

Chapter 4

4 Planning PR Programme

- Introduction to planning PR programme
- Reasons for planning PR programme
- The six-point planning model
 - Appreciation of the situation
 - Logical planning
 - PR transfer process
 - Investigation of the situation
 - Opinions polls
 - Problems solving
 - Methods of appreciating situations
 - Definition of an objectives
 - Publics
 - Media and techniques
 - The selection of media and techniques
 - The range of PR media
 - Planning of budget
 - Assessment of results
- Planning for an exhibitions for public relations
- Types of exhibitions for public relations
- How feedback is obtained
- Summary

Objectives

At the end of this chapter students should be able to:

- Understand reasons for planning PR programmes
- Understand the use of objectives

4.1 INTRODUCTION - PLANNING PR PROGRAMME

Planning is a fundamental function of management. It consists of selecting strategies from among alternative courses of action, both for the enterprise as a whole and for every department or section in it. Planning is, in effect, deciding in advance what to do, how to do it, when to do it and who is to do it. Planning assumes that rational processes can be used to nominate resources and define appropriate future action which will produce the desired outcome.

A proper PR campaign is usually customized to meet the specific needs of the clients. A PR firm must know precisely how to capitalize upon the media, customers, investors, and the general public. A company's image is shaped by such ongoing programs.

A PR program introduces the company to key editors, writers, reporters, and broadcasters, representing a vast range of media outlets, locally and nationally. To some extent, PR programs and communication efforts must be integrated for maximum benefits and exposure. The PR program must identify and package a client's story and second, have the channels to distribute that story to audiences.

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4.2 REASONS FOR PLANNING A PR PROGRAMME

Before a PR program is undertaken, information must be gathered, data must be collected, and interpretation must be done. It is essential that considerable thought must be given to what should be done and in what sequence to accomplish an objective. A good PR program should be an effective tool to support an organization's business, marketing, communication and its objectives. In other words, PR planning should be strategic. PR is important to ensure that effort and funds are not wasted. Four important reasons for planning are:

1. ***To set targets or objectives for PR operation.*** This will be required since it will act as a benchmark for the PR practitioners to assess the actual result with the planned results.



2. ***To estimate how many working hours are needed and other costs involved in the PR activity.*** This will ensure proper budgeting and planning and can ensure proper documentation in future.



3. ***To select priorities that will control (i) the number and (ii) the timing of different operations in the programme.***



4. ***To decide and identify the feasibility of carrying out the declared objectives according to the availability of (i) sufficient staff with the right skill, (ii) physical equipment such as office machines, cameras or vehicles (iii) an adequate budget.***

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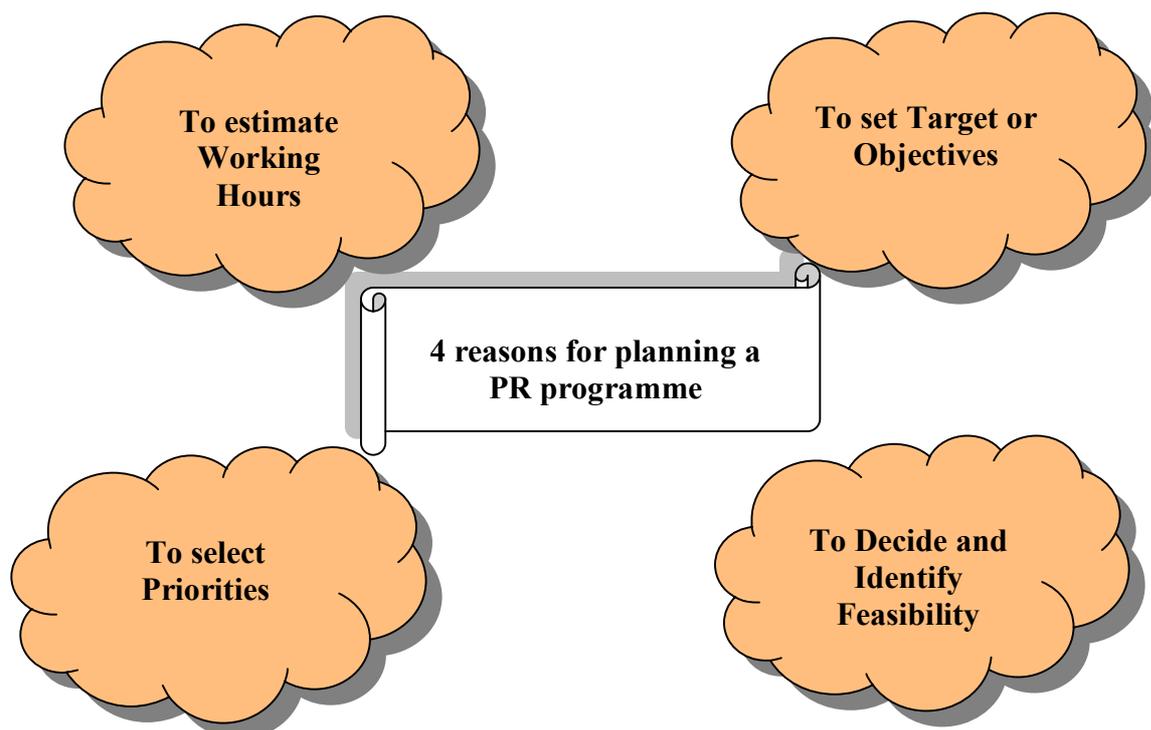


Figure 4.1: Reasons for planning a PR programme

Figure 4.1 emphasizes the important factors for planning a PR programme. Without proper planning; the PR practitioner would always be starting new things and never finishing others. In addition, a PR practitioner will look unprofessional and purposeless.



4.3 THE SIX-POINT PLANNING MODEL

Planning is one of the most important project management and time management techniques. Planning is preparing a sequence of action steps to achieve some specific goal. If you do it effectively, you can reduce much of the necessary time and effort of achieving the goal. A plan is like a map. When following a plan, you can always see how much you have progressed towards your projected goal and how far you are from your destination. Knowing where you are is essential for making good decisions on where to go or what to do next.



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Planning is also crucial for meeting your needs during each action step with your time, money, or other resources. With careful planning you often can see if at some point you are likely to face a problem. It is much easier to adjust your plan to avoid a coming crisis, rather than to deal with the crisis when it comes unexpected.



The simple six point planning model which is widely accepted by PR professionals and PR practitioners are as follows:

1. Appreciation of the situation
2. Definition of objectives
3. Definition of publics
4. Selection of media and techniques
5. Planning of a budget
6. Assessment of results

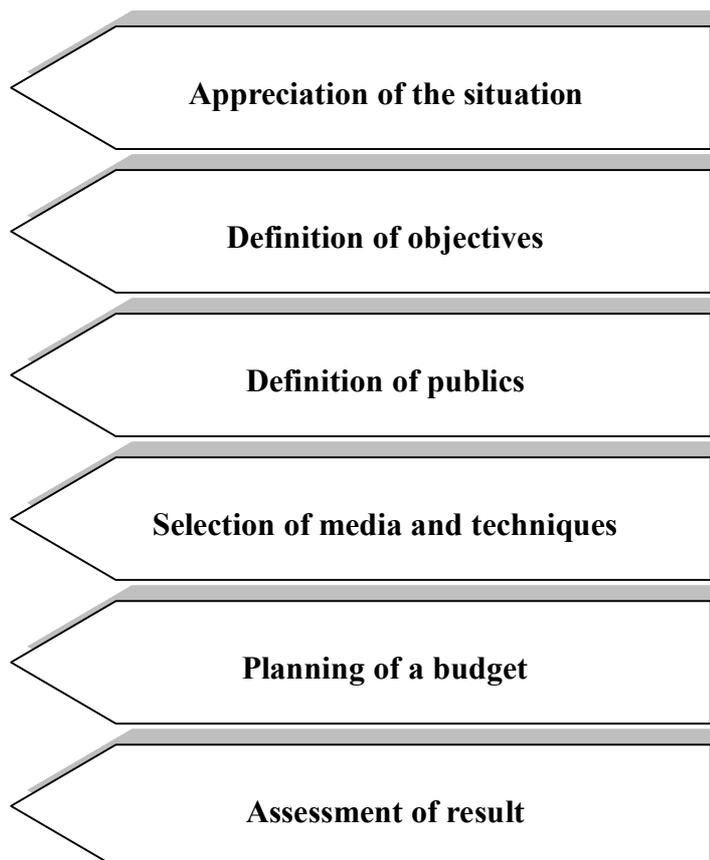


Figure 4.2: The six point planning model

4.4 APPRECIATION OF THE SITUATION (THE SIX POINT PLANNING MODEL)

4.4.1 Logical planning

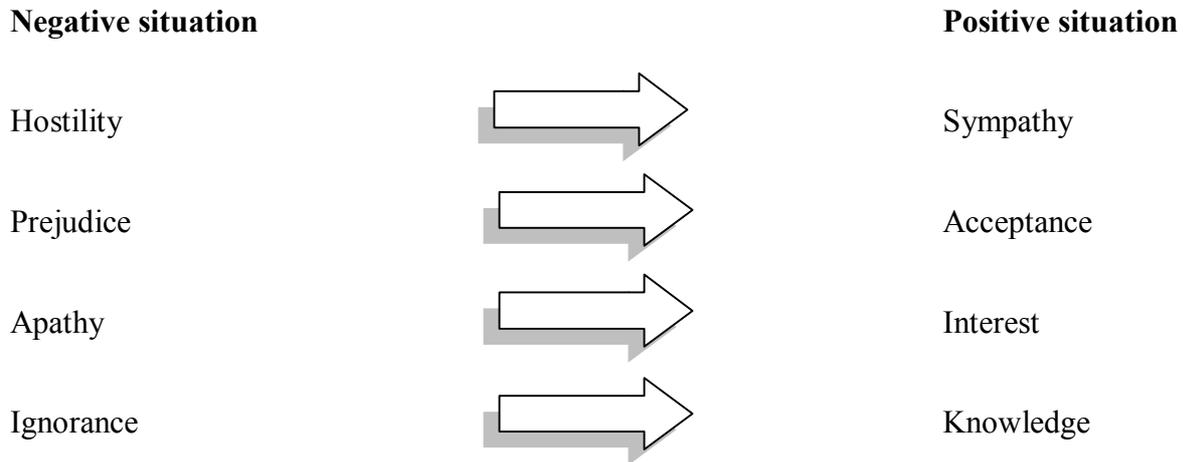
This refers to the planning by objective procedures, but it depends on the skills and efficiency with which it is applied. Before a PR programme can be devised, it is necessary to have a clear understanding about its starting point.

For example what are the public's opinions and image that our public have on our subject? This information can be obtained by conducting a communication audit, which examines the flow from an internal as well as external perspective.

Communication audit attempts to monitor and evaluate the channels, message and communication of an organization. It provides an organization with advance information which may prevent a major breakdown. PR practitioners can take the initiative in planning for their future rather than defensively reacting to a communication crisis.

4.4.2 The PR transfer process

The PR transfer process is the classic PR situation. This transfer process aims to convert four negative attitudes into four positive ones. Basically, knowledge creates understanding and its core principal of PR objective is to create understanding.



The four negative states are as follows:

- (a) **Hostility** – refers to the state of feeling of hostility. The organization has to ask to what extent enmity exists and what are the best solutions to the problem?
- (b) **Prejudice** – refers to feeling a strong dislike based on fear or false information. It may be caused by parental, educational, religious, social or class influences, environmental or just plain misunderstanding. At first, people may have conservative attitudes to new ideas and resistance. As they become converted to acceptance of the new idea, they will accept the change and become enthusiastic supporters.
- (c) **Apathy** - refers to lack of interest, enthusiasm or concern. Disinterest can be the product of laziness, selfishness, non-creativity, lack of imagination or a result of not having one subject being presented in an interesting and convincing way.
- (d) **Ignorance** – refers to lack of information about something. Nowadays, in today’s busy world, no one knows and understands everything. So, it is the responsibility of the PR practitioners to accept that it is necessary and important to compete for a place in people’s minds and hearts.



4.4.3 Investigating the situation

Investigation of the situation is required in order to recognize the real situation of the problems. This investigation may be done by observation, by study or examining existing information and statistical data which is known as 'desk research'. Nowadays, research is widely accepted by PR professionals as an integral part of the planning program development and evaluation process.



Observation Is a Means of Data Collection

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4.4.4 Opinion polls



Opinion polls are also known as attitude surveys, where an interviewer asks questions to a group of people who represent the particular public aimed at.

The results of the interviews or answers given can be produced for different people of different kinds holding certain views and opinions. The results of the first survey would identify an appreciation of the situation.

When a PR activity proceeds, a similar survey can be carried out at intervals of perhaps six months to record any changes in people's opinions, degree of understanding or attitudes.

4.4.5 Problem solving

Once the situation is appreciated and understood, it is possible to identify problems and suggest any recommended solutions.

Public Relations is referred to as problem-solving business: a process of identifying how to achieve a better understanding of this or that.



4.4.6 Methods of appreciating the situation

An example has been given of the opinion poll, but the fuller list of methods of appreciating the situation may include studies and analysis of:



- Opinions, attitudes, or image surveys
- Press cuttings, monitored broadcasting scripts
- State of competition and effects of imports
- Sales figure trends and sales report indications
- Share prices, if a public company, stock market opinions, dividends and balance sheets
- Industrial relations situations – strikes and wage settlements
- Customer complaints, product performance and test reports
- State and effect of the weather, if relevant
- Discussion with sales force and distributors
- Prices and effect of price changes
- Market forces: economic, social, political
- Attitudes of opinion leaders

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4.5 DEFINITION OF OBJECTIVES (THE SIX POINT PLANNING MODEL)

The first step in developing a PR program is to determine goals. Several company objectives may be reached through publicity. The possible objectives for a business company are as follows:

- (a) To improve the calibre of job applicants
- (b) To change the image because the company has introduced new activities, e.g. the company which once made shoes now makes clothes
- (c) To make the company known and understood in new export markets
- (d) To tell the little-known story of the company and gain credit achievement
- (e) Private company going public or to prepare the stock market for a new share issue
- (f) To educate installers, consumers or users about the products
- (g) To improve relationship between organization and community. This to avoid misunderstanding of the company's intentions.
- (h) To regain public confidence after a disaster which reflects the company's sufficiency and reputation
- (i) To establish and create a new corporate identity
- (j) To make known the chairperson's participation and involvement in public life
- (k) To support sponsorship schemes



- (l) To make known the company's research activities.
- (m) To convey the company's message to the community.
- (n) To establish, maintain and constantly reinforce the company's relationship with all segments of the media.

4.6 DEFINITION OF PUBLICS (THE SIX POINT PLANNING MODEL)

4.6.1 Defining publics

The public needs to be defined in order to identify which public needs to be targeted. Since the public is wide, it needs to apply constraints and decide exactly which publics can be reached effectively, within the allocation of a budget which is important in choosing a correct and suitable media. Suppliers, staff, distributors, customers, investors, and opinion leaders are aware and may all see television coverage. So, the suitable media here is televisions. (The public has been defined in Chapter 2).



4.7 SELECTION OF MEDIA AND TECHNIQUES (THE SIX POINT PLANNING MODEL)

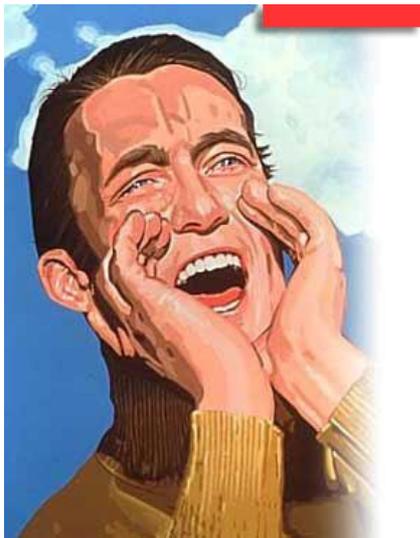
4.7.1 Selection of media and techniques

Public relations include ongoing activities to ensure the organization has a strong public image. Public relations activities include helping the public to understand the organization and its products or services. Similar to effective advertising and promotions, effective PR often depends on designing and implementing a well-designed PR plan. Similar to advertising and promotions, a media plan and calendar can be very useful, which specifies what media methods are used and when.

Often PR is conducted through the media such as newspaper, televisions, magazines, etc. Publicity is mentioned in the media and reporters and writers decide what will be said. Public Relations should consider two points: firstly, what groups of stakeholders do we want to appeal to and how? Secondly, what communication media do they see or prefer the most? One should also consider advertising by looking into collaborations, annual reports, networking, televisions, radios, newsletter, classified, posters and etc. PR practitioners also should ask what media is most practical to be used in terms of accessibility and affordability, and what messages are most appealing to each stakeholder. Media is a medium that helps PR practitioners to reach publics. The media may be the press and a technique may be a press reception.



Five comparisons may be made between PR and advertising media as follows:



- (a) The PR practitioners deals with journalist, editors, TV and producers, whereas the advertising practitioners deals with advertisement managers, space representatives and radio or televisions sales managers.
- (b) Advertising is only restricted to those media which may be expected to produce the best results at the lowest cost.
- (c) Advertisement space and air time need to be paid for. However, there no need to pay for editorial space programmes. Broadcast PR material or publicity is not free advertising and cannot be evaluated based on rate-card basis.
- (d) Different media may be used for advertising and PR campaigns. Advertising may be done in colour magazines, whereas PR materials are introduced in feature articles.
- (e) PR uses its own private media, such as house journals which in some instances may be necessary because commercial media, as would be used for advertising purposes, do not exist.

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4.8 THE RANGE OF PR MEDIA

The following are the main media used for PR purposes:



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- **Audio visuals** – slides and video cassettes (for replay on a television set). Videotapes (VCDs and DVDs) have superseded 35mm films.
- **The press** – regional and national newspapers: free newspapers, consumers, special interest, trade, technical, and professional magazines, directories, year books and annuals.
- **Television** – international stations (Astro), regional station (TV3, NTV7). This is a system by which information can be called up onto a television screen.
- **Radio** – local (Era, THR), national, international.
- **Exhibitions** – special PR exhibitions; PR support for exhibits in trade or public shows, overseas trade fairs.
- **Direct mail** - the advertising medium of direct mail may also be a PR medium, if personal letters are used to convey a PR message, e.g. mailing information to customers.
- **Spoken words** – Personal confrontation or eyeball-to-eyeball communication can be effective whether over a drink or meal, in an office, on the telephone or on the workshop floor.
- **Sponsorship**: for sports, arts, university fellowships, expeditions, causes and charities. Involvement in sponsorships can create goodwill.
- **House journals** – also known as company newspapers. There are two kinds of house journals (i) internal: newsletter, magazines and newspapers distributed to employees, pensioners, shareholders, members, subscribers or ratepayers (ii) external: similar kinds of publications distributed to special outside readerships, such as distributors, users, consumers, or opinion leaders.

- **Other forms of PR media** – This also includes Goodyear airships or air balloons which are illuminated with PR messages and flown over the country; postage stamps to educate drivers and pedestrians about road safety.



4.9 BUDGET

4.9.1 Planning of budget

Budgeting involves understanding how much money you earn and spend over a period of time. When you create a budget, you are creating a plan for spending and saving money.

PR is labour intensive and the biggest cost is usually working hours. Besides, other major cost can be the printing of house journals and the making of videos. The cost of videos, may be more than one budget if, for instance a construction job is being filmed from start to finish. When the video is ready, it will be shown for several years, so future budgets are needed for maintenance, distributions, and updating sequences.



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4.10 ASSESSMENT OF RESULT

There are several techniques which can be used in order to assess the results of PR activity. Three points that need to be considered are:

1. The research techniques in the process of appreciation of situation can be repeatedly used to evaluate the result and the opinion poll. Using the attitude test is another good example.
2. Methods and techniques to be used in evaluation and assessment should be decided in the planning stage.
3. Since there are schemes that set out objectives, there are declared targets against which the result can be tested. Even if they are qualitative rather than quantitative.



4.11 PLANNING FOR AN EXHIBITION AND PRESS EVENT FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

Exhibition promoters use PR on behalf of their shows to inform potential exhibitors and visitors and to support participants in the show. The press office is an important service to both exhibitors and the media. By being involved in the exhibitions, exhibitors can extend the value of their stand or booth by taking advantage of the press officer's services. Some stands may be used for PR purposes, the opportunity being taken to create knowledge and understanding rather than to

advertise and sell something. Anyone taking part in an exhibition has many PR opportunities, if prepared to carry out a proper scheme of activity. The plan for PR action should be decided as soon as the stand space is booked, which may be as much as a year in advance.



An ideal procedure might be as outlined below:

- a) Contact the exhibition press officer immediately the contract for stand space has been signed. The purpose of contacting the press officer is to know about the press day arrangements, the person who will be the official opener, press office facilities that will be provided and many more.
- b) Information about exhibits should be sent to journals which are previewing the event. This information is often invited by editors and it is not necessary to buy advertisement space.
- c) The exhibit catalogue entry should be submitted by the prescribed date.
- d) If a private press reception is to be held on the stand (or elsewhere) during the run of the show, catering arrangements and the dispatch of invitations must be made in good time.
- e) If there is to be no private press reception, individual invitations can be sent to the media to visit the stand. This may include an invitation to attend a demonstration.
- f) In certain cases, retailers, agents and other distributors may be invited to visit the stand, not only to see new products but also to meet company personnel. Admission tickets will have to be ordered from the exhibition promoters.
- g) Reference to the company's participation should be featured in the house journals.
- h) Local media should be informed.

4.12 TYPES OF EXHIBITIONS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

Exhibitions may be divided into the following types:

- Public exhibitions such as JOM HEBOH conducted by Media Prima
- Trade exhibitions usually limited to ticket holders and bona fide business people, eg. The Toy Fair, Furniture exhibition and Motor Show.
- Private exhibitions, held on own or hired premises, to which guests are invited
- Overseas trade fairs, to promote the products of a country, attract importers, or provide an international showplace with national pavilions and stands. The International Motor Show is a typical example.
- Mobile shows, the exhibitions being transported by trailer, train, special vehicle or aircraft. Ships have also been converted into floating exhibitions which have toured ports, numerous firms displaying their goods on board.
- Portable exhibitions which can be taken from place to place and set up in public halls, foyers of various buildings, libraries, hotel rooms, station forecourts and so on. They may be either public or private.
- Small exhibitions for show windows, hotel foyers, railway station and airport concourses. They may be housed in glass cases or mounted on display panels or specially set up in an allotted area. They may include samples, models, photographs, charts and lettered panels.
- Shopping Weeks sponsored by governments, trade associations, manufacturers, tourist organizations and other bodies e.g. Karnival Jualan Mega Malaysia. Shopping Weeks are held in large stores in foreign towns and cities. They are usually supported by window displays and in-store demonstrations and may be linked with theatrical events such as cinematic shows and stage shows consisting of national singers and dancers.



4.13 HOW FEEDBACK IS OBTAINED

Feedback is the result of some events done. Feedback used to evaluate the result of PR campaigns. There are several techniques used to obtain feedback, namely:

- By evaluating a statistical data on audience numbers and ratings - for example, by assessing the trends in buying patterns of the consumers, or sales reports.
- By interviewing the consumers – to obtain feedback, it is also necessary to interview customers to identify their opinions and reaction towards the products or services being sold to them.
- By distributing questionnaires – this method can help in getting feedback from customers and in searching for necessary information.
- Opinion polls – the extent of awareness can be measured by means of an opinion poll. If samples of relevant publics are interviewed at intervals of, for example, six months, it is possible to measure the upward or downward trend of the shifts.

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4.14 SUMMARY

Proper planning is important for the success of the PR activities. There are several reasons why planning PR programmes are needed. A PR firm must know exactly how to capitalize upon the media, customers, investors and the general public. Reasons why planning of PR programmes are needed are to set target or objectives for PR operation, to estimate how many working hours are needed and the cost involved, to select priorities which will control the number and the timing of different operations and to decide and identify feasibility of carrying out the declared objectives according to the availability (staff, physical equipments and adequate budget).

The PR manager needs to identify and understand the six point planning model namely appreciation of the situation, definition of the objective, definitions of publics, selection of media and techniques, planning of a budget, and assessment of results. By understanding and distinguishing the six point planning model, a manager can better control resources, set objectives and have better coordination and control of PR programmes. Appreciation of the situation refers to a clear understanding of the real situation before any planning can be formulated. There are several PR transfer process in order to transfer from a negative situation to a positive situation. The PR transfer process consists of changing hostile negative situations to sympathy, prejudice negative situations to acceptance, apathy negative situations to interest, and ignorance negative situations to knowledge. In order to find out the real situation to the problem, there are several techniques that can be used namely opinion polls, problem solving, press cuttings, interview sessions, questionnaires and many more.

Definition of objectives is the process whereby the PR manager carefully determines and defines the objectives of the PR programme. In the process of defining publics, the manager should carefully select their targeted audience for their PR programme. Then, the PR manager should carefully decide what are the suitable media and techniques to reach their publics. The media may be the press and techniques used such as a press reception. Determination of budget requires the PR manager to plan for the budget such as labour budget, machine budgets and many more. Lastly, the PR programme must then be evaluated to decide whether the programme reaches its goal or not.

4.15 EXERCISE

Section A: Fill in the blanks.

1. _____ refers to feeling a strong dislike based on fear or false information.
2. Transfer process aims to convert four _____ attitudes into four _____ attitudes.
3. _____ refers to lack of interest, enthusiasm or concern.
4. _____ are also known as attitude surveys, where an interviewer asks questions to a group of people who represent the particular public aimed at.
5. _____ is a medium that help PR practitioners to reach its publics.

Short answer questions.

1. What are the elements of the six-point PR planning model?
2. What is meant by 'appreciation of the situation'?
3. What is the PR transfer process?
4. What is an opinion poll?
5. What are the means of appreciating the situation?
6. Make a list of as many PR media as you can think of.
7. What are the three points which should be noted concerning the assessment of results?