Exploring Public Relations

Global Strategic Communication

Fourth Edition

Ralph Tench • Liz Yeomans

Exploring Public Relations

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Global Strategic Communication

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For password-protected online resources tailored to support the use of this textbook in teaching, please visit **www.pearsoned.co.uk/tench**

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Professor Ralph Tench is a full professor of communication education and a past director of research for the Faculty of Business and Law at Leeds Beckett University, with responsibility for the research strategy for over 150 academics representing law, accounting and finance, strategy and economics, marketing and communications and human resource management.

Dr Tench is the former subject head for public relations and communication at Leeds Beckett University, where for ten years he oversaw the expansion of the undergraduate, postgraduate and professional course portfolio. As professor he teaches on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, as well as supervising MA and PhD research students. His current focus is on developing and delivering major research projects in public relations and strategic communication in the UK and worldwide. He was the principal investigator for the first and largest EU public relations funded programme, the ECOPSI (European Communications Practitioners Skills and Innovation) programme. This project explored the education, skills and competency needs of European communication practitioners (www.ecopsi.org.uk). The three-year project contributed to competency frameworks for communications and the production of self-diagnostic tools (www.p4ace.org). This research builds on another international longitudinal research project (that celebrated its 10th year in 2016) funded by European bodies and private sector business, the European Communication Monitor (ECM) survey. The ECM (www.communicationmonitor.eu) is a qualitative and quantitative trend survey of European communications directors using a sample of over 3000 practitioners from 46 countries each year. Reflecting the breadth of his research experience and application, Professor Tench has recently directed another European-funded project exploring deliberative engagement and working in the SME sector (sme-engagement.eu) as well as supporting research projects such as the Public Health England Whole Systems Obesity multi-disciplinary project.

Professor Tench is a past external examiner for many UK and European universities, as well as a visiting professor. His doctoral students are engaged in research on issues of strategic communication related to trust, responsibility, reputation and branding, health communication and relationship management. He also supervises students on issues of professionalisation and the development of the public relations discipline. He has chaired over 30 PhD examinations and sat on panels for candidates in the UK, South Africa, Hungary, Ireland, Australia and Denmark.

Professor Tench is president-elect of the European Public Relations Research and Education Association (EUPRERA) and is a past board member of the association since 2013. He is also past head of the Scientific Committee for the Annual Congress (2009–2015). He is a member of the International Communication Association (ICA) and sits on the editorial board for the *Journal of Communication Management,* the *Journal of Further and Higher Education, Corporate Communications: An International Journal, Public Relations Review* and the *International Journal of Strategic Communication.*

Ralph is a regular guest and keynote speaker at academic and practitioner conferences and his research has been published and disseminated in over 200 books and journals worldwide. Previous editions of *Exploring Public Relations* have been translated into several European languages. Dr Tench has edited two volumes on his research interests in corporate social responsibility with Emerald – *Corporate Social Irresponsibility: A challenging concept* (2013) and *Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility* (2014). In 2017 he published *Communication Excellence: How to develop, manage and lead an exceptional communication department.*

Dr Liz Yeomans is principal lecturer and former subject group head for public relations and communication at Leeds Business School (Leeds Beckett University),

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Since joining the institution in 1994, Liz has helped establish a leading centre in public relations education. As well as contributing to the university's BA (Hons) Public Relations, Liz has led the development of courses for working professionals and established masters programmes in public relations and corporate communications, including a Master in International Communication together with four European institutions that comprise the Geert Hofstede Consortium. Her teaching focuses on the social psychology of communication, research methods, public relations theory, stakeholder relations and employee communication at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Among her achievements, Liz obtained funding for and led a successful Erasmus programme, *Women in Public Relations in Europe* in 2014. The programme, organised with partners at Istanbul University and LMU, Munich, attracted over 20 postgraduate students to a two-week residential summer school to research and debate gender equality in the communication disciplines. In addition, Liz has supervised numerous student research projects, three of which have gone on to win the annual EUPRERA Jos Willems dissertation prize.

Liz's research interests include emotion work in PR (the topic of a monograph for Routledge, forthcoming); women and gender equality; fair internships in the communication industries; employee engagement and qualitative research in communication. She supervises doctoral work releated to these areas. She has published in the *Journal of Communication Management, Corporate Communications: An International Journal, PRism* online journal, *Public Relations Inquiry* and the *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations,* where she has guest-edited a special issue on qualitative research in communication. Liz has presented at several international conferences including BledCom (Bled International Research Symposium), EUPRERA annual congress, and ICA and has reviewed numerous conference papers and journal articles.

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Richard Bailey FCIPR MPRCA is an experienced public relations educator. He has taught in universities since 2003, has been a professional trainer and has taught on and assessed professional qualifications. He previously worked as a PR consultant and PR manager in the technology sector (including time as chief press officer for a FTSE 250 company) and before that wrote for a business magazine about technology. He has edited *Behind the Spin* magazine (www.behindthespin.com) since 2008 and has published and presented on media relations, social media, public relations education and aspects of the history of public relations.

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Ryan Bowd is an award-winning strategic marketing and PR practitioner, who mixes a professional life of communications practice and academic teaching and learning. Currently he acts as a consultant and advisor to several key organisations and individuals in the Qatar region and globally, including Josoor Institute, in the areas of sport, event business and education. In his previous role as director of education for Josoor Institute, he helped to launch Josoor Institute and deliver programmes in sport and events to over 1500 delegates from over 90 countries. Prior to this he was head of practice for sport development, education and mass participation for IMG; where clients included the Abu Dhabi Tourist and Cultural Authority, Adidas Eyewear, Asics, Etihad, Gatorade, GE, GE Capital, inov-8, International Hotels Group (IHG), Tata Consultancy Services and the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy. He also worked at Weber Shandwick Public Relations and owned 1090 communications, the latter of which he sold to Connectpoint PR (now Amaze PR). Bowd has also lectured at Leeds Beckett University, Manchester Metropolitan University and Leeds University at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in a range of positions.

Professor W. Timothy Coombs, PhD, is a full professor in the Department of Communication at Texas A&M University and an honorary professor at Aarhus University in Denmark. His research areas include crisis communication, activist use of the Internet to pressure organisational change, and issues management. He is past recipient of the Jackson, Jackson and Wagner Behavioural Research prize from the Public Relations Society of America. His articles have appeared in a variety of international journals and his book chapters have appeared in major works in the field of public relations, including the *Handbook of Public Relations* and *Encyclopedia of Public Relations.* His crisis books include the award-winning *Ongoing Crisis Communication* and *Code Red in the Boardroom,* and he co-edited *The Handbook of Crisis Communication* with Sherry Holladay. His other

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Dr Kate Fitch is a senior lecturer and academic chair at Murdoch University in Perth, Australia, where she has taught since 2001. She has published extensively on diverse public relations topics, including gender, popular culture, pedagogy, and history. Her book, *Professionalizing Public Relations: History, Gender and Education,* was published in 2016. Recent publications focus on gender in public relations and on promotional culture. Her current research investigates historical representations of female practitioners and celebrity public relations. Kate is on the editorial boards of *Public Relations Review, Public Relations Inquiry and PRism.*

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Foreword

With this 4th edition the editors and authors succeeded once more in presenting meaningful updates of their contributions following the latest national and international developments and insights in the fast-changing world of public relations.

Like most people in the public relations scholarly community, I have studied numerous books on public relations, and on corporate communication or communication management, as the field is often called in other countries. Most books are very technical 'how to' books, promising that you will be able to do the job as long as you follow the tips of the author. Some books are very theoretical, analysing merely one single theoretical focus, with the promise that you will become a good practitioner as long as you follow this approach. *Exploring Public Relations* is none of these, or to put it differently: it is all of these books in one. It is theoretical and practical at the same time, it provides an insight in almost all theoretical approaches and different ideas on how to look at and do public relations, and it raises unsettled questions about the definition, the tasks of the professional, the debate about professional ethics, and the issue of its impact. This is the most open-minded book I know.

Look at the prudent way in which the editors have challenged almost everything that is commonly left un-discussed in the educational and practical fields of public relations. That public relations has to do with persuasion and also with propaganda, that the public relations field has a problem with its legitimacy, that there is no consensus whatsoever about what public relations is and what its value is for organisations of all kinds. The authors try to avoid taking a stand, leading us through all the discussions, rumours and evidence about these issues. What a book! It is fresh and good, it covers all current topics and simultaneously opens up a lot of perspectives. And all this in a very user-friendly manner. The book is built on the premise that a textbook should put the student at the centre of the learning experience. And that is exactly what it does.

It is an excellent book for undergraduates who want to know more about the field. But at the same time it is also enlightening and very practical for professionals who want to open their windows and learn more about the field they are working in. It not only shows a variety of different approaches and models within the discipline of PR but also interdisciplinary connections with communication studies and the wider context of social sciences. This makes the book also relevant and important for master's programmes in public relations and communication studies. Public relations is an evolving discipline and its growth requires continual questioning to challenge its boundaries and establish its terrain. The authors have brilliantly succeeded in doing that.

The first edition of *Exploring Public Relations* was a milestone. It was both very British and very international. *Exploring Public Relations* not only provided helpful guidelines to practical action, but raised unsettling questions about impact and implications as well. It was diverse, different, and consistently thoughtful in departing from the US norm. Instead of simple platitudes about equal exchanges, *Exploring Public Relations* looked at how to actually perform public relations in an ethical manner across very diverse cultures. It was also theoretically inclusive, with a light touch that challenged students to make up their own minds at the same time as they learned how to become competent practitioners. It was not uncritical of a field where technical mastery can override moral behaviour, as my colleague Professor David McKie from Waikato Management School, University of Waikato, New Zealand wrote in his foreword for the first edition.

Subsequent editions were updated in an enviable way, including all kinds of new issues, for example about the media context of contemporary public relations and journalism, about the intercultural and multicultural context of public relations, about corporate image, reputation and identity, and last but not least about research and evaluation. This fourth

edition has a further update, for example on communication theories (chapter 8). The book includes reference to almost everything that has been written in the last couple of years. It is updated with the newest insights from European as well as American and Asian perspectives. What an effort!

The first part of the book provides you with the background knowledge you will require to understand the role and purpose of public relations set against the broader business and societal contexts in which it plays an active role. Part two demonstrates that public relations is multifaceted and can be interpreted through a number of theoretical perspectives. In part three the focus is laid on the practice of public relations and, finally, in part four all kinds of consid-erations are explored, on health communication, on corporate communication, on positioning celebrities and countries, and on the future of public relations.

This is a book every public relations author wished (s)he had written. It will help to provide students with an introduction into the field, and will also help teachers to discuss important topics with their students. You will not be disappointed.

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Preface

Welcome to the fourth edition

We first conceived of this book in the early 2000s and it started with the idea that a textbook should put the student at the centre of the learning experience. While it is true that textbooks in general are becoming more student-centred for subjects as varied as biology, law, media and psychology, this was not and has not been the case in public relations. *Exploring Public Relations* very much led the way in this approach for our discipline and the feedback and compliments the book regularly receives are testimony to this. With this approach we wanted students to have an improved learning experience by involving them in a personal journey that brought the subject to life on the page and spurred them on to find out more. And this is what we have tasked ourselves to do with this exciting fourth edition. Our earlier editions brought challenges and so has this version of the book. But we have benefited from the ability to listen to students and academic colleagues in how they read, study with and educate using the first three editions of the book and its supplements. And through this listening we have attempted to answer any questions or gaps in the earlier versions to ensure it is fit for purpose in a challenging, changing world of communication.

The key areas we have addressed are the most obvious ones in contemporary life of how the techniques used in public relations and communication have been influenced by rapid technological change and its integration, particularly in the past five years. To reflect this we have introduced a new chapter on digital and social media, and have ensured that all chapters consider the implications of technology and change on the theory and practice of the discipline. Clearly some chapters have integrated these influences more than others. One of the key features of the book is that it is an edited textbook and all chapters are written and reviewed within a consistent framework. This means that the book has a particular style and consistency that we have been keen to preserve. This is partly achieved by only working with senior and experienced academics and practitioners who share a mission to understand and explain the discipline. We are therefore pleased to be able to include contributors from around the world who are closely associated with us individually and collectively at Leeds and have the same aspirations to improve the subject knowledge and application of public relations in society. Again we feel this was and continues to be a unique feature and strength of the book as it has evolved.

So who to write such a comprehensive text? For this we looked to our colleagues at Leeds Beckett University who teach on our well-established undergraduate, postgraduate and research programmes. We also looked to our wider network – senior academics and practitioners who have contributed to our subject area and programmes, former colleagues who have moved on to careers elsewhere and past external examiners.

Target audience

Feedback suggests there is a diverse range of readers for *Exploring Public Relations* from senior practitioners to undergraduate students. It is the preferred textbook for universities around the world as well as for professional bodies and professional courses which adopt it as their core text. Its content is comprehensive, which perhaps explains this broad appeal. That said, the book is written in a way that it can be used and read by someone who is totally new to the discipline as well as a student or practitioner with significantly more depth of understanding. The contents pages of the book demonstrate how it can be used to support more practical and theoretical aspects of the discipline and at different levels. Therefore it is a perfect accompaniment for undergraduates and postgraduates who are studying public relations as a single subject (i.e. a bachelor's or master's in public relations), jointly with another subject, or as a single module or unit within a wider programme.

Book style and structure

The book is divided into four parts. Part 1 provides important background knowledge to help students understand the broad business and societal context in which public relations plays a role. Included here, for example, are chapters on democracy and on the intercultural and multicultural context of public relations. New to this fourth edition, as mentioned earlier, is a much-needed appraisal, in chapter 3, of digital and social media. In Part 2 there is a chapter on the related, but often ignored, topic of persuasion and propaganda to help you arrive at your own definitions, as well as a chapter on professional ethics – a topic of increasing importance; while Part 3 includes emerging specialisms such as issues management, community involvement, financial PR and public affairs. Part 4 comprises chapters that are not conventionally included within a public relations textbook, for example, the chapter on pressure groups and NGOS, health communication and celebrity public relations. The final chapter looks to the future and provides some themes and questions that we hope student readers will take up as topics for investigation and research. Public relations is an evolving discipline and its growth requires continual questioning to challenge its boundaries and establish its terrain. As students, teachers, researchers and practitioners we are all responsible for achieving this aim.

more deeply about the issues and ideas that are being presented and discussed. We have attempted to define terms or phrases that may not be universally understood or which form part of the specialist language related to that topic or area of study which are included in a glossary at the back of the book. Finally we have included many cases studies (**Case studies** and **Mini case studies**) which aim to exemplify and apply the principles under discussion.

Over to you

We have been delighted and occasionally surprised at the warm response to our first three editions. These have been read and used for teaching literally all over the world and with gratifying endorsements of our original pedagogic strategy of making clear links between theory and practice. However there are many questions about public relations and its practice which remain under explored. These we aim to highlight in this book, inspiring readers to investigate further, possibly through detailed research for undergraduate and postgraduate projects, dissertations and theses. We hope this revised fourth edition continues to bridge the divide between theory and practice and, above all, is a thought provoking and enjoyable read for students, practitioners and tutors alike.

Pedagogy and its place

This is an educational textbook for public relations and therefore includes a number of devices that we hope will help both students and tutors to get the most out of the material. First, each chapter begins with a list of the **Learning outcomes** which students should achieve after engaging with the material. We have structured the book to have a range of consistent pedagogy which support the reader in understanding the chapter subject. For example, there are regular **Explore** features which give instructions on where to look for further information or how to engage further with topics. **Think abouts** are included to encourage reflection and for the reader to pause and think a little

Acknowledgements

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Finally, but not least, we would like to thank our families. For Ralph, this dedication goes to my father John and of course to Catherine, Anna and Will. A physical object like the book is some justification for why I spend so much time in a bike-filled home office.

For Liz, this fourth edition is dedicated to John, Daniel and Hannah for their constant love and support.

Ralph Tench and Liz Yeomans, 2016

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PART 1

The context of public relations

This first part of the book provides you with the background knowledge you will require to understand the role and purpose of public relations (PR) set against the broader business and societal contexts in which it plays an active role. Chapter 1 discusses how public relations is defined, its early origins, including proto-public relations practices, and how it evolved across the globe as the contemporary practice we recognise today. Chapter 2 discusses frameworks for analysing and understanding the relationship between public relations and the media/journalism, while recognising how both practices are changing in response to technological and economic developments. Chapter 3 examines technological developments in further depth, specifically digital and social media which are taking public relations into a new era of practice. Arguably, public relations is essential to modern democratic societies. In Chapter 4 the relationship between democracy and public relations is examined and critiqued. Chapter 5 examines the societal context of public relations from the organisation's perspective, highlighting the theme of corporate social responsibility. In Chapter 6, the international and multicultural context of public relations is introduced. Finally, we turn to the role of the public relations practitioner in Chapter 7 to focus on what public relations practitioners do.

Public relations origins
Definitions and history

Learning outcomes

By the end of this chapter you should be able to:

■ identify and discuss the main aspects of public relations development over time

■ review and critique the different interpretations of public relations history

■ analyse and discuss different national and cultural interpretations of public relations and its history

■ examine your understanding of historical research and identify sources, such as articles, books and archives, for future research.

Structure

■ Proto-public relations: the antecedents of modern public relations

■ The expansion of public relations in the twentieth century

■ The worldwide development of public relations since the mid-twentieth century

■ How public relations grew

Introduction

In this chapter, the formation of public relations (PR) as a practice will be traced from its earliest indications in the ancient world through two millennia and up to the end of the twentieth century. There are many **antecedents** of public relations and these were mainly methods of promotion and of disseminating information. It was not until the late nineteenth century that the term 'public relations' was first used, although public relations-like practices (also called proto-public relations) were evident.

Organised communication practices, recognisable as public relations, were introduced in Germany and the United States in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In the United Kingdom, public relations were noticeable from the mid-1920s onward, primarily in government. Professionalisation in the form of university-level education and practitioner associations mainly appeared after the Second World War. From the 1950s onwards, the practices of public relations as promotion (or **marketing PR**) and public relations as communication management continued to expand across countries in the Western world, although it was suppressed in the Soviet bloc of Eastern Europe and in China until the early 1990s. By the 1980s, public relations theory and practice were evolving in more sophisticated forms that focused on the formation of mutually beneficial relationships and as a support for organisations' reputation. In this and following decades, it expanded internationally and, notably, attracted an increasingly feminised workforce that was educated at university level.

This chapter will consider the definitions of public relations as well as the antecedent, the springboard (impetuses for expansion) and the restraints that held it back in some regions of the world. Methods of interpreting the history of public relations will also be considered.

This chapter will thus consider how public relations gradually became identified as a planned, strategic practice whose purposes were to communicate and build relationships in a mutually beneficial and ethical manner. As it evolved, public relations developed from personal and organisational promotion, benefited from technologies such as print and, later, mass media, became an important element in empire- and nation-building, and has formed worldwide practices with increasing employment and economic importance. See Explore 1.1.

Box 1.1

What is public relations?

At the outset of a chapter on the history and origins of public relations, a definition of the topic is needed. How does it differ from advertising, publicity, propaganda and other forms of communication that aim to persuade and inform? There have been innumerable attempts to define public relations. In the mid-1970s, Rex Harlow identified more than 400 versions or variations. Since then, more have been proposed, discussed and, in some instances, dismissed. Watson and Noble (2014) comment that 'some commentators see the surfeit of definitions as a weakness of public relations; others appreciate the debate that surrounds them as an indication of vigour in the field' (p. 6). This chapter won't propose a single definition as it will show that there have been a wide range of cultural, managerial and political and religious influences upon the formation of public relations theories and practices. However, there are some characteristics that shape the wide variety of forms of public relations that are evident.

- It is a planned communication and/or relationship-building activity with strategic or deliberate intent (Lamme and Russell 2015). Some definitions emphasise the management of communications (Grunig and Hunt 1984; Broom and Sha 2013), the management of relationships (Coombs and Holladay 2006) and the creation and maintenance of reputation (CIPR 2016).

- It seeks to create awareness among specific groups, often referred to as 'publics' or 'stakeholders', and engage their interest.

- The interest of the public should result in a mutually beneficial relationship or response, possibly as dialogue. Thus, it is different from publicity, which only seeks to disseminate messages.

- In its most common form, public relations has been enacted through the media, which has been the gatekeeper of communication. This is an important difference from advertising, which places messages through the purchase of advertisement space and airtime (radio, television and online). With the rise of social media, public relations activity has increasingly become a form of direct communication, bypassing media scrutiny.

Although the US public relations pioneer Edward L. Bernays proposed that 'public relations attempts to engineer public support' (Bernays 1955: 4–5), the term 'to engineer' is rejected by many as implying manipulation rather than truth-telling. Many scholars and practitioners contend that ethical communication is the bedrock of professional public relations.

Proto-public relations: the antecedents of modern public relations

When did public relations (or similar practices) start? See Explore 1.2. Karl Nessman (2000: 211), in a rather tongue-in-cheek comment, suggests that it 'would date back to Adam and Eve, to the point when people had to win over the confidence of others'.

Other suggestions include Sumerian wall-markings from 2000 BCE (in modern Iraq) to the persuasive rhetors of Ancient Greece (400 BCE) to Roman emperors. Al-Badr (2004) has claimed that a 4000-year-old cuneiform tablet found in Iraq was similar to a 'bulletin telling farmers how to grow better crops' and thus a form of promotional information. It has been noted that Julius Caesar, when he was Consul in 59 BCE, arranged a daily news tablet or sheet called *Acta Diurna* (Daily Gazette) that offered information to the Roman populace and showed him as an active leader. In the Christian era, Robert Brown (2015) has proposed that the Apostle St Paul was a first-century example of a public relations practitioner because of his influence on others, the campaign he undertook to reach out and build relationships with faith communities and his writing and publication of 'letters' (books) of the Bible.

Other examples are the formation and promotion of saintly cults (Watson 2008), and the promotion of Crusades by Popes. These examples are not public relations, because they were not 'seen as strategically planned activity in medieval times and . . . did not use the framing of language and accumulated best practice that are applied now' (Watson 2008: 20). 'They were PR-like but were not PR' but were 'proto-public relations' (ibid), a term which 'is based on 'proto' meaning 'original' or 'primitive' (OED 2005: 601) and draws to mind the term 'prototype' (Watson 2013: 12).

Asia

Around the world there were other antecedents to public relations. In China, PR-like activities can be traced for thousands of years, occurring mainly at state level 'with the intention of the ruler or the emperor to establish a credible reputation among his people, or to maintain a harmonious relationship with different sectors of society' (Hung-Baesecke and Chen 2014: 24). These occurred in three forms: collections of folklore and culture such as folk songs, lobbying between rival states in order to avoid war and prevent attacks, and diplomacy to open trade links such as the Silk Road across Asia. Chinese, Taiwanese and Vietnamese researchers also point to the tenets of Confucianism as both ancient and enduring influences on proto-public relations and modern practices. Keeping promises and valuing reputation, an emphasis on interpersonal relationships and 'relational harmony', being firm on principles and ethics yet flexible on strategy and the importance of

propriety ('respect, benevolence, fairness, friendship, and harmony and being knowledgeable') (Hung-Baesecke and Chen 2014: 23) led to the formation of proto-public relations that was based on *guanxi* (personal connections), which has both positive and negative aspects. It is also found in Vietnam as *quan hệ,* which also means 'personal network' (Van 2014: 148). Confucianism emphasises 'the importance of public opinion' (Wu and Lai 2014: 115) and thus has given a strong cultural base to modern public relations in East Asia in a manner not seen in other parts of the world. Proto-public relations in Thailand, which was never colonised, evolved through royal institutions from the thirteenth century onwards and was expressed in Buddhist religious beliefs and supported the unity of the nation (Tantivejakul and Manmin 2011). It was King Rama IV in the late nineteenth century who 'used royal gazettes, printed materials, royal photographs and the release of information to the press' to provide clear evidence 'of PR-type activity to support national governance and imperialism avoidance' (Tantivejakul 2014: 130). Although the western forms of public relations are practised in Japan, it also has developed a culturally different form called *kouhou,* which originally meant to 'widely notify' (Yamamura et al. 2014: 64). The term first appeared in a leading newspaper and denoted an advertisement or announcement. In the Meiji restoration starting in 1867, many older social and political structures were broken down as part of modernisation, although a more democratic society did not evolve. The 'public did not exist, only the emperor's subjects did' (Yamamura et al. 2014: 64). However, government formed news agencies to supply information to the rapidly expanding number of newspapers and 'the press agencies were the first organisations to systematically engage in the publicity business' (Yamamura et al. 2014: 64). Unlike in China, Taiwan, Vietnam and Thailand, the press agencies did not continue cultural and religious traditions.

India, which was a British colony from the eighteenth century to 1947, has a proto-public relations history that harks back to the reign of King Ashoka (272 BCE–232 BCE) whose edicts and inscriptions on rocks and pillars 'were imperial communications to the subjects of his vast empire' (Vil'Anilam 2014: 35). During subsequent eras of Maurya, Gupta and Mogul rulers, rulers communicated with society through formal meetings (Darbar) at the emperor's court at which representations were made and decisions given. Vil'Anilam (2014: 35) argues that 'early practices of maintaining relations with the public cannot, however,

be compared with modern public relations'. In this first phase of India's communication history until 1858, which Reddi (1999) calls a 'propaganda' era, there was communication from the East India Company and the formation of India's first but short-lived newspaper in Calcutta in 1780. It was followed by the 'publicity and information' era until independence. Notably this period included the formation of the governmental Central Publicity Board during the First World War, which was the first organisational communication operation in the country (Bardhan and Patwardhan 2004), and the development of public relations activities undertaken by Indian Railways. Some authors consider that Mahatma Gandhi, the leader of the Indian movement for independence from the British and a former newspaper editor, was the 'spiritual founder of Indian public relations' (Reddi 1999) because of his use of mass media in campaigns against the coloniser and to address poverty.

Middle East and Africa

In the Arab world, before technology accelerated the speed of communication, traditional gathering points such as the mosque and the *majlis* or *diwaniyya,* a public gathering place for men, were both formal and informal channels for dissemination and discussion of news (Badran 2014). Some scholars have traced antecedents back 1400 years to the era of the Prophet Mohammed when the new religion began to be disseminated in the tribes of the Arabian peninsula (Abdelhay-Altamimi 2014: 84). Poetry was important in this culture and the poet 'was considered to be the press secretary of the tribe, attacking the tribe's enemies, praising its accomplishments and strengthening the fighter's morale' (Fakhri et al. 1980: 34). It is a tradition that is still 'alive and well' in the modern Arabian Gulf region (Badran 2014: 8). The practice of public relations, prior to the arrival of Western agencies and corporate communication departments, was limited to a protocol role of organising events and taking care of visitors (Abdelhay-Altamimi 2014; Badran 2014). In colonial Africa of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, proto-public relations was in a governmental information form, often supporting the formation of newspapers in British colonies in Eastern and Southern Africa (Kiambi 2014, Natifu 2014) and Nigeria in West Africa (Ibraheem 2014). Kiambi has found evidence of a Colonial Office information methodology that may have been applied in African, Asian and Caribbean colonies in the early to mid-twentieth century.

Australia and New Zealand

Australia and New Zealand, both British colonies until the start of the twentieth century, also saw government communication as the preparatory stage for public relations. In Australia, 'Government attempts to inform, convince and persuade the widely spread population relied on and exploited PR strategies more than any single entity private enterprise could hope to achieve' (Sheehan 2014: 11). The promotional activities undertaken by the provincial-style colonies that made up nineteenth-century Australia attracted immigrants to new settlements and miners to the mid-century Gold Rush, as well as lobbying the colonial master in London about independence and trade issues. In New Zealand, promoters of the colony sought immigrants and investors and to position the country for a future separated from Australia as an independent dominion of the British Empire. Galloway (2014: 14) comments that nineteenth-century New Zealand 'began to develop some skill in the press agentry then beginning to emerge in the United States' and that strategic publicity took place in the London Great Exhibition of 1851 and the Vienna International Exposition of 1873.

Latin America

In Latin America, public relations is mostly seen as a recent phenomenon, dating from mid-twentieth century onwards. Only in Argentina, a Spanish colony until 1810, is there clear evidence of publicity-type activities in support of the nascent colony and its ambitions to attract investment from Europe. These included newspapers promoting political groups and the national interest, and a diplomatic lobbying campaign (Carbone and Montaner 2014). The start of public relations in Brazil is set at 1914 when a Canadian-owned tramway company in Sao Paolo set up the Public Relations Department, but progress was very slow until the 1950s. In Central America, corporate public relations activity supported the Panama Canal in 1914 but, like Brazil, this was a false dawn.

Europe

The European antecedents vary and are subject to considerable debate. In Eastern Europe and Russia, some scholars (e.g. Ławniczak 2005, 2014; Boshnakova 2014) consider that public relations arose only after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet bloc (see Picture 1.1). It was a result of

Picture 1.1 The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 led to rapid expansion of public relations and political communication in Eastern Europe. However, the German Democratic Republic, which is now part of the Federal Republic of Germany, had 'socialist public relations' that employed more than 3000 people in the 1980s.

the new democratic politics and governments. However, others have mapped out proto-public relations activity in preceding decades and centuries, including among former Soviet bloc nations such as the Czech Republic, former East Germany, Hungary, Romania and Slovenia. In Western Europe, it is Germany whose public relations history is best developed with evidence of organised strategic communication in the eighteenth century.

Early proto-public relations activity can be traced to leading writers being employed 'as publicists and as state employees in the 1790s' and a 'full time "press officer" [was] hired by the Prussian Chancellor von Hardenberg during the Vienna Congress (1814–1815)' which sought to solve boundary issues arising from the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars (Bentele 2015: 48–49). In 1841, a central bureau of newspapers was started in Prussia 'to correct wrong press reports', with a succeeding Literarisches Cabinet or Buro, 'Literary Cabinet or Bureau', continuing until 1920. Another aspect of Prussian governmental communications was that 'official' newspapers were established and government-friendly newspapers given financial support. Outside of political changes, 'economic and technical progress also shaped PR's development' (Bentele 2015: 50). Coal mining and steel manufacturing were the basis of heavy industry, and electronics and chemicals were innovative sectors. From companies such as Krupp (steel), Siemens and AEG (electronics) and BASF, Bayer, Hoechst and Agfa (chemicals), which were seeking national and international markets, the beginnings of systematic, planned corporate and marketing public relations were established. Alfred Krupp

was a leader and along with Werner Rathenau and Werner von Siemens 'simultaneously became leading businessmen as well as architects of PR in the nineteenth century' (Bentele 2015: 50). Krupp had a publicity coup of a 2.5-ton block of cast steel at the 1851 Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace, London. In 1867, a full-time 'Literat' (man of letters) was appointed as the manager of Krupp's corporate communications, followed in 1870 by a corporate press department whose role was to monitor coverage of the company in newspapers and prepare articles and brochures to promote Krupp and its products (Wolbring 2000). Other German companies also developed press relations operations. By the beginning of the twentieth century AEG was evaluating its press coverage in an organised manner; the sociologist Max Weber began research in 1910 into the sources of newspaper coverage, which demonstrates how well the media economy and promotional communication sector was established.

In much of the rest of Western Europe, little evidence has come forth about proto-public relations or planned publicity and press relations that can be compared with the German experience. Although the United Kingdom appears to have had well-organised practices for informational communications in its colonies, this was not evident in the four home nations until after the First World War. There are notable exceptions such as the Marconi Company issuing news releases in 1910 about transatlantic telegraph services. In the Netherlands, there was a long tradition of *voorlichting* (a literal translation of 'Enlightenment'), which meant giving people information in order that they could participate in discussions about their society. There were *voorlichters* who travelled around giving information about health, farming, education, politics, etc. (van Ruler and Cotton 2015: 91). However, *voorlichting* can be interpreted as a communication mechanism 'to show people how to conduct themselves as good citizens and to control them'. The history of PR in the Netherlands can therefore be seen as a history of the battle for information and emancipation on the one hand and education and persuasion on the other but always under the ('Dutch uncle') of 'knowing what is best' (van Ruler and Cotton 2015: 91). In Norway, socially radical policies were promoted by 'potetprest' (potato priests of the Lutheran church) in public information campaigns in the mid-late eighteenth century aimed at alleviating poverty through the planting of potatoes. The priests used lectures, handbooks and their enthusiasm in these planned activities.

The expansion of public relations in the twentieth century

As the previous sections demonstrated, public relations has many, time-varied beginnings. In some countries and regions, it has been influenced by religion and culture; in others, it has been linked to political,

Box 1.2

The patron saints of public relations

Saint Bernadine of Siena is the patron saint of public relations who is commemorated on 20 May each year. Bernardine (also known as Bernardino), a Franciscan preacher, was born in 1380. He was a successful evangelist and propagandist who travelled throughout Italy for 30 years. Following his death at L'Aquila in 1444, a basilica was built in the town and his body remains on display there.

But how was he chosen as the patron saint for public relations, which is a modern profession? It came about in 1956 when a successful petition was brought by Cardinal Lecaro of Bologna for the nomination of Bernardine as Patron Saint of public relations practitioners in Italy. In 1960, Cardinal Feltin, Archbishop of Paris, sought and obtained a similar designation of Bernardino as Patron Saint of PR professionals in France. Since then, the Italian preacher-writer has become the universal Patron Saint of PR.

Bernardine is, however, not only public relations' saintly minder. He also stands for Italy, debtors and gamblers, L'Aquila, California, advertisers and communication people, and chest problems.

Saint Paul (also known as Saint Paul the Apostle) lived during the first century in ancient Cilicia (which is now part of Turkey), Syria, Israel, Greece and Italy. He is also considered as a patron saint of public relations workers as well as for journalists, authors and many others. Saint Paul travelled widely as a promoter of the new Christian faith and wrote many New Testament books of the Bible.

governmental and economic developments such as industrialisation and the development of parliamentary democracies. In general, public relations is a phenomenon of the twentieth century. During the first half of the century, its expansion was primarily in the United States with some disrupted progress in Germany. The United Kingdom's engagement with public relations commenced after the First World War, but expanded more rapidly from 1945 onwards, as did much of Western Europe and other regions of the world outside of Eastern Europe. In Asia, Thailand established governmental communications in the 1930s but other nations in that continent and in Africa developed public relations structures after independence, which mainly came in the 1960s. The People's Republic of China was closed by its Communist government from 1949 until 1979 after which public relations practices were gradually introduced as the economy re-opened. The advance of public relations in Latin America was varied as many countries were under forms of military government, often until the mid-1980s.

The United States

The dominant models of public relations practices were developed in the United States from the final decades of the nineteenth century onwards (see Mini case study 1.1). These have been well recorded and taught around the world through popular textbooks and the example of US education. Although most countries have national approaches to public relations, there are 'International PR' models of practice in general and specialist areas that are used by multinational corporations and international organisations that have derived from US practice.

Railway companies, religious organisations and travelling entertainments (notably circuses) were all engaged in public relations activity in the final two or three decades of the nineteenth century (Lamme and Russell 2010). The term 'public relations' appeared around that time, but it did not gain strong recognition for three or four decades. The most common practices, as shown in the examples of circuses, were press agentry and publicity. Press agents earned their living by selling stories about their clients into newspapers. Publicists also sought media coverage for clients who paid them.

One US innovation which has been widely imitated is the agency for communication activities. Cutlip (1994) names the Publicity Bureau of Boston, started by three former newspaper reporters as a 'general press agent business' in 1900, as the first of this type. It lasted for only 10 years but represented universities and American Telephone & Telegraph (AT&T). It was followed in 1902 by a New York agency set up by another newspaperman, William Wolf Smith, whose agency was a 'publicity business' aimed at assisting corporations in countering press attacks and regulatory legislation. The third agency, Parker & Lee, which followed in 1904, is especially notable as it employed the newspaperman Ivy L. Lee, who became the first high-profile public relations adviser and a major influence on US practice until his early death in 1934. Lee's partner was George Parker, who had served as President Grover Cleveland's press agent in his three presidential campaigns for the Presidency. Apart from Parker, all founders of the pioneer agencies came from newspapers. This set the style of practice as media relations for publicity purposes. Ivy Lee, however, would become a policy adviser to future employers such as the Pennsylvania Railroad and the magnate John D. Rockefeller (see Explore 1.3). Lee set out the case for companies to put their cases to the public: 'If you go to the people and get the people to agree with you, you can be sure that ultimately legislatures, commissions and everybody else must give way in your favor.' Although Lee is portrayed as a public relations pioneer, he used the term 'publicity' as evidenced in his 1925 book, *Publicity: Some of the Things It Is and Is Not* and did not promote a clear, organised vision of public relations.

The agency business grew gradually and it was not until after the First World War in 1919 that the earliest active promoter of 'public relations' as a term and a communications practice set up in business. This was Edward L. Bernays, who with his soon-to-be wife Doris Fleischman started their agency in New York. Bernays' importance is more related to his books, *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (1923), *Propaganda*

Mini case study 1.1
Early media monitoring

The measurement and evaluation of media coverage is a major professional issue, which seems to have arisen from the 1970s onwards. However, the first president of the United States, George Washington, had staff who monitored newspapers in the new nation's 13 states in the late eighteenth century so that he could understand political discussions and attitudes.