mobility With the proliferation of mobile phones on campus, colleges everywhere are compelled to capitalize on feature-rich phones that are capable of much more than just voice calls. Adoption of the BlackBerry, iPhone and other smart devices that have Internet access allows students and faculty to perform a wide range of assignments. Tasks like administration, sharing class notes, downloading lectures, instant messaging, etc., are possible anywhere cell phone service is available.

The adoption of IT/ICT in higher education facilitates the following:

1. Improving the access to the system through online education.
2. Improving the quality of teaching especially across remote locations.
3. Increasing transparency and strengthening systems, processes and compliance norms.

Recommendations

1. More generous financial support should be made available to provide the basic ICT infra structural facilities.
2. Since Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has come to stay, people that are not computer literate should take positive steps to remedy their deficiencies so as to flow along with the reforms.
3. Effective and efficient power supply supplemented with standby generators should be provided to check the menace of frequent electricity power failure.

Conclusion

The inevitable conclusion that the researchers have arrived at in this study is that ICT has fulfilled its promise in the sector, there is remarkable rise in the use of ICT, and many of the activities are now ICT driven. This has led to the speed on acquisition, processing, storage, retrieval and dissemination operations. ICT has also help to curb the problem of information explosion in this information era.

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BPO-A World Wide Trend (India – A Major Gainer)

Jayesh Kumar Sinha

<u>A B S T R A C T</u>

The Outsourcing History of India
The outsourcing history of India is one of phenomenal growth in a very short span of time.

The idea of outsourcing has its roots in the 'competitive advantage' theory propagated by Adam Smith in his book 'The Wealth of Nations' which was published in 1776. Over the years, the meaning of the term 'outsourcing' has undergone a sea- change. What started off as the shifting of manufacturing to countries providing cheap labour during the Industrial Revolution, has taken on a new connotation in today's scenario. In a world where IT has become the backbone of businesses worldwide, 'outsourcing' is the process through which one company hands over part of its work to another company, making it responsible for the design and implementation of the business process under strict guidelines regarding requirements and specifications from the outsourcing company. This process is beneficial to both the outsourcing company and the service provider, as enables the outsourcer to reduce costs and increase quality in non core areas of business and utilize his expertise and competencies to the maximum. And now we can see the benefit to the service companies in India as they mature, prosper and build core capabilities beyond what would generally be possible by the outsourcing company.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Since the onset of globalization in India during the early 1990s, successive Indian governments have pursued programs of economic reform committed to liberalization and privatization. Till 1994, the Indian telecom sector was under direct governmental control and the state owned units enjoyed a monopoly in the market. In 1994, the government announced a policy under which the sector was liberalized and private participation was encouraged. The New Telecom Policy of 1999 brought in further changes with the introduction of IP telephony and ended the state monopoly on international calling facilities. This brought about a drastic reduction and this heralded the golden era for the ITES/BPO industry and ushered in as lew of inbound/outbound call centres and data processing centres. Although the IT industry in India has existed since the early 1980s, it was the early and mid 1990s that saw the emergence of outsourcing. One of the first outsourced services was medical transcription, but outsourcing of business processes like data processing, billing, and customer support began towards the end of the 1990s when MNCs established wholly owned subsidiaries which catered to the process off-shoring requirements of their parent companies. Some of the earliest players in the Indian market were American Express, GE Capital and British Airways.

The ITES or BPO industry is a young and nascent sector in India and has been in existence for a little more than five years. Despite its recent arrival on the Indian scene, the industry has grown phenomenally and has now become a very important part of the export-oriented IT software and services environment. It initially began as an activity confined to multinational companies, but today it has developed into a broad based business platform backed by leading Indian IT software and services organizations and other third party service providers. The ITES/BPO market expanded its base with the entry of Indian IT companies and the ITES market of the present day is characterized by the existence of these IT giants who are able to leverage their broad skill-sets and global clientele to offer a wide spectrum of services. The spectrum of services offered by Indian companies has evolved substantially from its humble beginnings. Today, Indian companies are offering a variety of outsourced services ranging from customer care, transcription, billing services and database marketing, to Web sales/marketing, accounting, tax processing, transaction document management, telesales/telemarketing, HR hiring and biotech research.

Looking at the success of India's IT/software industry, the central government identified ITES/BPO as a key contributor to economic growth prioritized the attraction of FDI in this segment by establishing 'Software Technology Parks' and 'Export Enterprise Zones'. Benefits like tax- holidays generally enjoyed by the software industry were also made available to the ITES/BPO sector. The National Telecom Policy (NTP) introduced in 1999 and the deregulation of the telecom industry opened up national, long distance, and international connectivity to competition. The governments of various states also provide assistance to companies to overcome the recruitment, retention, and training challenges in order to attractinvestments to their region. The National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) has created platforms for the dissemination of knowledge and research in the industry through its survey and conferences. NASSCOM acts as an 'advisor, consultant and coordinating body' for the ITES/BPO industry and liaisons between the central and state government committees and the industry. The ardent advocacy of the ITES/BPO industry has led to the inclusion of call centers in the 'Business Auxiliary Services' segment, thereby ensuring exemption from service tax under the Finance Bill of 2003.

These measures have led to a steady inflow of investments by large foreign companies such as Reuters, for establishing large captive ITES/BPO facilities across India. Moreover, the existing ITES/BPO operations of major multi-nationals are also being ramped up to cater to the ever increasing demand for better and speedier service. Almost all of India's top ITES/BPO giants have announced some form of expansion and are in the process of hiring manpower to fill the additional seats. India's competitive advantage lies in its ability to provide huge cost savings thereby enabling productivity gains and this

has given India an edge in the global ITES/BPO marketplace. NASSCOM studies pinpoint the following factors as the major reasons behind India's success in this industry (Source : www.nasscom.org):

Literature Review

BPO [Business Process Outsourcing] has been the latest **mantra** in India today. As the current sources of revenue face slower growth, software companies are trying new ways to increase their revenues. BPO is top on their list today. IT services companies are making a quick entry into the BPO space on the strength of their existing set of clients. We hope to address all issues related to BPO in India on this portal.

We will attempt to explain what it takes to setup a BPO facility in India. Actually, setting up a call center is capital intensive. An ordinary BPO center that takes care of pure back office operation [e.g. payroll, data entry] will not be as expensive as a call center.

The philosophy behind BPO is specific, do what you do best and leave everything else to business process out sourcers. Companies are moving their non-core business processes to out source providers. BPO saves precious management time and resources and allows focus while building upon core competencies. The list of functions being outsourced is getting longer by the day. Call centres apart, functions outsourced span purchasing and disbursement, order entry, billing and collection, human resources administration, cash and investment management, t axcompliance, internal audit, pay roll...the list gets longer everyday. In view of the accounting scandals in 2002 [Enron, WorldCom, Xerox etc], more and more companies are keen on keeping their investors happy. Hence, it is important for them to increase their profits. **BPO is one way of increasing their profits.** If done well, BPO results in **increasing shareholder value.**

Worldwide Services Contracts Analysis: BPO

IDC's *Worldwide Services Contracts Analysis: BPO* service offers service providers valuable insight into the dynamics, size, and scope of BPO services deals from both a horizontal and a core-industry standpoint. This service provides access to the Servces Contracts Database online tool and supporting research that will help the vendor, end-user, and financial services communities monitor the key deal trends and upcoming opportunities as well as the performance of specific vendors. The online database offers tangible metrics to evaluate buying patterns by business process and vendor track records across

business processes, industry, and geography. This service examines macro trends and developments in BPO deal making for the customer care, human resources, finance and accounting, procurement services, and logistics segments as well as the core industry processes (e.g., service after sales, claims processing, payments processing) of the BPO market. It also analyzes new directions in cross-functional BPO areas, such as procure to pay and order to cash.

Markets Covered

This service provides a view of BPO deals from a pan-BPO perspective, including the following segments of the BPO and processing markets:

- ❐ Customer care
- ❐ Human resources
- ❐ Finance and accounting
- ❐ Procurement services
- ❐ Logistics
- ❐ Industry specific (e.g., claims processing, payments processing, and service after sales)

Subjects Analyzed

Throughout the year, this service will address the following topics around BPO deals:

- ❐ Contract analysis by business process, vendor, vertical industry, geography, and scope of services
- ❐ Contract pricing and benchmark metrics
- ❐ Prime versus subcontractor relationships
- ❐ Losing bidder, renegotiations, and contract cancellations
- ❐ Geographic scope and sourcing
- ❐ Trends around contract length
- ❐ Contract signing criteria

Key Questions Answered

Our research addresses the following issues that are critical to your success:

1. What competitor contracts are up for renewal over the next 12.18 months?
2. How do the value and length of BPO contracts compare across various BPO markets, countries, and vertical industries?

3. How are contract lengths and values changing over time?
4. Which vendors are most successful at penetrating any given geography, industry, or business process area?
5. What end-user buying trends are emerging?

BPO Deal Trends. Sample Snapshot Analysis

Companies Analyzed

This research service examines how IT services and function-specific providers are positioning themselves to compete in the BPO Market and reviews the strategies, market positioning, and future direction of several providers in the BPO space, including:

❒ Business and technology services providers such as Accenture, ACS, BearingPoint, Capgemini, CGI, CSC, Deloitte, EDS, HCL, HP, IBM Global Services, Infosys, SAIC, TCS, Unisys, and Wipro.

❒ BPO process specialists such as ADP, Alliance Data Systems, Ariba, BAX Global, Ceridian, Cirqit, Convergys, DHL, DSSI, Exel, FedEx, Fidelity, Fiserv, Hewitt, ICG Commerce, Newline Noosh, OPI, Prosero, Ryder, Schneider Logistics, Sitel, Tele Tech, Three Core, UPS, West, and Xerox.

Research Agenda

Throughout the year, this service will offer insight into the latest trends impacting the market. Potential studies include:

Top Business Outsourcing Deals

This study examine stop BPO/processing contracts of the previous year, ranked by total contract value. It analyzes contracts based on business process, value, length, time of year signed, geography, industry, winning vendors, and scope of services provided.

Top Human Resources BPO Deals

This study includes the top HR BPO contracts of the previous year, ranked by total contract value. It analyzes the contracts based on value, length, time of year signed, geography, industry, winning vendors, and services provided.

Top Finance and Accounting BPO Deals

This study includes the top F&A BPO contracts of the previous year, ranked by total contract value. It analyzes the contracts based on value, length, time of year signed, geography, industry, winning vendors, and services provided.

Top Procurement BPO Deals

This s tudy includes the top procurement BPO contracts of the previous year, ranked by total contract value. It analyzes the contracts based on value, length, time of year signed, geography, industry, winning vendors, and services provided.

Top Customer Care BPO Deals

This study includes the top customer care BPO contracts of the previous year, ranked by total contract value. It analyzes the contracts based on value, length, time of year signed, geography, industry, winning vendors, and services provided.

Top 100 Outsourcing Deals

This study includes the top 100 IT outsourcing and BPO contracts of the previous year, ranked by total contract value. It analyzes the contracts based on value, length, time of year signed, geography, industry, winning vendors, and services provided.

Top 100 Outsourcing Deals: Five- Year Report

This document analyzes a five-year history of the top 100 IT outsourcing and BPO contracts. The study analyzes deal trends based on value, length, geography, industry, winning vendors, and services provided. IDC also couples its deal-trend insights with the latest end-user survey research.

A Complete Intelligence Solution

IDC offers a complete market intelligence solution customized to meet your business requirements. The array of products and services available to you includes:

- ❐ The opportunity to have your specific questions answered through personal interaction with industry experts who cover the topics and markets in your service
- ❐ Around-the-clock access to our market intelligence on idc.com,
- ❐ DC's personalized Web experience
- ❐ A view of the market's future with 12 months of continuous intelligence about its direction and the reasons behind it, along with actionable advice for taking advantage of existing and emerging opportunities
- ❐ Special client discount pricing on purchases of research from other services
- ❐ Complimentary admission to IDC's annual Directions conference, where you'll hear our latest forecasts and network with IDC analysts and other industry professionals
- ❐ Complimentary invitations to monthly executive telebriefings, interactive forums designed to provide you with insights about research and strategies directly from IDC analysts To find out how our flexible packaging options can meet your specific business needs, please contact your IDC sales executive.

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CONCLUSION

India may corner 56% of world BPO biz India is likely to capture 56 per cent share of offshore business process outsourcing business by 2006 with the demand for BPO services increasing at an annual growth rate of 50 per cent during 2004-06, according to a report by rating agency ICRA.

However, the prospects of a BPO backlash in the US may act as a constraining factor for the offshore BPO market and in such a scenario, India may be able to capture only 42 per cent share of the offshore market by 2006, the report said.

The size of the Indian BPO market is likely to be around $9-12 billion by 2006 and will employ around 400,000 people, ICRA said in its Indian BPO industry report.

Indicating a consolidation trend within the industry, the report points out that even though there are a large number of BPO players in the Indian market at around 400, the percentage of third party vendors to total BPO players have declined from 57.4 per cent in FY 2001 to 42.2 per cent in FY 2003 while that of captive players have increased from 42.6 per cent to 57.8 per cent during the same period.

The relative decline in the share of third party vendors maybe explained by the mergers and acquisitions currently taking place within the industry, it said.

With a projection of 50 per cent annual growth for the BPO industry over 2004-06, the ICRA report said that established BPO players are likely to move up the value chain in quest for better price realisation.

For BPO service providers, moving up the value chain is critical, given the attrition rates in the industry, which are on an average higher in low value- added segments (in call centres) ascompared to higher value-added segments like engineering, the report said.

As these Indian firms scale up rapidly, ICRA expects that some of the big players in the market may use the IPO route to raise funds for moving up the ladder.

It said a number of countries have emerged in the BPO segment like Australia, the Philippines, China and Ireland. However India is favourably placed as far as competitiveness is concerned.

Even as the Indian BPO industry is poised for growth, a major inhibiting factor may be the potential US backlash because of the fear of the potential job losses, the report adds.

Even though the bills tabled in the US refer to the state government business getting outsourced, the report states that the backlash may have a dampening impact on the BPO business in India.

"Interestingly the trend analysis shows that the outsourcing of BPO business from the US has registered an increase on an average after September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, but has declined in 2003," it said. It added that rising unemployment rate in the US, may however, put pressure on US firms' decision to out source to India.

Recommendations

How to stop BPO attrition First, the good news. The business process outsourcing industry in India is growing at a phenomenal pace. Exports were worth $ 5.2 billion in 2004-05, growing at 44.5 per cent and industry body Nasscom has projected a 41 per cent growth in 2005-06 to $ 7.3 billion.

The employee base has grown at a compounded annual growth rate of 52.6 per cent, from 42,000 in 2001-2002 to 3,48,000 in 2004-2005.

Also, a Nasscom-Hewitt Associates survey says that the cost of attrition in the industry is 1.5 times the annual salary.

For a fresh college graduate, a call centre job pays about 2.5 times as much as other job openings. And the boom shows all signs of continuing considering that the cost per transaction in India is estimated to be the lowest at 29 cents compared to 52 cents in China.

Now, the bad news. Already grappling with a 30 per cent attrition rate (the highest in the Asia-Pacific region, compared to China at 10-15 per cent), the industry is expected to have a manpower shortage of 2,62,000 in 2008. In a country where 3 million graduate every year, the task is daunting.

HR consultants say one of the key gaps being faced by the industry is the low level of expertise at frontline (lower- middle) management, in managing and sustaining an ITES-BPO operation.

The inexperienced middle and front line management is one of the key causes of attrition. Another disturbingdata is that nearly 50 per cent of those who quit leave the industry.

So what's the way out? First, the industry has to get out of its image of an Internet sweatshop where an employee is resigned to his fate of being in office at ungodly hours for a dead-end job.

Companies which have not been able to tackle this image could take a cue from ICICI One Source, which gives employees who have been with the company for more than 18 months an option to switch to positions in other ICICI group companies.

The system works as a big assurance for BPO employees that the skills they have learnt such as customer friendliness and rapid response to customer problems have wider applications and market demand.

This is important considering the fact that the cost of attrition in the industry is 1.5 times the annual salary.

BPOs have also started moving up the value chain -- a primary reason why the industry needs to put its act together to meet the coming crisis for trained manpower.

For example, the expectation is that by 2007, the industry demand for Java professionals alone will touch three million.

On its part, Nasscom is doing what it can by exploring the concept of a national skills registry of IT employees, which will operate on a shared services model and will be administered by a credible third party.

The industry body is also coming out with an assessment and certification programme to create an employable talent pool with benchmarked- requisite skills and will shortly unveil an assessment and certification for front line management.

A Nasscom-KPMG study has made detailed recommendations for attracting, training, certifying and deploying resources for the ITES industry.

Some of these recommendations, which are worth implementing, immediately are:

An ITES/IT awareness fund be created with industry support to generate awareness about employment in these industries, especially in Tier II and III cities through advertisements, workshops, seminars and counselling sessions.

Existing in frastructure i n universities/colleges and existing vocation counseling centres be leveraged, especially in Tier II and smaller towns to provide career counseling in ITES/IT opportunities.

Some IT companies have of course done pioneering work to become an employer of choice. TCS, for example, has put in place a comprehensive academic interface programme (AIP), process framework and proper infrastructure.

Under this programme, professors from academia are also sent on sabbatical to TCS.

Zenzar Technologies has also done itsbit. The company has partnered with Symbiosis International Educational Centre to offer placement guarantees to successful graduates of the institute's management course in information technology.

Admission to this course are on the basis of a national entrance examination: AIMS Test for Management Admission (ATMA). The batch of 90 students in this course includes engineering students from premier institutes as well as non- engineering graduates from relevant streams.

Parametric Technology Corporation (PTC) is another company that has made available its specialised CAD/CAM software Pro/Engineer to colleges across the world and is providing training on its platform.

The company has entered into a partnership with ITC Infotech to promote technological literacy among secondary school students throughout India and has provided over 200 engineering colleges, including the I ITs, BITS, and RECs, with Pro/Engineer software for their classrooms.

There are many more such examples. For BPOs, the signal is clear: shape up or ship out.

Attrition In Indian Bpo Industry

What is the biggest challenge for the BPO industry in India today? Well, it is a no brainer: Attrition!

The business process outsourcing (BPO) industry in the country which is expected to employ around one million people by 2008 is facing the challenge of finding quality human resources given the current attrition rate of around 50 percent.

Analysts say attrition rates vary by 20%-40% in some firms, while the top ones averages at least 15%. Nasscom in a report said the outsourcing industry was expected to face a shortage of 262,000 professionals by 2012.

The size of the Indian BPO market is likely to be around $9-12 billion by 2006 and will employ around 400,000 people, ICRA said in its Indian BPO industry report.

Mercer India said the industry should look beyond the traditional areas of recruitment and some thought should be given to employ physically challenged people and housewives. The reasons for the high rate of attrition was due to various factors like salary, work timings, other career options, adding that there is always the danger of costs increasing while billing rates decline.

With 245,100 people employed at the end of March 31, 2004 against 171,100 last year, the industry witnessed a hiring growth rate of about 40-42 percent. On the hiring front, the industry absorbed about 74,000 people in 2003 despite the attrition rate of 45- 50 percent being a matter of concern.

Attrition rates in IT-enabled businessprocess outsourcing sector have come down from the 30-33 per cent being witnessed of late to about 25 per cent now, according to statistics compiled by the National Human Resource Development Network.

Attrition rates	%
US	42%
Australia	29%
Europe	24%
India	18%
Global Average	24%
*Source-Times News New York (2003)	

If you compare attrition rates for a Voice and Non-voice process, then attrition rates are significantly lower in a non-voice process. As the industry moves up the value chain and becomes a full-scale BPO player, attrition rates will further decrease.

For BPO service providers, moving up the value chain is critical, given the attrition rates in the industry, which are on an average higher in low value- added segments (in call centres) as compared to higher value-added segments like engineering.

It will not be possible for the industry to arrive at a blanket agreement on poaching but bilateral agreements between companies are being signed. Basic norms are being put in place and code of ethics is being stressed upon by industry. Companies are being encouraged to adopt responsible behavior in order to ensure that the industry does not become a victim of its own actions. Industry needs to go aggressive but not cannibalistic.

In order to ensure a consistent flow of trained manpower in the future, the industry needs to work with the government to introduce courses at a school and college level, which are in line with the requirements of the ITES- BPO industry. India has one of the largest pool of English speaking graduate workforce. The challenge for the industry is not in employment but employability. The industry is also hiring professionals from outside the industry in order to meet its steady supply of manpower.

Honest corporate managers will tell you that to make offshoring work, you need at least a 300% to 400% wage spread between American software writers, engineers, accountants, and call-center employees and their Indian and Chinese counterparts. Labor costs have to be very, very low overseas -- not just lower -- to compensate for time-shifting, managing over such long distances, and decreased productivity.

High attrition rate, price wars, poor infrastructure and lack of data protection laws could derail India's booming outsourcing industry. This seemed to sum up the views of BPO fraternity at the Nasscom summit here.

Tackling Attrition Head-On

Industry experts feel, as the industry was still in its nascent strategy there was lot of strategies available to reverse this trend and make it an attractive employer.

NASSCOM ITES-BPO forum has identified HR as one of the key challenges of the ITES-BPO industry and has formed a special task force to address short-term challenges such as Attrition and also long-term challenges such as ensuring availability of a skilled talent pool.

To arrest this trend, companies can look into various options like good rewards, bonding programme, flexible working hours and stronger career path. With attrition rates ranging between 30-60 percent in the BPO industry, HR specialists feel that a scientific and analytical approach should be implemented.

The tremendous turnover rate is undeniably one of the main problems faced by the BPO industry globally. HR specialists at the Nasscom 2004 summit brainstormed on various approaches to handle this bugbear- either declare war on attrition and tackle it head on, or adopt a more scientific analytical approach.

Pay cheques alone are not enough to retain employees. Management also needs to consider other aspects like secure career, benefits, perks and communication. The attrition battle could be won by focusing on retention, making work a fun place, having education and ongoing learning for the workforce and treating applicants and employees in the same way as one treats customers.

Companies need to go in for a diverse workforce, which does not only mean race, gender diversity, but also include age, experience and perspectives. Diversity in turn results in innovation and success. The 80:20 rule also applies to recruitment, she quipped, since studies showed that 80 percent of the company's profit comes from the efforts of 20 percent of the employees. So BPOs need to focus on roles, which have the most important impact.

According to experts, the cost of attrition is 1.5 times the annual salary. Age should not be a barrier for training employees and could in fact bring in more stability to the company.

To provide a stimulating environment for its employees, BPOSource offersworld-class infrastructure with a spacious premises. operations facilities are equipped with de-stress & recreation rooms and large cafeterias. Transport and concierge facilities are available to all employees. Senior personnel closely monitor employee issues to ensure that the work force remains efficient and happy.

Investing in employees

We invest considerable resources in training with the programs and tools designed to meet specific

employee needs. This enables our employees to acquire multiple skills and knowledge across technical and managerial roles, thereby offering opportunities for vertical and lateral growth.

Our Training team, which has over 80 personnel, delivers various training programs for Executives. Last year the training team delivered 134 training programs and this amounted to a total of 32,000 man-hours of training across the company. At the entry Customer Service Agent levels, BPO Source has training programs that focus on topics ranging from Project Planning, Project Delivery to Personality Development to Six Sigma. The BPO Source Star Certification Program lays emphasis on preparing Team Leaders for real time scenarios and equips them with managerial skills.

We have several HR policies and programs that apply across levels. At BPO Source our primary strategy has been to grow talent from within. Close to 75% of the higher-level positions are filled from within the organization. For ambitious entry level employees we have clearly defined career paths that will ensure vertical or horizontal growth in functions such as Training, HR, Quality, Marketing, Support, etc. Under an internal job posting program called 'Aspirations', employees are encouraged to apply for lateral movements within the company. We have also invested in several Quality of Life programs. BPO Source encourages employees who want to pursue higher studies through a higher education scholarship policy called 'i- surge'. BPO Source was the first BPO in India to extend personal and career counseling services to employees.

BPO's Approach towards Inside Sales:

Be the first

Any market where customers areequipped with information is all set to become a buyer's market. When the players are many, the choices available for the buyer are aplenty. BPO however sees an opportunity in this. If you can pre-empt the competition, in providing relevant, timely and accurate information, you are saving the buyer's precious time. BPO, by following such a strategy, has always been able to get into the buyer's consideration set.

Pitch-in the appropriate

In sales you are as good as what you speak. Traditional face-to-face sales, has a limitation, in that, the sales person, many a times, has to shoot from the hip, for questions in areas, in which he/she is not a master in.

In tele-sales, its pertinent, to make the appropriate person answer the concerns raised. Doesn't it sound good to hear from an automobile engineer or a financial analyst about the problems in your car or about your mortgage loans?

BPO does just that in all its pre-sale transactions – positioning the right person to back the sales team in the pre-sales process.

Such meticulousness in serving a prospective customer puts BPO in a favorable light and gives re-assurance to the buyer about our service levels.

BPO harnesses the combined power of communication through the net and the phone, to provide information real- time.

Provides case studies, that are straight- to-the-point and very relevant.

At every point of significance in the transaction, the sales team calls up/instant messages/mails the client and gauges the interest.

It's an art to judge the buyer's comfort levels with being reached several times

Supplementary Education Services:

BPO has been the natural choice of world-renowned training houses, when they expand their reach. Quality of teachers, Scalability to demand and afford ability are the corner stones of such partner engagements. BPO now teaches, counsels and mentors students across 120 countries on a 24/7 basis.

Our services as a supplementary education partner:

Teaching English to native and non- native English speakers Correcting English answer scripts of the students Teaching Math and Science Counseling the students and mentoring them Moderating online classes BPO leverages its virtual classroom infrastructure and its ability to scale up to your needs in every supplementary education partnership. So you can now go online and cover more states with no prior investment on infrastructure!

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Public Relations And Corporate Image

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A B S T R A C T

Coordination of a variety of promotional vehicles, an integrated marketing communications strategy is implemented at specific times during a marketing campaign to ensure the message is consistently received by its target audience.

A sound integrated marketing communications plan requires a blend of strategic planning, design, and communications ingenuity enabling the marketer to reach through multiple channels in architecting growth for business, brands, and products. Facing the ever-increasing growth of competition in the marketplace for dominance of communication channels, businesses need to concentrate on perfecting their integrated marketing communications plan in an effort to stay on top.

INTRODUCTION

Businesses cannot afford to underestimate the importance of marketing to specific target audiences. In order to drives sales, a complete integrated marketing communications strategy should be explored and implemented to include public relations, advertising, internet, etc

Role Of Marketing Communication In Corporate Image

Various communication strategy assessment includes a variety of factors:

Primary sales/ communications objectives Competitive pressures Hurdles to success Marketing Communications Strategy: Evaluating Available Resources Creating an effective marketing communications strategy requires a realistic appraisal of the resources our clients have available. Each program takes into account the factors that will influence the selection of our tactics, including:

Business strengths and weaknesses

Budgets

Staffing

Time constraints

Choosing Appropriate Strategies & Tactics

The proven communications tools used include:

Public Relations

Advertising

Direct Mail

Literature

Digital Communication

Marketing Communications Strategy: Creating a Timeline

An effective marketing communications strategy addresses the client's immediate needs and future plans. NM Marketing Communications creates an implementation plan that sets a realistic timetable for achieving sales and communications goals. The timeline takes into account a number of factors, including:

Short-term and long-term objectives Phased implementation to accommodate market cycles Link to company developments or industry events Marketing Strategy and Communications Strategic framework for specific marketing decisions prior to developing communications Communications as a Strategic Corporate Resource Leveraging marketing and communications to a strategic level Basic corporate goals in terms of managing cash flows and generating shareholder value Analyzing goals as to how they relate to the use of marketing, communications, and the changing, interactive, customer - driven marketplace

Developing an Integrated Brand Communications Process

The increasing value of the brand to the organization Relationships between developing brand values, building customer relationships, and satisfying corporate goals Customer identification, customer valuation, and the development of communications programs (i.e., brand messages or brand incentives) Financial issues of brand communications Creating Brand Advocates Making customers "raving fans" of your products or services Strategic value targeting, customer insight, whole brand positioning and implementation, and integrating the whole range of "brand communications" Organizational Imperatives for IMC Building compelling brands by integrating their "total communications"

Tools to prioritize elements of the communications mix

Implications for allocating resources, organizational structures, processes, and metrics

Corporate Positioning

Every industry is witnessing unprecedented levels of competition. As competition intensifies, companies must work hard to differentiate themselves from their peers. The companies must carve out a unique position in the minds of their key stakeholders based on their visions, values, unique strengths and the value that they bring to the lives of customers, shareholders and communities they serve. Maximising shareholder value alone is not enough.Each company must identify and consistently project the unique value that it brings to the marketplace. As the pace of change intensifies, and as managements respond to these changes with newer products and services, the companies have to redefine themselves for their present and future stakeholders.

Employee Communications

Successful corporate management in the new millennium is essentially about managing accelerated pace of change. When companies develop strategies for responding to changes, managements, particularly in the developing world often overlook the importance of communicating the change initiatives to employees.

In most Indian companies employee communication often means a monthly or a quarterly newsletter. In most cases, the standard contents are the CEO inaugurating some irrelevant internal function, or coverage of employee picnics or family events and other material which has little impact on equipping t he employees t o understand and adapt to the company's strategic initiatives.

If strategy must succeed it is imperative that the entire organization understand it and work in tandem for achieving corporate goals. Effective employee communications is the difference between unlocking and blocking the full potential of the organization.

Basic Definitions: Advertising, Marketing, Promotion, Public
Relations and Publicity, and Sales

It's easy to become confused about these terms: advertising, marketing, promotion, public relations and publicity, and sales. The terms are often used interchangeably. However, they refer to different -- but similar activities. Some basic definitions are provided below. A short example is also provided hopefully to help make the terms more clear to the reader.

Advertising

Advertising is bringing a product (or service) to the attention of potential and current customers. Advertising is focused on one particular product or service. Thus, an advertising plan for one product might be very different than that for another product. Advertising is typically done with signs, brochures, commercials, direct mailings or e-mail messages, personal contact, etc.

Promotion

Promotion keeps the product in the minds of the customer and helps stimulate demand for the product. Promotion i nvolves ongoing advertising and publicity (mention in the press). The ongoing activities of advertising, sales and public relations are often considered aspects of promotions.

Marketing

Marketing is the wide range of activities involved in making sure that you're continuing to meet the needs of your customers and getting value inreturn. Marketing is usually focused on one product or service. Thus, a marketing plan for one product might be very different than that for another product. Marketing activities include "inbound marketing," such as market research to find out, for example, what groups of potential customers exist, what their needs are, which of those needs you can meet, how you should meet them, etc. Inbound marketing also includes analyzing the competition, positioning your new product or service (finding your market niche), and pricing your products and services. "Outbound marketing" includes promoting a product through continued advertising, promotions, public relations and sales.

Public relations

Public relations include ongoing activities to ensure the overall company has a strong public image. Public relations activities include helping the public to understand the company and its products. Often, public relations are conducted through the media, which is, newspapers, television, magazines, etc. As noted above, a public relations is often considered as one of the primary activities included in promotions.

Publicity

Publicity is mention in the media. Organizations usually have little control over the message in the media, at least, not as they do in advertising. Regarding publicity, reporters and writers decide what will be said.

Sales

Sales involves most or many of the following activities, including cultivating prospective buyers (or leads) in a market segment; conveying the features, advantages and benefits of a product or service to the lead; and closing the sale (or coming to agreement on pricing and services). A sales plan for one product might be very different than that for another product.

Public Relation

Generating publicity is not as complex as you might think. Most of the success of public relations centers on knowing what to do and when. Implementing these initiatives can dramatically increase awareness of your business.

Public relations (PR) is often confused with advertising, merchandising, promotion, or any of a dozen other buzz words in the marketing communications vocabulary. (By the way, *marketing communications* is a broad term that encompasses all of these disciplines.)

Public relations is about doing something newsworthy that you want to communicate, and then telling your audience (or very likely, several audiences) what you have done.

One of the most common public relations vehicles is the brief "New Product" announcement you see in magazines and trade publications. Often only a few lines or a paragraph in length, these announcements herald the launch of future products or services. These short announcements are typically triggered by a new product release, which may be accompanied by various forms of communications such as internal announcements to the organization's employees and external news releases to the media, stockholders, user community, and other groups. News releases trigger a chain of events that result in visibility.

There are some important terms that may help you understand public relations. *News media* refers to all the places where people read or hear about news, including newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and the Internet.

A *news release*, sometimes referred to as a press release, is a printed or electronic document issued by organizations who want to communicate news to editors, journalists, industry writers, or other media groups. Journalists write about the story for publication (if it is considered newsworthy), while editors control whether the story actually appears in a newspaper, magazine, website, or broadcast.

A news release contains important facts, quotes from key people, dates that the news happened (or will happen), and contacts for additional information. The news release is concise and usually runs no longer than two pages.

Public relations, then, can be thought of as the process that delivers your news to the people you want to reach through a broad, influential, and far- reaching news media community.

Public Relations Differs from Advertising

Advertising is very different from public relations. One key difference is that you always pay for the space and time of an advertisement (or commercial, which is an insert appearing on radio, television, or the Internet). By contrast, editorial coverage generated through public relations is not paid for by the organization issuing the news release. The media will pick up and publish the story because they consider it news worthy, not as a paid advertisement.

Another crucial difference is that, in advertising, you have virtually full control over the message. Because you are paying for advertising, the ad or commercial runs your exact text (called copy), provided the copy complies with generally acceptable standards for advertising. In the case of public relations, the media outlet you are targeting is under no obligation to run the story in any form. If a media outlet does decide to run the story, an editor will generally rewrite the news release, or use pertinent information from the news release to create the news. (For instance, your news release might be used as part of a larger story on players in your industry or profession.) In addition, you have no control over when the release or news will run. All decisions are made by the editor.As you can see, public relations is a cost-effective way of getting your story out. Taking the trouble to write effective news releases and to build a relationship with the relevant media will, in time, pay dividends in the form of exposure and prestige. Best of all, public relations probably costs less than a single advertisement.

Public Relations

Since public relations communicates messages through the news media, all the power of the media is brought to bear when the public—those viewers, listeners, or readers the company want to reach—learns about news.

Think of what this means: high interest level, credibility, implied objectivity, and possibly implied endorsement by the journalist or publication reporting the information. There is also an urgency conveyed when news is reported in the media—and that news has the potential to reach a tremendously large audience.

With exposure comes awareness. An important goal of public relations—in any medium—is to make people aware of what your organization is, what it offers, and what it does. Never underestimate the value of such awareness. In flashier terms, it's called *buzz.*

Creating awareness for your organization is important for the development and utilization of its programs and initiatives. You must inform the public and educational and training institutions about what you offer and how you can meet their needs. Public relations is probably the most valuable tool in accomplishing this. A well-implemented public relations initiative will help present your organization's offerings to their best advantage.

Public and news media relations also positions you to enter new marketplaces and exposes new Linux programs to new audiences—all without the expense associated with an advertising program. A sustained public relations program allows you to ensure your programs are in front of appropriate decision-makers. This continuous flow of information creates a constant awareness and a constant influx of inquiries—especially when integrated with other powerful marketing communications tools such as brochures, trade shows, and so on.

Benefits of a Public and Media Relations Program

Public relations are vitally necessary, perhaps even critical, in today's competitive marketplace. There are many ways a sustained public relations program can benefit your organization: Public relations should not be a "we will do it if we have the time and resources" kind of effort. A sustained initiative can build your organization's profile in the news media and the local community.

Editorial coverage gives your organization better stakeholder attention compared to paid advertisements.

Editorial copy generated through effective public relations is far morebelievable and credible than paid advertising, due to media objectivity. Recent studies in North America suggest that positive editorial coverage generates up to nine times more visibility than paid advertising.

Public relations is an economical means of promoting organization.

Regular and effective news releases can make organization a "news media source" on the state of Linux. It is critical to develop relationships with the news media in the same way it is a good idea to develop other kinds of friendships in the community. Writers and reporters are always looking for reliable and respected sources to quote. Regular media exposure legitimizes organization's work and enhances its reputation. There is a subtle but nonetheless real perception that mention in a newspaper or on television must be important. Media coverage communicates to the business community that your organization's qualifications and programs are worthy of "a serious look."

You must also be cautious when dealing with media outlets. Being overconfident or overly aggressive in trying to place stories with the news media can have damaging results. It is a lot easier to lose goodwill than to gain it back. The safest position is to understand what you are doing, work hard to accomplish predetermined and realistic goals, be courteous and respectful when dealing with your media contacts, and expect some disappointments along the way. After all, hard as company may try, the results of the public and news media relations initiatives are never predictable.

Public and Media Relations Planning

The first and most important step in public relations planning is to understand and define what organization want to accomplish through public relations. What are organization objectives? Just as importantly, how will organization determine (measure) organization success in accomplishing these objectives? Creating a list of concrete goals can help organization maintain direction in organization efforts.

Corporate image

The best way to gain insight into this question is to look from the other side of the communications channel: Of all the people that organization deals with, who do organization need to tell about new programs and products? Often organization most important contacts will be organization current and future partners, IT professionals in organizations local area, human resource managers, training and development personnel, and organizations offering competing products.

To reach organization's public relations goals, there are many key audiences and stakeholders that organization should regularlycommunicate with to gain higher visibility. The following list details a few of the most important audiences: *News media.* Includes print, radio, television, and Internet outlets for business news, information technology news especially related to Linux and open source, vertical media (directed at a people with similar interests such as a hobby or business), human resources, colleges and universities, and organizations and enterprises dealing with Linux or Linux information management solutions.

IT professionals. Includes practicing IT professionals, students, and prospects such as people considering a career change.

Influencers.

Business partners and suppliers.

Includes communicating to strategic partners such as independent software vendors, training providers, and suppliers, which helps organization become a valued business partner to these groups, each of which bring specific value to organizations business.

The third step in public relations planning is to understand what organization want to say. To attain organizations objectives, it is critically important to maintain message consistency when delivering organization organization's messages, vision, mission, and core values to organizations target audiences. Consistency creates a stronger impression and helps people remember organizations core messages.

Although a given message may be "tweaked" or "massaged" for different audiences, the core messages should not vary.

Examples of happenings that generate interest.

Locations and launches. This kind of news is obvious. For instance, a new branch of organization may have just opened, and organization want to make people aware of the new location and offerings. Also, if organization are launching a new product or have hired a local figure well-known to the Linux community, these things are of great interest to the public.

Industry developments and human interest. Sometimes newsworthy information is a little less obvious. Every day happenings can be in the news. Whenever there are changes or new developments in the industry, this clearly presents an opportunity for positive exposure and media coverage in appropriate publications. For instance, how and why the change is being undertaken may become a story in itself. Perhaps the change is being driven by a dynamic Linux guru, worthy of a magazine profile. Sometimes these stories are called "case studies" and typically are given favour able consideration by editors because of their considerable human interest appeal.

Numerical data and trends. Society isfascinated with numbers. The more impressive or interesting the figures (relative to competitors and the rest of the industry), the more likely media outlets are to use those numbers in their reporting.

Organizational announcements. Notable changes in staff or volunteers are another way of getting media exposure. The more important the position, the more newsworthy organizational announcements become.

Partnerships. Especially partnerships with far-reaching effects across the industry create a major news story.

I ndustry recognition. W h e n organization wins an award or is recognized by peers, let the world know! The bottom line is that organization can find news in almost any event. Organizations responsibility is to ensure that organization becomes known and respected by editors, journalists, educators, and other stakeholders with whom organization are communicating. Remember, the more respected organization is, the more (and better) coverage organization are likely to receive. The determining factor in that judgment will be the audience—the readers, viewers, and listeners who organization reach.

Effective and well-organized public relations efforts require news releases and correspondences to reach an appropriate editor.

Contacting the News Media

All contacts with the news media create an impression of organization and organization that carries into the public perception. Creating and updating a media contact database is the first step towards developing good relationships with editors and writers. When organization are contacting editors, remember that editors are busy professionals, so being polite and to- the-point are vitally important. Customizing organizations pitch for different editors and types of media will a l so give organizations information a better chance of being published. Effective media contacts will make organizations public relations campaign a success for organization and the publications that organization are featured in.

Creating a Media Contact Database

Organization cannot underestimate the importance of maintaining and continually updating a database of editorial contacts who have an explicit or implied interest in Linux and organization. Directories available in organizations local reference library list publications of every description, giving the full particulars of their readership, editorial staff (often with contact information), circulation, publication frequency, areas of coverage, and other relevant information. Consulting these directories is the first step towards building organizations media database.Time must be spent in researching names and contact information for organizations database. Organization will need to know the audiences of each publication, names of key editors, these editors' responsibilities, the dates of special-focus issues concerning Linux, and more. This information will allow organization to do a better job of targeting organizations news to the right media contacts. For instance, there may be occasions when organization want organizations news to reach certain editors but not others. Organizations news may only concern a portion of organizations database, such as the educational community. Organizations research (and later, direct experience) will tell organization that only certain editors will be interested. In short, there is a lot of homework to be done identifying the news media related to organization area and learning the specifics about them. The more information organizations database contains, the more valuable the information will be to organization.

Before organization contact any editor, organization need to know where to call, email, or write. Fortunately, there are dozens of published directories of editorial contacts. While organization could

easily spend thousands of dollars buying or subscribing to them, organization do not need to. As mentioned above, organizations l ibrary probably has several subscriptions on hand.

Some of the more popular directories for North American and international contacts include the following news media organizations. There is likely a membership fee (depending on the service level requested) to access the databases of these groups.

Another way to find local media contacts and organizations is to look in organizations local telephone directories. Here are some categories to start organization on way (organization local Yellow Pages may list these under different headings):

> Broadcasting companies
>
> News publications
>
> News services
>
> Newspaper feature syndicates
>
> Newspapers
>
> Publishers - periodicals and magazines
>
> Radio stations
>
> Television stations

Once organization have created a list of potential editors to contact, find out as much as organization can about their publication, coverage areas, and special interests. Become familiar with their publication, their website, or their broadcast. Get to know the beats (coverage areas) of specific reporters.

Maintaining Organizationr Database

Whether organization keep editorial contact information in an electronic database (such as an ACT or DBF file) or in a t raditional Rolodex, organizations contact information *must* be kept up-to-date. Editors come and go, reporters are reassigned to new beats, and publications merge or create spin-offs. Organizations need to stayon top of these changes. Review organizations media contact list at least every three to four months. Contact appropriate people in each organization to get updates of names, email addresses, and phone numbers. Through this exercise organization may discover new targets to whom organization can pitch organizations story.

The primary purpose for the letter of introduction is to open the lines of communication and to make organization self or designated spokesperson available. Be sure to give organizations full name and contact information. *Most importantly, do not forget to include organizations email and website addresses.* Email is the preferred method of communication in the journalistic community. Make corresponding and dealing with organization easy for organizations media contacts. This is critical to the success of any media and public relations program.

If organization include broadcast in organizations public relations program, organization will need to adjust the terminology accordingly. Instead of editors, organization will be corresponding with news directors and producers; instead of readers, organization will be referring to listeners, viewers, or an audience. No matter what their job description is, remember that organization are dealing with actual people. The more personable organization are in organizations correspondence, the more likely organization are to see results.

Using the Phone

Regardless of the size and scope of organizations media relations program, look for an opportunity to directly contact at least some of the editors and journalists important to organization. The telephone is a tremendous ally in any public relations program. A phone call establishes person-to-person contact, lends credibility to organizations public relations effort, and helps organizations contact to associate a name to the news releases organization subsequently send to them. A few moments on the phone, either as a prelude or a follow-up to a news release, not only draws attention to organization but can also impart a sense of immediacy and urgency that may provide the edge organization need to acquire editorial coverage of organizations story.

Once editors know of organization and organization, there may be times when they contact organization directly. For example, the publications organizations have targeted may occasionally feature an editorial focus on Linux. Check the editorial calendars of these publications on a regular basis. Periodicals plan their issues two to three months in advance of the publication date, so organization need to be proactive in pitching (telling) organization's story ahead of time. Editorial calendars are often made available on the publication's website. They are also usuallyavailable free of charge from the publication's advertising department. If all else fails, contacting the publication's editorial assistant and making a polite request should yield positive results.

Another important way to use the phone is to find out who organization should be contacting at a specific publication. The receptionist is usually cooperative and very knowledgeable about this. Organization may end up talking to a lot of different people before organization get the answers organization need, but public relations is far more effective when organization deliver organizations news to the right people.

Making the Pitch

"The Pitch" (that is, "selling" organizations story) has changed over the years. Pitching is often not done just by regular mail, telephone, or even fax anymore. These days, most contacts are made through email.

Before sending anything, organization should try to find out how a particular editor or journalist likes to receive pitches and in what format the pitch should be presented. In-depth database research on numerous publications and reporters is available from companies. Every editor or journalist has their own preferences for receiving news releases and pitches. Knowing whether to call, fax, or email makes a world of difference—and may even be the difference between getting organizations news read and covered, and not. While sending the same email to 20 editors is quick, easy, and painless, organizations pitch may not get the attention organization deserves. Though e-mail has simplified and certainly quickened the transfer of information between public relations professionals and their media contacts, email has some drawbacks. Email is not as personal as a phone call, as quick as glancing over a fax, or as formal as a letter sent by post. The ease and ubiquity of email can sometimes make building a working relationship with certain editors or journalists more difficult.

For example, a particular Bloomberg reporter (who shall remain anonymous) does not like receiving pitches by email. In her words: "Email tells a one-sided story in its pitch. It makes it impossible to ask questions regarding some uncertain aspects." Because of this, this reporter prefers to be contacted by phone. She will only read and accept email if the email relates to her beat and covers all the points she wants covered.

Carrie Donovan, an editorial assistant for The Washington Post, states: "Initially, I prefer postal mail pitches, since I receive artwork and photos for stories. Images sent via email tends to be problematic, either too small for us to run or it may look bit-mapped (jagged-looking)." She also observes that emailed releases are more likely to have missing information, something as seemingly obvious as an address to an event. Like most media professionals, Ms. Donovan wants all the facts delivered

coherently andcomprehensively. Failure of a public relations representative to do this is enough to turn her off completely.

Whatever method organization use to correspond with an editor or reporter, always remember that media people are *extremely* busy. After all, they live and die by deadlines. Although organization may want to know if organizations contact has received organizations pitch or news release, phoning them is generally not recommended. Most editors don't have the time to answer follow-up calls or engage in lengthy conversation.

First impressions count. The best advice we can give when organization are dealing with a news editor for the first time is to tailor the pitch specifically to that editor's beat. Then sit back and hope for the best. Although this approach sounds unpredictable, this is the nature of public relations.

By corresponding with editors in the way they prefer (which may not be the easiest or most convenient way for organization), organization will set a good impression for organization. With persistence and good manners, organization may eventually become an authority to whom journalists and editors willingly turn for commentary.

Pitching for Different Media

The news release, the most common way in which organization will communicate news, mostly serves print-based media such as newspapers, magazines, and the Internet. Pitching stories for television and radio will be somewhat different.

Print-based Media

Every publication has a lead time for accepting releases and pitches. Generally, daily and weekly newspapers have quite short lead times, while monthly or quarterly magazines may have a lead time of several months. Each publication will also have requirements regarding text and graphic formats. For instance, they may accept only plain-text documents with no formatting or require graphical files (such as photos) to be submitted in a particular file type and resolution.

Although organization do not need to become an expert in desktop publishing and print production, having a general knowledge of these areas will be extremely beneficial. Familiarize organization self with commonly used text formats (such as Microsoft Word for print and HTML for the Internet) and

graphical formats (such as eps, jpeg, and gif). For important communications, organization may wish to engage the services of a copy editor, graphic designer, or other publishing professional.

The Internet today works similarly to the print media. Speed is paramount for this medium. News can be posted immediately, without waiting for the printing presses to roll. Space limitations are not as much of a concern as they are for print, and the online edition will often publish stories that do not fit in the printed edition.

Naturally, online editors prefer to receive organizations news electronically. Targeting the rightonline editors can result in almost immediate posting of organizations news. Be sure to build relationships with online editors as organization would for print editors. The online world is a growing segment that organization simply cannot afford to ignore.

Television and Radio

Studies show that television has replaced newspapers as the primary medium from which people get their news. These studies also found that TV news had a much higher credibility rating than newspaper coverage. Thus, specialty TV programs may offer an excellent opportunity for communicating organizations story. Such shows may include: local TV news shows, programs produced by community TV stations, business or information technology shows, and educational shows.

Because television emphasizes visuals, organization should look for stories and angles that permit interesting or engaging video footage. Radio interviews are another excellent vehicle for publicizing organization and activities. Contact organizationr local radio station and pitch organizationr self as an interview candidate to the news director or assignment editor. Know that organization must have a compelling and convincing answer to the question, "Why should our listeners be interested?"

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