

Excellence Theory In Public Relations

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The Excellence Theory

The Excellence Theory is defined as a method used in the public relations industry to determine how companies can use an organized system to better manage efficiency and environment. This theory has multiple processes to see how a company performs and how it can be fixed to make the organization better. The multiple processes include a public relations evaluation which determines the strategic management, the models they use for public relations, employee communication, gender, diversity, ethics, and social responsibility (Grunig, 1992). It also includes a survey interview in which executives and employees within multiple organizations including nonprofits, government, and more participated.

The Excellence Theory used measurements to determine the value of public relations within the different companies and included the management's decisions that affect society and the stakeholder's relationships that it influenced. James E. Grunig (1992) said an organization has a chance to be effective by behaving in ways, such as determining who is affected by certain situations that will change within the company and how certain problems get solved. By behaving in this way, it can increase the skill of problem-solving and have the goals of stakeholders, as well as the management executives, be satisfied with the results. By achieving these steps, organizations were using symmetrical communication to effectively overlook what's best for both the company and the public.

The other parts that make this theory successful are if companies leave the roles of strategic management to just marketing, the value of the public relations in that organization loses its meaning. Diverting the responsibilities of these roles to only marketing can result in a stakeholder only being interested in that particular section. These types of actions result in asymmetrical communication.

Constructs And How They Work With This Theory In The Public Relations Industry

Page Center Training (n.d) defines two-way asymmetrical models as a model that uses compelling dialogue to influence certain actions and mindsets of particular stakeholders. This model allows public relations specialists to review any feedback to see what they can improve to make their messaging better. However, people with different motives can pursue the company with a bad message. This model allows the organization to incorporate feedback while promoting their organization's values. "Further, the model suggests that public relations professionals should consider the implications of their persuasive messages on others. Such a broadened focus illustrates the ethical development of public relations from a self-interest approach to one that incorporates a concern for others in its actions (Page Center Training, n.d)." This is typically known as an imbalance way to communicate to society because it does manipulate and influence the public how the organization wants them to behave.

Organizations have great influence over the world and can use two-way asymmetrical models in a negative way. With their influence, it can make society as a whole feel exactly what the corporations want them to feel. Clara Gustafsson (2005) explains this idea in the following statement, writing "Today, large corporations hold important positions in the global, as well as local community. Corporations have responsibilities towards the communities they are part of. In many cases, stakeholders do not have much choice but to trust corporations to take their responsibility. Because of the increasing power of corporations, philosophy of social science is called for in order to gain more knowledge regarding asymmetrical reciprocity of trust in business relationships (Gustafsson, 2005. P. 142)." Especially in 2020 and 2021, all corporations have pushed some influence in major topics we deal with daily, such as politics, religion, and lifestyles.

Different from the two-way asymmetrical model, the two-way symmetrical model is the model that a public relations specialist should act as a connection between an organization and the public rather than a persuader. Ohio State University (n.d) explains this model is used as a mutually beneficial situation for both parties. Unlike the two-way asymmetrical model, this is known as a balanced way to communicate with your targeted audiences. This process uses communication to express the organization's values with the public and reduces issues between the organization and stakeholders.

An example of the two-way symmetrical model is social media platforms and organizations. Social media is a great strategy to use for promoting a brand/company and allowing the fans to interact with said brand. Ryan Tewes (2016) discusses the use of the social media platform Twitter with the connection of sports teams that go along with this model. "In order to utilize Twitter to its fullest extent, professional sports teams must devise a social media communications strategy that will allow fans to feel a connection with the organization. At its core, public relations establishes and maintains relationships between the organization and the public that is mutually beneficial. For a professional sports organization to be successful, its public relations department must develop a strategy that forms this bond. (Tewes, 2016. P. 1)." When it comes to an organization and its fans on social media, people like that the company actually hears them and their thoughts. The public also likes the idea that they are being taken into consideration for certain business decisions that going to benefit them.

With social media being involved more in everyone's daily lives, one-way communication is starting to be used more. MyEducator (n.d) has defined one-way communication as a person who directs a message to someone and the receiver of that message does not give any response in return. This method is typically known if it's instructions through

any digital communications between the company or individuals of a company. This is also known to be a faster way of communication, there's a disadvantage to using this as one will not know if the receiver has received the message and there could be miscommunication if it's not perceived correctly.

Due to the new age of technology, we are able to communicate with others at the speed of light. Communicating has never been easier for the human race before, we are able to send out any social media post, texts, emails, virtually anything. However, there is a disadvantage to this. When we send something, there's a chance the person on the receiving end won't get our message or will ignore it. Edosomwan, Kouame, Prakasan, Watson, and Seymour (2011) agree with this statement by writing ... "There are several communication channels in an organization that includes meetings, phone calls, and emails. These communication channels have their own limitations such as forgetting a message, missing to take notes during a meeting, and searching for information in a huge list of emails which can be challenging (Edosomwan, Kouame, Prakasan, Watson, and Seymour, 2011. Pg. 7)." This is important to look at all notifications and making sure every direction is understood, just in case there's something urgent that needs to be talked about.

As one-way communication is only one-sided, two-way communication is the opposite as there are two responding participants. Study.com (2019) has defined two-way communication as a person who directs a message to another person and the second participant sends a response back to the original sender to acknowledge they have received communication. This method of communication is used mainly between employees, executives, and consumers. It's important to receive any feedback, especially from consumers. This allows the organization to know what to improve on regarding its services and/or products.

With social media playing a huge part in the world, it's important for an organization to stay connected with its followers. Bottles and Sherlock (2011, Pg. 70) mention that social media isn't meant to be difficult and that it's meant to be nurturing relationships with your consumers so that loyalty can strengthen as the organization builds. Two-way communication is a great model to use for businesses, it allows them to personally connect with their customers.

The Public Information Model is defined as a technique for public relations. This model allows public relations specialists to publish or give information into a news story for the public to be updated or to learn about. "Organizations put a high value on sharing accurate information, which is additionally solely meant to inform the public without focusing on publicity (ToolsHero, 2020)."

Hon and Grunig (1999) present the idea that it is important for individuals in the public relations industry to give out correct and coherent information about their company. Companies are being judged based on how they present themselves to the public eye and how much attention the company gets from these stories that are put out. "Outputs are usually the immediate results of a particular PR program or activity. ... They measure how well an organization presents itself to others, the amount of attention or exposure that the organization receives. Outcomes measure whether target audience groups actually received the messages directed at them ... paid attention to them ... understood the messages ... and retained those messages in any shape or form (Hon and Grunig, 1999. P. 2)." Companies might also take into account the quality of the story/information itself. Not all information is "news-worthy" to share and it might hurt their reputation.

Page Center Training (n.d) defines the Press Agency Model as the lowest method to use in public relations as it focuses on mainly publicity. It's something companies will use through

headlines to attract a consumer's interest and see what is happening. There have been quotes throughout the last few decades saying how all publicity whether it's good or bad, is always good publicity because it gets your name out there. However, if an organization is constantly associated with bad publicity, consumers are most likely not going to buy from them.

The Conclusion Of The Excellence Theory In Public Relations And How It's Used

While the Excellence Theory was tested for almost three decades by research and interviews with the executives and employees of over 320 different companies. It's still a theory that is used to the current day by many agencies, corporations, and companies of all types. Theories like this particular one are still being improved by the constant research to help the public relations industry make better marketing decisions for their organizations. Grunig (2006) explains that research is determined by environmental scanning, the interest of the public, the empowerment of this industry, and more factors. The Excellence Theory can have completely different factors to it but the foundation of this will always be the same, it's a marketing strategy that will be used by many in the upcoming decades as well.

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