

**PUBLIC RELATIONS TRAINING
FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS :
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN PHOENIX**

AJITH HARIPARSAD

Dissertation submitted in partial compliance with the requirements for the
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Reference declaration in respect of a Master's Dissertation

I, AJITH HARIPARSAD
(full name of student)

and, _____
(full name of supervisor)

do hereby declare that in respect of the following dissertation :

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN PHOENIX.

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Date

Signature of Supervisor

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Signature of Supervisor

Date

DEDICATION

In memory of my late
Grandmother, Mother, Sister and Brother
who continue inspiring me.

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on public relations training for secondary school principals and offers recommendations for selected secondary schools in Phoenix.

Principals in most schools in South Africa have had little or no training in public relations. Since a number of tasks performed by school principals require public relation skills, it is imperative that a significant part of their in-service training should focus on aspects of the practice of public relations.

This research aims to highlight the need for such training as principals interact continually with a wide variety of people, circumstances and social settings. Interaction between principals and educators, principals and learners and principals and parents may be pleasant and rewarding or frustrating and lead to conflict.

The researcher was motivated to investigate the need for public relations training for secondary school principals because he had observed gross inconsistencies in how principals in three Phoenix secondary schools interacted with educators, learners and parents. Principals, equipped with sound public relation skills, have considerable advantage over those principals who lack such skills because they are able to keep specific individuals and the general public informed about the aims, intentions and functioning of their school.

Where schools are situated in areas of high unemployment, (as is the case with the Phoenix schools researched), the provision of adequate education on inadequate funding (because parents cannot pay school fees), becomes a major problem for school management. Inadequate funding necessitates fundraising by the school. Fundraising requires public relation skills. If schools are to be successful at fundraising, secure sponsorships for purchasing sports' equipment and provide refreshments for learners on sports' days and keep up learner enrolment, principals will have to acquire public relations skills.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- | | | |
|----|---------|--|
| 1. | DET | Department of Education and Training. |
| 2. | HOA | House of Assembly. |
| 3. | HOD | House of Delegates. |
| 4. | HOR | House of Representatives. |
| 5. | KZN DEC | Kwazulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture. |
| 6. | NDE | The National Department of Education. |
| 7. | PRISA | The Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa. |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 PREAMBLE

The importance of having public relations skills cannot be emphasized enough. Schools today have to operate as small businesses and must raise their own funds as the Kwazulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture (KZN DEC) provides only a subsidy which schools use, partly or fully, to pay for basic essentials like electricity, water and municipal rates. Schools must then embark on various fundraising activities in order to provide quality education for their learners.

The Phoenix community is an area in which the unemployment rate is extremely high and many families live in abject poverty. As a result many parents cannot afford to pay school fees even if the amount is relatively small. However, from the researcher's observations at selected secondary schools in Phoenix, principals lack the necessary public relations skills that are required to raise funds and this has negatively affected the effective functioning of their schools. This may even account for the drop (over the last five years), in the enrolment figures at their schools. A drop in enrolment impacts on a principal as the school concerned may be downgraded. This results in reduced management staff and also a principal, faced with a smaller salary, may be forced to move to another school. This situation can be avoided if enrolment figures are kept constant or if they increase. If this occurs a principal has the option of requesting additional staff, which will help to boost the image of the school. Having and applying basic public relations skills, including communication and human relations skills, will not only bolster enrolment figures but also improve the image the public has of a school.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Principals in most schools in South Africa have had little or no training in public relations. Since a number of tasks performed by school principals require public relation skills, it is imperative that a significant part of their in-service training should focus on aspects of public relations practice. This research aims to highlight the need for such training as principals interact continually with a wide variety of people, circumstances and social settings. Interaction between principals and educators, principals and learners and principals and parents may be pleasant and rewarding or frustrating and lead to conflict. The researcher was motivated to investigate the need for public relations training for secondary school principals because he had observed gross inconsistencies in how the principals in three Phoenix secondary schools interacted with educators, learners and parents.

Principals, equipped with sound public relation skills, have considerable advantage over those principals who lack such skills, because the former are able to keep individuals and the general public informed about the aims, intentions and functioning of their schools. Principals should be image builders and “ people persons ” in every sense, mending communication breakdowns wherever they occur and establishing links where they are lacking. Principals should enjoy contact with people and be able to display tact, patience, enterprise, initiative, enthusiasm, resilience, humour and understanding. Moreover, at all times, they should be approachable and presentable.

Prior to 1991 most South African schools showed little interest in building constructive relations with the public because they were fully funded by their respective departments of education : White schools received their funding from the House of Assembly (HOA) , Coloured schools from the House of Representatives (HOR) , Indian schools from the House of Delegates (HOD) and African schools from the Department of Education and Training (DET). However, when “ the doors of learning were open to all ” and schools were no longer segregated but administered by one National Department of Education (NDE), subsidies were reduced. Schools were forced to become self-

sufficient in order to provide education for their learners. This is less of a problem for schools that have sufficient funds accumulated from school fees and donations or schools whose learners come from affluent homes and can easily afford increased school fees. However, where schools are situated in areas of high unemployment (as is the case with the Phoenix schools researched) the provision of adequate education on inadequate funding because parents cannot pay school fees, becomes a major problem for school management.

Inadequate funding necessitates fundraising by the school. Fundraising requires public relations skills. If schools are to be successful at fundraising, secure sponsorships for purchasing sports' equipment and provide refreshments for learners on sports' days and keep up learner enrolment, principals will have to acquire public relations skills.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This research aims to :

- show why public relations skills are necessary for principals ;
- discover whether principals in selected Phoenix schools have the necessary public relations skills ;
- provide recommendations for training principals in public relations skills, particularly for those in selected Phoenix schools.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

This investigation is based on qualitative research methodology. It draws on the perception, observation and experience of the researcher working in the field as well as a review of related literature such as books, journal articles, research reports, Government publications and relevant documents issued by the KZN DEC. A structured questionnaire was also issued to three secondary school principals in the Phoenix area.

When human actions are studied, value judgements are made, which cannot be quantified or analysed in terms of cause and effect relationships. Qualitative researchers try to interpret phenomena by assessing the meanings which people attach to them and employ different methods in order to secure as much information in the area of study as is possible. The study of human behaviour necessitates viewing it from more than one standpoint in order to avoid bias or distortion of reality.

There are many methods of obtaining data involving people. In research, it is often good practice to combine different methods in order to make use of their different strengths. Considering the nature of this research topic, it was decided to use observation, a study of related literature and a structured questionnaire as research tools. The questionnaire, which is an alternate method of obtaining information, was considered although there are serious reasons against using it. There is no guarantee that sufficient consideration will be given to the answers. Furthermore, unlike the interview, the questionnaire lacks the personal touch. Another problem is that although the anonymity of the respondents is maintained when a questionnaire is used, there is no guarantee that the questionnaire will be completed by the person for whom it is intended.

Traditionally, observation has been a basic method of scientific inquiry during which scientists observed phenomena under specific conditions, mostly in a laboratory. Social scientists also use observation to understand social phenomena. The environment around a social scientist has an influence on his choice of research problems, his ideas and his theories. According to Moser and Kalton, although the subject matter is there to be observed, it is important for the method to be suitable for investigating the problem (1971:16). The method must be appropriate for the population and sample if the study is to be reliable and objective.

It is often possible to answer some of the questions a survey is intended to cover by studying the available literature on the topic. A review of the related literature can be an extremely valuable

source of data. Literature can be divided into primary sources and secondary sources. The primary sources of literature used in this research include Government publications, such as gazettes and regulations and publications from the KZN DEC. The secondary sources of literature include publications such as books, journals and unpublished dissertations.

1.5 CONCLUSION

Every individual and every organization engages in public relations, whether good or bad. Public relations is important to all organizations whether they are commercial that is profit making, or non-commercial that is profit is not the primary concern. The aim should always be to establish good public relations, which work positively for the organization/institution.

The public relations officer is the link between an organization and its public, aiming to reconcile private and public interests. A public relations office must be a channel of communication between an organization and the public – a channel for an interchange of ideas and a two-way flow of information. It must give out information, but at the same time gather information about the public's needs and desires. It must work closely with management to ensure that these are recognized as a factor in the framing of policies and practices.

1.6 SUMMARY

Principals who have public relations skills are invaluable to their schools as most schools now have to operate according to business principles in order to secure sufficient funds, as the subsidies of the KZN DEC are inadequate. Public relations skills are necessary as schools have to engage in many fundraising activities to increase their school funds. Such skills will also ensure that school enrolment figures do not drop.

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CHAPTER TWO

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Public relations affects almost everyone who is in contact with people. We all, in one way or another, practise public relations daily. For an organization, every phone call, every letter, every face-to-face encounter is a public relations event.

Definitions of public relations do differ, but all agree that good public relations requires a firm base of theoretical knowledge, a strong sense of ethical judgement, solid communication skills and above all, uncompromising professionalism. Many people seem to have an idea of what public relations is, but few seem to fully comprehend it. The reason for this is understandable. It results largely from the fact that the scope of activities undertaken by public relations professionals is limitless.

People establish and maintain relationships with each other. These relationships require varying degrees of interaction and interdependence and therefore different levels of social, political and economic changes. Modern society consists of increasingly interdependent, complex and often conflict-laden relationships.

Human Relations Theory and Interpersonal Relations Theory describe the study and management of relations among individuals. International Relations Theory deals with relationships among nations. Public Relations Theory applies when the area of concern is the relationship between an organization and the individuals and other organizations which makes up its “publics.”

2.2 ANALYSIS OF THE TERM “PUBLIC RELATIONS”

According to the British Institute of Public Relations, “public relations is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics.” This means that public relations activity should be organized as a campaign or programme and should be a continuous effort and not practised haphazardly. Its

purpose is to ensure that the organization is understood by people with whom it comes into contact (Jefkins, revised and edited Yadin : 1998 : 6).

According to the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) :

“ Public relations is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its various publics – both internal and external”

(Skinner and von Essen: 1998:4-6).

Rensburg and Cant (2003: 36-37) have expanded on the above definitions as follows :

Deliberate :

All public relations efforts are deliberate efforts at achieving the specific aims of an organization.

The areas in which these aims are to be achieved are clearly defined, as are the publics at which they are aimed. The messages are carefully evaluated in terms of the overall aims of the organization. Public relations is a process of communicating deliberately with target publics. It seeks to receive feedback from its target publics and deliberately create the relationship.

Planned :

The nature of public relations ensures that activities are meticulously planned to address all relevant problems and issues and to take appropriate steps to solve them.

Sustained :

For public relations to be meaningful and effective, a continuous analysis of the environment and the ways to communicate with the market is required. Once the communication process has been initiated and established between an organization and its publics, it must be maintained, which necessitates a sustained effort from the organization. First contacts are seldom successful, which emphasizes the need for sustainability.

Establish :

The primary aim of public relations is to establish a climate of mutual understanding between an organization and its publics – new or existing.

Maintain :

It is essential that once a positive relationship has been established, it should be maintained. As the environment in which businesses operate is ever changing, the positive perception that exists must be nurtured and maintained over time. Maintaining the relationship implies that the organization must listen to the feedback received from target groups and act upon it.

Mutual understanding :

For communication to be effective between an organization and its target publics, it is essential that they understand each other in the way that was meant to be. In this way, agreement and harmony can be reached and a positive relationship can be built.

Publics :

Any group that influences an organization or its operations and is important to an organization, is regarded as a public. These groups can be either internal or external or both.

Internal and external :

The internal publics of an organization are usually its employees and the external publics are groups outside the organization such as unions, financial institutions, the media, shareholders and the community.

More recently, in 2002, the following definition was adapted by PRISA :

“ Public relations is the management through communication of perceptions and strategic relationships between an organization and its internal and external stakeholders. ”

Following the World Assembly of Public Relations Associates in Mexico City in August 1978, the following statement was agreed to by the representatives : “ public relations practice is the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organization leaders and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organization's and the public interest. ” This definition embraces the public affairs and social

science aspects of an organization and includes its responsibility to the public interest. Thus the public judges an organization by its behaviour (Jefkins, revised and edited Yadin : 1998 : 7).

Jefkins, revised and edited Yadin (1998 : 6) believes “ Public relations consists of all forms of planned communication, outwards and inwards, between an organization and its publics for the purpose of achieving specific objectives concerning mutual understanding. ” This definition specifies that the purpose is not merely “ mutual understanding ” but achievement of specific objectives. These objectives may involve solving communications problems, for example, making negative attitudes about the organization, positive. Furthermore, when objectives are expressed, results can be measured against them to determine the degree of success or failure of a public relations campaign or programme.

According to Lesly (1991 : 5) “ Public relations people have the role of always being in the middle – pivoted between their clients/employers and their publics. They must be attuned to the thinking and needs of the organizations they serve or they cannot serve well. They must be attuned to the dynamics and needs of the publics so that they can interpret the publics to the clients, as well as the publics to the clients. Public relations by its nature is broad-gauged and is engaged in accommodating various viewpoints and inputs. ”

Lesly summarized the value of public relations to the public as follows :

- “ Public relations is a means for the public to have its desires and interests felt by the institutions in our society. It interprets and speaks for the public to otherwise unresponsive organizations, as well as speaking for those organizations to the public.
- Public relations is a means to achieve mutual adjustment between institutions and groups, establishing smoother relationships that benefit the public.
- Public relations is a safety valve for freedom. By providing the means of working out accommodations, it makes arbitrary action or coercion less likely.
- Public relations is an essential element in the communications system that enables individuals to be informed on many aspects of subjects that affect their lives.

- Public relations personnel can help activate the organization's social conscience.
- Public relations (either systematic or unconscious) is a universal activity. It functions in all aspects of life. Each member of the public practises principles of public relations in seeking the acceptance, cooperation or affection of others. Public relations professionals only practise in a more professional manner. ”

2.3 ANALYSIS OF THE TERM “ SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ”

Public relations consists of all communications with all the people with whom a school has contact.

Principals of schools are also concerned with public relations, unless they are utterly isolated or beyond human contact.

According to Bortner (1959 : 3) “ unlike the concept held by some people, school public relations is not a high-pressure selling campaign. It is also not a bag of tricks designed to lubricate the gears of public consent or the transposing of information into propaganda. Although these approaches have been employed by some school officials in the name of public relations, the results have generally been unsatisfactory. ”

Firstly, one cannot sell that which one does not own and a school official does not own a school. Secondly, high pressure campaigns are ineffectual if overused and rarely educate the public, which may continue to know little about the schools. Thirdly, attempts to misrepresent, withhold, or cover up information about the schools can only result in a loss of popular confidence, once the public learns the truth, as it surely will. Schools are not without fault and they should not be presented as perfect institutions. In fact, they are likely to seem more approachable if they frankly admit their failures and problems.

Furthermore, school public relations is a long term process which seeks to foster understanding and friendly working relationships between schools and their communities. It is an operation which helps schools to know their communities in order that they may not only serve educational needs, but also

select more intelligently the media and activities, which will keep people informed about the schools, their purposes, programmes, progress and problems.

Thus, it is clear that public relations is a two-way street. It means understanding the community so that it can be helped to better understand the school. This encompasses both listening and talking. Accordingly, it should not be confused with publicity, which is simply one activity in the total programme of public relations. It should also not be confused with information giving alone, for there is no guarantee that information leads to understanding. Real understanding is best cultivated by the interaction of school and community through a variety of contacts and by those human relationships that make for mutual respect.

To summarise then, “ school public relations ” refers to the deliberate efforts made by a school to influence community opinion and earn community support. These efforts typically use news releases, newsletters, speeches and reports to influence public opinion in favourable ways. The communication efforts are directed towards increasing community understanding of school needs and practices and encouraging community interest, cooperation and support in improving education (Kindred : 1984 : 12).

Ultimately it is principals who are accountable for the running of their schools and the demands made on them are enormous. They are often expected to perform miracles under difficult circumstances. Yet, no matter how great their intelligence, training and experience, they can never be experts at everything and must be sufficiently humble and adaptable to be able to accept that in public relations they never stop learning. Their willingness and ability to find out is critical.

Jefkins, revised and edited Yadin (1998 : 16) identified seven attributes that are vital to the public relations practitioner which principals can adopt :

1. “ ability to get on with all kinds of people : this means understanding, sometimes tolerating, people, not flattering them ;
2. ability to communicate : that is, explain by means of spoken or written word or by visual device such as photography ;
3. ability to organize : that calls for patient planning ;
4. personal integrity in both professional and private life ;
5. imagination : that is a creative sense, as when writing a script for a film or videotape, planning campaigns and seeking solutions to problems ;
6. ability to find out : that is to have ready access to information ;
7. ability to research and evaluate the results of a public relation’s campaign and learn from these findings.”

2.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING GOOD SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATION SKILLS

The role of good public relations in a school cannot be emphasized enough. The reasons are many :

- firstly, as a body responsible to the state and the local community, the school is obliged to supply full and accurate information as to how it spends money, utilizes property and educates its learners ;
- secondly the school can only succeed to the extent that it holds the understanding, interest and confidence of the community. The school belongs to the community and it cannot progress beyond the current level of community opinion. This is as it should be, since educational policy is public policy and only the citizens/public can make policy in a democratic society, be it at the local, provincial or national level. In fact, public educational policy is of the greatest importance, since it determines what kind of adults our children will become, what kind of nation we will fashion. At the same time, it is clear that intelligent policy decisions are likely to be made by an interested and informed group of people. Therefore, the school should do all it can to keep the interest and understanding of the people in the community at a high level ;
- a third reason for school public relations programmes is that the best education for children requires co-operation among all sections of the community who touch their lives. The school is only one agent in the total educational setting. The home, religious institutions and numerous local organizations and agencies all have an effect for better or worse on children’s development, but the school is the one agency which serves all children and as such, is in the best position to assume leadership in stimulating the aims and efforts of all relevant community groups ;
- a fourth reason arises because wide community support is essential for handling the demands of pressure groups that would like to use the school to achieve their own interests. Such groups can be found in most communities : some have been able to make serious inroads into schools, including encroachment into curricular programmes. They thrive in an atmosphere

of public indifference, but their efforts are curbed when the school develops general community support. A concerned community will permit no invasion of its schools by any group ;

- finally, the position and status of teachers require improvement. Teacher stereotypes must be replaced with accurate depictions and this can be accomplished with principals' efforts in giving them good publicity through school public relations programmes designed to make the community aware of the outstanding services of teachers to society.

Principals are the most influential factors in developing community opinion concerning their schools. Schools which lose sight of their principal's vital role in public relations will never maintain the necessary support of the community. Principals have numerous face-to-face contact with people which may be extremely important in conditioning public sentiment towards schools. These relationships are considerably more important in moulding opinion than formal pronouncements and planned procedures. They include not only contacts with learners but also with parents, neighbours, friends and the general public. Every impression created by what they say and do during these meetings has a positive or negative effect upon the school's public relations. To many people, **principals are the schools they run.**

2.5 THE PRACTICE OF SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS

A school's progress derives in substantial part from its senior officials. As those with administrative responsibility and authority act and speak, so go the interpretations and echoes created by the public relations function. Thus, public relations is inescapably tied by nature and by necessity, to the management function (Cutlip *et al.* 1994 : 59).

In this context, long term success in an organization's public relations calls for :

- commitment and participation by management ;
- competent public relations practitioners ;
- centralized policy making ;
- communication (two-way) with both internal and external publics ;
- coordination of all efforts towards defined goals and objectives.

Public relations practitioners also need to understand the staff role. The difference between line and staff management is important. Line management determines the ground rules and sets the course. Public relations works within these rules and with others on matters that have an impact on the school's relationship with its community, both inside and outside. In these matters, both line and staff managers must participate. Once all points of view have been aired and debated, the final decisions may result from consensus, or from choices made by line management. Final decisions are the task of senior line management.

According to Bortner (1959 : 104) writers in the field of school administration stress public relations as one of the chief functions of the principal. They recognize public relations as having at least equal importance with such functions as leadership. However, principals must operate within the framework and limitations established by their superiors. Principals' personalities are key to the success of schools public relations programme. Numerous elements of personality have important bearing on the success of a programme. These include personal appearance, diplomacy, social manners, sense of humour, ability as a public speaker and the ability to inspire confidence and attract people, but no single quality is more crucial in public relations than operating schools in consultation with other important stake holders.

Principals, who dominate schools and use them for their own purposes cannot expect to foster good public relations. A principal's public relations role falls into four main areas :

1. organizing the school for public relations ;
2. working with the staff ;
3. working with the community ;
4. working with the press.

Each of the above aspects will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

2.6 CONCLUSION :

Public relations has been defined in many different ways. In South Africa where the practice of public relations dates from only a few years after the Second World War, a true understanding of its nature is still rare. One reason is that public relations covers such a wide range of activities.

Public relations as a broad concept is nothing new. It has always existed. Public relations affects almost everyone and we all practise public relations in one way or another. Public relations does not exist as a function on its own. It is an integral part of the marketing function of an organization.

Good public relations cannot be bought, it must be earned. Public relations is not a once-off phenomenon but an ongoing process, which may take years to bear fruit.

2.7 SUMMARY :

In this Chapter, the researcher highlighted the need for schools to engage in some sort of public relations programme by focusing on the available literature on the subject. The term “ public relations ” was also defined and “ school public relations ” as a concept examined.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter will focus on the use of the questionnaire, the results of its application and analysis of these results. Questionnaires seek information which should be analysed and discussed. This information pertains to the need for public relations training for principals in selected secondary schools in Phoenix, which is north of Durban.

3.2 DISTRIBUTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The principals of the three selected secondary schools in Phoenix were presented with questionnaires by the researcher who outlined the purpose of his research and made each principal aware that his/her participation was voluntary and that he/she was free to ask questions concerning the questionnaire. Each principal was willing to participate and as the questionnaire was self-explanatory, questions were kept to a minimum and any apprehension felt was soon cleared up by the researcher. The questionnaires would be collected after a week. This would give the principals sufficient time to complete them (notwithstanding the fact that each questionnaire could easily be completed in twenty minutes). One of the principals was most obliging and returned the completed questionnaire the next day. The other two principals, however, only handed in their questionnaires when the researcher called at their schools on the agreed day. In one case the researcher had to wait while the principal completed the questionnaire.

3.3 THE PURPOSE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was used to obtain the following information from the principals :

- their qualifications ;
- in-service training workshops on public relations attended by them ;
- how their schools communicated with their internal and external publics ;

- fundraising activities at their schools ;
- their public relations programme (if any) ;
- the image the community had of their school.

3.4 RESULTS

The first five questions were concerned with the principals' ages, their length of service in the teaching profession, the number of years each had served as principal and as principal of his/her present school as well as information concerning subject/s of specialization when they were Level One educators.

Question 1

How old are you ?

Table 1

	31-39 years	40-49 years	50-59 years
PRINCIPAL A		X	
PRINCIPAL B		X	
PRINCIPAL C			X

Question 2

How many years have you been in the teaching profession ?

Table 2

	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-25 years
PRINCIPAL A			X
PRINCIPAL B			X
PRINCIPAL C			X

Question 3

How many years have you served as principal ?

	Under 5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years
PRINCIPAL A	X		
PRINCIPAL B	X		
PRINCIPAL C		X	

Question 4

How many years have you served as principal of your school ?

Table 4

	Under 5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years
PRINCIPAL A	X		
PRINCIPAL B	X		
PRINCIPAL C		X	

Question 5

What specialist subjects have you taught in your experience as a teacher ?

Table 5

	Afrikaans	Accounting	Business Economics	Typing
PRINCIPAL A	X			
PRINCIPAL B	X			
PRINCIPAL C		X	X	X

Question 6

This pertained to the principals' qualifications as follows :

- 1.1 Academic and
- 1.2 Professional.

6.1 Academic Qualifications

Table 6

	B.A	B.Com
PRINCIPAL A	X	
PRINCIPAL B	X	
PRINCIPAL C		X

6.2. Professional Qualifications

Table 7.

	J.S.E.D.	B. Ed
PRINCIPAL A	X	
PRINCIPAL B	X	
PRINCIPAL C		X

Question 7

Have you attained qualifications in any of the following subjects :

(If YES, please specify the course and institution)

Table 8

	Public relations		Human Relations		Communication		Marketing	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
PRINCIPAL A		X		X		X		X
PRINCIPAL B		X		X		X		X
PRINCIPAL C		X		X		X	X	

Question 8

This question concentrated on the principal's in-service training.

8.1 How many workshops for principals have you attended in the last five years ?

Table 9

	Number of workshops attended
PRINCIPAL A	15
PRINCIPAL B	10
PRINCIPAL C	20

8.2 Briefly state the theme and duration of the last five workshops you attended.

PRINCIPAL A

Table 10

No	THEME	Duration
1	S.G.B.	1 Day
2	EMIS	1 Day
3	QUALITY ASSURANCE	3 Days
4	CAREERS	1 Day
5	FINANCE	1 Day

PRINCIPAL B

Table 11

No	THEME	Duration
1	WHOLE SCHOOL EVALUATION	1 Day
2	DEVELOPMENTAL APPRAISAL	1 Day
3	NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL FUNDING	1 Day
4	GETC	½ Day
5	SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN	1 Day

PRINCIPAL C

Table 12

No	THEME	Duration
1	SECTION 20/21 SCHOOL'S FINANCING	3 Hours
2	CONFLICT MANAGEMENT	2 Days
3	LABOUR RELATIONS	3 Days
4	HIV and AIDS	1 Day
5	FET	1 Day

8.3 How often have these workshops for principals been held in your circuit/district/region ?

Table 13

	Annually	Quarterly	Monthly	Fortnightly	Other (Specify)
PRINCIPAL A					As the need arises
PRINCIPAL B			X		
PRINCIPAL C					As and when required

8.4. Do you think that you would find workshop discussions on the following subjects helpful to you in your role as a secondary school principal ?

Table 14

	Public Relations		Human Relations		Communication		Marketing	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
PRINCIPAL A	X		X		X		X	
PRINCIPAL B		X		X	X			X
PRINCIPAL C	X		X		X		X	

Questions 9 - 22

These questions concentrated on the nature of the chosen schools and the manner in which they operated.

Question 9

What is the pupil population of your school ?

Table 15

	500-650	651- 800	801-950	951-1100
PRINCIPAL A	X			
PRINCIPAL B	X			
PRINCIPAL C			X	

Question 10

How has the pupil population at your school changed over the last five years ?

In each case the principals of the three schools responded that their pupil population had **DECREASED.**

Question 11

How many members of staff (including the management team) does your school have ?

Table 16

	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35
PRINCIPAL A	X			
PRINCIPAL B		X		
PRINCIPAL C			X	

Question 12

Is there any member of your staff that has attained a qualification in Public Relations ?

NONE of the three principals had any member of staff qualified in Public relations.

Question 13 did not apply as it relied upon a positive response to the previous question.

Question 14

By what means does your school communicate news to its alumni (ex pupils) ?

Table 17

	Newsletters	Governing Body Meetings	Other (Specify)
PRINCIPAL A	X		
PRINCIPAL B		X	X (Assembly Announcements)
PRINCIPAL C	X		

Question 15

By what means does your school keep parents and other interested members of the community informed about the activities and accomplishments of your school ?

Table 18

	Newsletters	Governing Body Meetings	Press Releases	Other (Specify)
PRINCIPAL A		X		
PRINCIPAL B	X	X	X	X (Assembly Announcements)
PRINCIPAL C	X	X		

Question 16

How has your school raised funds in the last five years ?

Table 19

	Variety Concert	Debs' Ball	Fair/Fete	Fun Run/Walk	Other (Specify)
PRINCIPAL A		X		X	
PRINCIPAL B	X	X			X (Fitness Hike)
PRINCIPAL C	X	X		X	

Question 17

What was/were the goal/s of your fundraising drives ?

Table 20

	Purpose
PRINCIPAL A	To refit the Computer Room Boundary Fencing
PRINCIPAL B	To purchase sports equipment
PRINCIPAL C	To provide quality education for all learners To upgrade facilities and provide teaching resources To pay for basic running costs of the school because of non-payment of school fees

Question 18

This question focused on whether the three principals followed a written, planned Public Relations programme and related issues.

Since **NONE** of the principals responded positively to question 18.1 , the rest of the questions namely 18.2 to 18.5 were not applicable.

Question 19

What, would you consider, is the overall public image the community has of your school ?

Each of the three principals stated that their community had a **GOOD** image of their schools.

Their reasons are tabulated below.

Table 21

	Reasons
PRINCIPAL A	Good pass rate Good discipline Good staff morale
PRINCIPAL B	Sound discipline Good matric pass rate
PRINCIPAL C	Academic excellence Excellent discipline Excellent teacher attendance and discipline Good support from School Governing Body

Question 20

How would you describe present attitudes of parents towards greater parental involvement in the activities of your school ? Parents are generally :

Table 22

	Strongly Interested	Interested	Not Interested	Not Interested At All
PRINCIPAL A			X	
PRINCIPAL B			X	
PRINCIPAL C			X	

Question 21

Briefly outline what attempts have been made by you to change parental apathy or lack of interest :

Table 23

	Attempts made to change parental apathy or lack of interest.
PRINCIPAL A	Held meetings. Spoke to the School Governing Body
PRINCIPAL B	Held regular meetings. Sent out circulars
PRINCIPAL C	Motivational speakers were invited Meetings were scheduled in the evenings to accommodate parents. Learners were motivated to accompany their parents. Shorter meetings were held

Question 22

Which of the following do you think is the general image the public has of your school :

Your school produces :

Table 24

	Academic Excellence	Outstanding Sportspersons	Mainly Dropouts	Pupils of Average Abilities
PRINCIPAL A	X			X
PRINCIPAL B				X
PRINCIPAL C	X			

Possible reasons for the above were :

Table 25

	Reasons
PRINCIPAL A	Educators very helpful and dedicated
PRINCIPAL B	Poor socio-economic conditions High unemployment rate Low educational level of parents Parental apathy
PRINCIPAL C	Excellent grade 12 results Structured sports programme Structured intervention programmes for academic excellence. Welfare Club that provides for indigent learners and parents

3.5 ANALYSIS

An analysis of the results of the questionnaire reveals the following in respect of all three principals :

- they were appointed as principals at their respective schools ;
- none of them had any formal training in public relations proper (only one principal had some training but that came from having a commerce background) ;
- none of the in-service training workshops they attended were related to public relations ;
- none of them had any educators on their staff with public relations qualifications ;
- pupil enrolment figures in each of their schools had decreased in the last five years ;
- none of them had operated any public relations programme ;
- each of their schools engaged in a variety of fundraising activities to supplement the non-payment of school fees ;
- parents displayed apathy in each of the schools, in spite of their good images.

3.6 CONCLUSION

It is, therefore clear that a structured public relations programme is necessary in each of the schools to boost not only the decreasing pupil enrolment figures but also the funds required by the three schools to provide quality education for their learners. Such a programme would perhaps

also help improve communication between the schools and the communities they served.

3.7 SUMMARY

In this Chapter, the results obtained from the questionnaire were reported . The following aspects pertaining to the three principals were analysed :

- their qualifications ;
- the in-service training workshops they attended ;
- how their schools communicated with their internal and external publics ;
- fundraising activities ;
- their public relations programme (if any) ;
- the image the community had of their schools.

In the final Chapter an overview of the research will be given. Conclusions from the research will be examined and the researcher's recommendations presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous Chapter focused on the questionnaire, the results of its application and an analysis of the results. In this final Chapter an overview of the research will be given, conclusions from the research will be examined and the researchers' recommendations will be presented.

4.2 OVERVIEW

The researcher has observed that principals in most schools in South Africa have little or no training in public relations. Since a number of tasks performed by school principals require public relation skills, it is imperative that a significant part of their in-service training should focus on public relations practice. This research highlighted the need for this training as principals continually interact with the community in a wide variety of circumstances and social settings. Interaction between principals and educators, principals and learners and principals and parents and the general public may be pleasant and rewarding or frustrating and lead to conflict.

Principals trained in sound public relation skills have a considerable advantage over those who lack such skills. Trained principals are able to keep the public informed about the aims, intentions and functioning of their schools. Principals should be image builders and “ people persons ” in every sense – mending communication breakdowns wherever they occur and establishing links where they are lacking. They should enjoy contact with people and display tact, patience, enterprise, initiative, enthusiasm, resilience, humour and understanding. At all times principals should be both approachable and presentable. Unfortunately, many principals lack these qualities and often humiliate educators, learners and parents so that they are reduced to tears and feel worthless.

Budgetary constraints have forced schools to become self-sufficient in order to provide quality education for their learners. This is not a problem for schools that have sufficient funds or schools whose learners come from affluent homes and can easily afford expensive school fees. However, where schools are situated in areas where unemployment is rife, as is the case in Phoenix, a major task for school management is being able to provide quality education on inadequate funding. Consequently, the principal's ability to raise money is essential because of an inadequate subsidy and insufficient school funds. Most fundraising activities require public relation skills. Schools should be "user friendly" in that they are accessible to the community. This is necessary for successful fundraising, securing sponsorships and providing refreshments for learners on sports days. Moreover, if learner enrolment figures are not maintained, the school and its management staff are downgraded. There seemed to be a general apathy among the three principals about the practice of public relations which is surprising in view of the fact that when learner enrolment figures fall, their salaries are affected.

As outlined in Chapter One, the research instruments used in this study were observation, a review of related literature and a structured questionnaire. Each principal was given a week to respond to a series of questions. The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain information concerning the three principals' qualifications, the in-service training workshops attended by them, how their schools communicated with their internal and external publics, fundraising activities at their schools, their public relations programme (if any) and the image the community had of their school.

Data collected from the questionnaire survey was analysed and presented in detail in Chapter Three.

An analysis of the questionnaire given to the three principals may be summarized as follows :

- they were appointed as principals at their respective schools ;
- none of them had any formal training in public relations (only one principal had some training but that came from having a commerce background) ;
- none of the in-service training workshops they attended were related to public relations ;
- none of them had any teachers on their staff with public relations qualifications ;
- pupil enrolment figures in each of their schools had decreased in the last five years ;
- none of them had operated any public relations programme ;
- each of their schools engaged in a variety of fundraising activities to supplement the non-payment of school fees ;
- parents displayed apathy concerning the activities of the schools.

From the literature review in Chapter Two and the results obtained from the structured questionnaire in Chapter Three, it is the researcher's view that a structured public relations programme is necessary in each of the schools to boost not only the decreasing pupil enrolment figures but also the funds required by the three schools to provide quality education for their learners. A good public relations programme will also help improve communication between the schools and the communities they serve.

4.3 TRAINING SCHOOL STAFF FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAMME

Regardless of the length of time that may be required for the total organizational process, principals should start at the same point – the education of their staff in the nature of, the need for and the advantages likely to result from a school public relations programme. To achieve this principals should themselves initiate the following :

- the development of a two-way process of information and interpretation between the school and its community ;
- the active participation of the entire school staff – teaching and non-teaching – in the public relations programme ;

- a clear-cut definition and delegation of duties and authority essential to the operation of an effective public relations programme ;
- the constructive involvement of community leaders and community organizations in helping to plan and execute the public relations programme.

While the exact nature of the organizational machinery for public relations is something for each school to determine, a public relations committee in a school has certain advantages. It is probably the best means of involving a large number of teachers and also the non-teaching personnel. In addition to a central public relations committee of three to ten members, contingent upon the size of the school, there may be other committees to deal with special phases of the public relations programme. Some committees will be concerned with planning operational tasks. Of great importance, however, is that committee members be elected democratically in terms of their talents and interests. Democratically electing members of a public relations committee in a school is itself a very good public relations exercise for principals and will ensure that they have committed support. This is a good example of participative democracy in a school.

4.3.1 WORKING WITH THE STAFF FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

Organizational machinery can easily be designed to secure a mechanical participation of staff members in the school public relations enterprise. However, the active and earnest participation of the entire school staff will be secured only if the principal works with them. No single quality of personality is more important to principals than a democratic attitude if they are to foster good internal as well as external public relations. Public relations can never fully succeed unless accepted by the school staff as “ our programme ” for “ our school ”

4.3.2 RECOGNIZING TALENTS AND INTERESTS IN MAKING PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSIGNMENTS

Principals can boost staff by including members in accordance with their talents and interests in public relations committees. Principals should know their staff well, including aspects of personality,

temperament, social inclination, special abilities and willingness to work in a group. They should learn which staff members are well equipped to maintain community contacts because of their established associations and social interests, who are good public speakers or discussion leaders and who are able to write publicity materials and news releases. Morale may be adversely affected and consequently, public relations efficiency, if assignments are dictated by the principal rather than arrived at through mutual agreement and if the talent and interests of educators in photography, drama and printing of booklets are ignored.

4.4 IN-SERVICE TRAINING IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Principals should also work with their staff by providing or finding assistance in in-service training in public relations. In fact, the education of all staff in public relations should be the first task of principals who want to institute a public relations programme. The responsibility for training in public relations within the school is fundamentally that of the principal.

The areas of in-service training that need to be covered are :

- need for public relations ;
- ways in which a public relations programme will be of benefit to the school and to each staff member ;
- nature of the community and particularly, the school's attendance district ;
- public relations responsibilities of each staff person ;
- media and techniques which can be employed to promote good public relations.

4.4.1 APPROACHES TO IN-SERVICE TRAINING

In order to awaken staff interest which is often difficult at the start of an in-service programme, the principal should review the results of a community opinion poll about the school, explore common errors in public relations of which the staff, including himself/herself, may be guilty, probe the reasons behind poor reviews in the local press and study the progress in neighbouring schools that have instituted public relations programmes. One or more of these measures might be all that is

required to remedy staff indifference. In order to sustain interest and insight, the principal should develop a handbook of information about understanding and executing public relations responsibilities, which will be helpful for staff members. The handbook should include information about the purpose of the public relations programme, its organizational machinery and the responsibilities of school personnel ; facts concerning the community, the school and the school district, including administrative organization, boundaries, budgets and enrolments ; complaint procedures and channels and a list of reminders of everyday contacts through which good public relations can be built. The handbook should be designed in such a way that it can be easily revised and kept up-to-date.

The principal should enlist the help of staff members, particularly educators, in preparing the handbook. A cooperatively prepared handbook will not only be better but educators, having assisted in its preparation, are likely to show greater interest in using it and will be encouraged to use it. From time to time, the principal may need to give attention to in-service training designed to assist educators with specific public relations issues/activities such as conducting meetings with parents on pupil progress or supervising field trips. Unless this is done, some educators will not be prepared to handle these matters with tact and understanding.

However, there still exists the danger of over loading educators and other staff members with too much direction in public relations : educators must not be burdened to the extent that their classroom effectiveness is hampered. This is, after all, their primary contribution to the school. This indicates the need for caution and good judgement on the part of the principal with respect to in-service training in and the assignment of public relations tasks.

4.5 THE COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

4.5.1 ENCOURAGING STAFF-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

In addition to the in-service training approach, the principal should work with staff members in public relations by encouraging them to foster constructive relationships with the community. The importance of good relations between educators and the community cannot be emphasized enough. In order to achieve this, the principal can adopt the following procedures : as a starting point, the principal should endeavour to employ educators and other staff members who will be likely to seek good community relations. Although educators should unquestionably have freedom to choose their own religious, political and social affiliations, the principal has the right and responsibility to secure the best possible representation in the various areas. The democratic, all-embracing nature of the school imposes the obligation for contact with all groups in the community. Staff can neither symbolize the character of the school nor take its message to the community unless they have contact with its diverse religious, political and social groups.

The principal should introduce staff members, particularly new educators, to the community representatives, particularly those in whom they indicate interest. This can be done personally or by soliciting the aid of staff and members of these groups. In addition, a principal may find it advantageous to introduce new staff members to community leaders through some sort of planned social activity such as an end-of-term *braaivleis*.

4.5.2 WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY IN A PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAMME

While encouraging good staff-community relations, principals should work directly with the community. They should seek to persuade the community that they too are responsible for the success of schools serving them. The combined effort of principals and school staff will be the chief force in fostering these cooperative relations. Nevertheless, there are some issues which principals should assume immediate responsibility for. These are :

- conducting a community survey ;

- keeping the community informed ;
- maintaining formal community contacts ;
- maintaining close relations with parents ;
- preventing and adjudicating school-parent and school-community conflicts ;
- enlisting the aid of key community leaders and organizations in promoting school public relations ;
- initiating and supervising school services for the community ;
- operating a school office that provides for the comfort and gracious treatment of visitors ;
- maintaining constructive relations with the local press and other media.

4.5.2.1 CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY SURVEY

Effective public relations require a comprehensive analysis, a survey of community life by the school. The main purposes of the community survey is to do the following :

- foster closer, more understanding school and community relations ;
- identify particular trouble spots or conflict areas to which attention should be given.

The survey must be continuous in nature if it is to be of genuine and permanent value.

Community needs and attitudes change and the school must keep abreast of these changes.

4.5.2.2 INVOLVING THE STAFF

In accordance with recommendations made earlier in this Chapter concerning organization for public relations, the principal should see to it that all members of the staff participate in a comprehensive community survey. This is desirable in creating not only a complete picture of the community but also in building among staff members a sensitivity to community needs and to problems of school public relations. In fact, staff participation in the community survey is an excellent means of in-service training for public relations.

The principal should make sure that all the participating staff members receive adequate instructions concerning the purposes and machinery of the survey, their particular responsibilities, the types of information desired, the sources of information and the extreme importance of tact and confidentiality in gathering information which must be done in an unobtrusive and professional manner.

4.5.2.3 KEEPING THE COMMUNITY INFORMED

It is conceivable that the principal could discharge his/her second responsibility – keeping the community informed – without first making a community survey, but the survey results should help him/her do the job more scientifically. A comprehensive picture of the community ought to help the principal determine which medium is best.

The media which can be used are as follows :

- the local press ;
- the student newspaper, for which the principal might write a regular column intended for parents and other adult readers ;
- a monthly newsletter which, if simple but attractive, can be a valuable as well as a continual path of communication between school and home ;
- special brief reports about school events/happenings in the form of pamphlets ;
- exhibits of classwork or extra-curricular projects ;
- scheduled classroom visits and/or tours of the school for small groups of adults ;
- community radio stations.

A principal should maintain an “ idea file ” on the various media which can be utilized. Ideas are available from newspaper clippings, professional literature, projects in other schools and verbal suggestions. However, bombarding the community with too much information might have the effect of turning attention away from the school. Hence, all public relations programmes must be judiciously selected and applied.

4.5.2.4 MAINTAINING FORMAL COMMUNITY CONTACTS

In their efforts to keep the community informed, principals cannot overlook their responsibility for maintaining formal community contacts. Through these contacts, they not only have an opportunity to tell the people about their school but also to officially represent the school in the community.

These contacts would ordinarily consist of membership in community organizations, speaking before community groups, attending community celebrations and participating in community campaigns.

These are essential aspects of the principal's job and a governing body can scarcely afford a principal who neglects them. Principals must be energetically involved in community relationships and this includes networking with nearby principals if they are to build the most favourable sentiment toward the school and for that matter, toward themselves. Educator cooperation with civic organizations applies equally to the principal.

4.5.2.5 MAINTAINING CLOSE RELATIONS WITH PARENTS

There is always the need for principals to improve their relations with all parents if they are to win community cooperation. Nevertheless, it is clear that they should give particular attention to maintaining close relations with parents of learners in their school. This is where their solid core of community support lies. In addition to the obvious requirement of courtesy and graciousness in their contacts with parents, there are a number of things principals can do to maintain close relations with them.

In the first place, they can make themselves available to parents, as well as other visitors, by establishing and advertising regular office hours and by a readiness to interrupt other activities (at almost any time) in order to talk with parents especially if they are emotionally upset. Secondly, they can be alert to opportunities to write notes of congratulation or sympathy when these are appropriate. Thirdly, they can help set the stage for congenial parent-educator intercommunication by organizing regular parent-educator meetings on learner progress, having first supervised in-service training for educators in how to conduct these meetings. Fourthly, they should work closely

with the governing body through cooperation with, stimulation of, guidance and commitment to this body. Sometimes the difference between success and failure of the governing body can be traced to the differences between encouragement and animosity, cooperation and domination on the part of the principal. Fifthly, they can provide for parent education and orientation particularly if it relates to problems about which parents have expressed concern and also to inform parents of major changes being considered in educational policies and procedures. Some principals are hesitant about working too closely with parents for fear that they will become aggressive to the point of trying to run the schools. However, recognition of the natural interest of parents in their children and the need for intelligent educational leadership should prevent problems.

4.5.2.6 SCHOOL PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY FESTIVITIES

Yet another way in which the principal can foster goodwill is by providing for school participation in larger community festivities. For instance, when the school band or choir performs as a feature of a community programme, the result is likely to be increased public appreciation for the school. Accordingly, the principal should keep a calendar of those activities which provide suitable opportunities for school participation so that activities and programmes may be planned in advance.

4.5.2.7 OPERATING AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL OFFICE

While they focus attention upon services which the school can perform for the community, principals must not forget that the very services which people receive when visiting the school office are likely to constitute an important factor in building good public relations. Attention has already been given to the considerable public relations influence of the secretarial staff in their personal, written and telephone contacts. Mention has also been made concerning the desirability of principals maintaining regular office hours for the convenience of visitors. At the same time the physical arrangements of the school office should also provide for the comfort and gracious treatment of visitors.

When visitors enter the school office, they should find adequate seating facilities enabling them to visit in comfort while waiting for their appointments. Although such facilities are essential to the proper physical organization of any office, they are not always provided. The result is that visitors often remain standing, or find seats on uncomfortable benches which have to be shared with learners waiting to be “disciplined” - a situation scarcely calculated to make a favourable first impression.

When visitors are expected to wait for appointments, the period of waiting will be less wearisome if they are supplied with a variety of reading materials. It is not difficult to supply such reading materials as the School District’s Annual Report, special public relations reports, student newspapers, newsletters, popular periodicals and books for children are easy to obtain. In addition, graphs, photographs and charts dealing with school achievements can be strategically placed on walls to occupy the attention of visitors.

When visitors enter the principal’s office, they should also find attractive surroundings and comfortable chairs. Moreover, the office should be arranged so that principals can move to a chair near the visitors rather than talk to them across the desk. These “little things” help immensely in making friends and it is not difficult for principals to attend to the details that ensure the comfort and gracious treatment of the school’s visitors.

4.5.2.8 MAINTAINING CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS AND OTHER MEDIA.

Finally, in working with the community, principals should maintain constructive relations with the press and other media. Even in those communities where there is no local daily or weekly newspapers, resourceful principals will often find nearby metropolitan papers helpful in publishing news and feature items.

There are a number of things that principals can do to establish and maintain constructive press and other media relations. In the first place, they can make the staff aware that many school events,

achievements and programmes are of public interest. Secondly, they can appoint an interested and competent staff member to gather news and feature items from other staff members and prepare them for release to the press and other media. Thirdly, they can make certain the press and other media receive announcements of all school events even though the announcements may not necessarily be printed or the events covered by the press and other media. Fourthly, principals can develop personal relations with newspaper personnel including, possibly, publishers and editors and certainly a member of the news staff. Finally, they can operate an “open-door policy ” in all dealings with the press and other media. This implies that they will be available to representatives of the press, whether or not they have appointments and will be honest and sincere in furnishing news and expressing opinions.

4.5.2.9 PUBLIC RELATIONS ERRORS

Not all principals succeed in their public relations function. In some instances, they deliberately ignore or belittle public relations responsibilities on the grounds that the operation of the school is a totally professional matter not subject to lay interference. In other instances, principals apparently overlook the fact that success in public relations depends upon a well- run , dynamic school with an instructional programme geared to the needs of its learners. That is, they forget that production necessarily precedes salesmanship.

Aside from these sweeping blunders, there are more specific public relations errors of commission or omission which can be charged to principals. They include absorption in masses of administrative minutiae with slight attention to more important functions, aloofness from learners, educators and/or the community, unavailability to staff and public, non-cooperation in community enterprises, non-cooperation with newspapers and other media, authoritarianism in administration, “ old-maidish supervision, ” including excessive stress on trivia, assignment of public relations responsibilities to the staff without providing for the requisite in-service training, failure to involve non-teaching personnel as agents in the public relations programme, selection and retention of inferior reception

personnel and personal assumption of the total public relations load without involving school staff. The very possibility of such pitfalls together with the larger need to “size up” the public relations programme suggests a final responsibility for principals – evaluation of the programme and their role in it. Like any process of evaluation it should be continuous in nature and approached in terms of objectives established for the programme. More particularly, it should throw light upon the value of the various media and techniques employed and upon the accomplishments of the agents involved including, above all, principals themselves. Any programme that has goals is worth evaluating.

4.6 ADVICE FOR PRINCIPALS

For those principals who are lacking essential public relation skills, the following will help :

1. A SHORT COURSE IN HUMAN RELATIONS (Author Unknown)

The SIX most important words	:	“ I admit I made a mistake ! ”
The FIVE most important words	:	“ You did a good job ! ”
The FOUR most important words	:	“ What is your opinion ? ”
The THREE most important words	:	“ If you please ! ”
The TWO most important words	:	“ Thank you ! ”
The ONE most important word	:	“ We ”
The ONE least important word	:	“ I ”

2. THE FOURTEEN PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN RELATIONS

H	Have self-confidence.
U	Understand the viewpoints of others.
M	Make yourself the friend of all.
A	Admit it when you are wrong.
N	Never make promises you cannot keep.
R	Respect and courtesy are important.
E	Explain thoroughly.
L	Look ! Listen ! Learn !
A	Avoid argument.
T	Try to be approachable and sociable.
I	Insist on selfless service to the community.
O	Others first ! Self last !
N	Never criticize in public.
S	Stress the positive always.

(Secretarial Public Relations Guide No 051900012 – M.L.Sultan Technikon - 1986)

3. QUALITIES OF THE ASPIRING PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONER

- Ability to get on with people.
- Leadership.
- An understanding of human relations.
- Creative ability and imagination.
- Good sense and sound judgement.
- Wide culture and interests.
- Good education and common sense.
- An enquiring mind.
- Mental alertness.
- Critical and analytical ability.
- Organizing and planning ability.
- Business sense and administrative talent.
- Maturity and stability.
- Integrity and moral courage.
- Physical fitness.

(Skinner and von Essen : 1982 : 234)

4.7 CONCLUSION

The principals of the three secondary schools in Phoenix lack the necessary public relation skills and this has negatively affected the effective functioning of their schools. This may even account for the drop in enrolment figures over the last five years at these schools. A drop in enrolment impacts on a principal as the school concerned may be downgraded. This may result in reduced management staff and a principal faced with a smaller salary, may be forced to move to another school. This can easily be avoided if enrolment figures are kept constant or if they increase. Perhaps having and applying basic public relation skills including communication and human relation skills, will not only bolster

enrolment figures but also improve the image the public has of these schools. A short and easy to follow public relations programme can be put in place and workshops highlighting public relation skills need to be put together and conducted for both primary and secondary school principals in Phoenix and other areas too.

4.8 SUMMARY

This study was confined to selected secondary schools in Phoenix. Further research should be conducted to include primary schools for it is clear that training principals in public relations skills is a necessity especially since schools have to now engage in various fundraising activities as they are no longer fully subsidized, as was the case up until the early 1990s. A further benefit to the KZN DEC will be the huge financial saving once principals have acquired the essential public relation skills for the KZN DEC may be able to further reduce subsidies to schools if schools are able to raise their own funds.

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APPENDIX A.

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Durban Institute of Technology

Department of Education

Topic of Research

Public Relations Training for Secondary School Principals : Recommendations for Selected Secondary Schools in Phoenix.

Dear Principal

I am presently registered for the M. Tech : Education coursework and mini-dissertation. This study will involve the completion of a questionnaire by yourself. I would therefore like to appeal to you for your assistance in permitting me to obtain this information which will only be used for research purposes. No names of persons or institutions will be used. All information will be treated as strictly confidential and your completed questionnaire will be destroyed immediately after the contents have been analysed.

Your willingness to co-operate will be most helpful.

Yours faithfully



(Mr. A. Hariparsad)

Contact Details : 11 Abervale Road

Rydalvale

PHOENIX

4068

Telephone : (031) 5071452

APPENDIX B.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

(to be completed by participant)

Date : 25 July 2003

Title of Research Project : Public Relations Training for Secondary School Principals : Recommendations for Selected Secondary Schools in Phoenix.

Name of Supervisor : Mrs. J.J. Prosser

Name of Research Student : Mr. A. Hariparsad

PLEASE TICK THE APPROPRIATE ANSWER	YES	NO
Have you read the Research Information Sheet ?		
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions regarding this study ?		
Have you received satisfactory answers to your questions ?		
Have you had an opportunity to discuss this study ?		
Have you received enough information about this study ?		
Who have you spoken to ?		
Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study ?		
(a) at any time		
(b) without having to give any reason for withdrawing.		
(c) without affecting your future health care		
Do you agree to voluntarily participate in this study ?		

If you have answered no to any of the above, please obtain the necessary information before signing.

Please print in block letters : _____

APPENDIX C.
QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR CHOICE OF ANSWER BY MEANS OF A CROSS. (X)

WHERE FURTHER DETAILS ARE REQUIRED, PLEASE USE THE SPACES PROVIDED.

SHOULD YOU REQUIRE MORE WRITING SPACE, YOU MAY CONTINUE YOUR ANSWER ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THE PAGE.

1. How old are you ?

31-39 40-49 50-59

2. How many years have you been in the teaching profession ?

11-15 16-20 21-25

3. How many years have you served as Principal ?

Under 5 6-10 11-15

4. How many years have you served as Principal of your present school ?

Under 5 6-10 11-15

5. What specialist subjects have you taught in your experience as a teacher ?

6. Please indicate your qualifications as follows :

6.1 Academic : _____

6.2 Professional : _____

7. Have you attained qualifications in any of the following subjects. (If YES, please specify the course and institution)

7.1 Public Relations YES NO

7.2 Human Relations YES NO

7.3 Communication YES NO

7.4 Marketing YES NO

8. Principals sometimes receive in-service training by means of workshops (eg. Orientation courses and group discussions)

8.1 How many workshops for principals have you attended in the last five years ?

8.2 Briefly state the theme and duration of the last five workshops you attended.

N0	THEME	DURATION
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

8.3 How often have these workshops for principals been held in your circuit/district/region ?

Annually Quarterly Monthly Fortnightly Weekly

Other (specify) _____

8.4 Do you think that you would find workshop discussions on the following subjects helpful to you in your role as a secondary school principal ?

8.4.1 Public Relations YES UNCERTAIN NO

8.4.2 Human Relations YES UNCERTAIN NO

8.4.3 Communication YES UNCERTAIN NO

8.4.4 Marketing YES UNCERTAIN NO

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS PERTAIN TO THE NATURE OF YOUR SCHOOL AND THE MANNER IN WHICH IT OPERATES. PLEASE ANSWER CANDIDLY AS ALL ANSWERS WILL BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY.

9. What is the present pupil population at your school ?

500-650 651-800 801-950 951-1100

10 How has the pupil population at your school changed over the last five years ?

It has : decreased increased been constant fluctuated

11 How many members of staff (including the management team) does your school have ?

16-20 21-25 26-30 31-35

12 Is there any member of your staff that has attained a qualification in Public Relations ?

YES UNCERTAIN NO

13 What position does this person qualified in Public Relations hold in your school ? (if applicable)

Senior Deputy Deputy HOD Other (Specify) _____

14 By what means does your school communicate news to its alumni (ex-pupils)

None Newsletters Governing Body Meetings

Other (Specify) _____

15 By what means does your school keep parents and other interested members of the community informed about the activities and accomplishments of your school ?

None Newsletters Governing Body Meetings Press Releases Radio

Other (Specify) _____

16 How has your school raised funds in the last five years ?

Variety Concert Deb's Ball Fair/Fete Fun Run/Walk

Other (Specify) _____

17 What was/were the goal/s of your fundraising drives ?

18.1 Do you as Principal follow a written, planned Public Relations programme ?

YES UNCERTAIN NO

18.2 How often is this written Public Relations Programme revised or evaluated ? (if applicable)

Annually Quarterly Monthly Other (Specify) _____

18.2.1 Is anyone, other than yourself in charge of co-ordinating this Public Relations Programme at your school ? (indicate position of co-ordinator if this question is applicable)

Senior Deputy Deputy HOD Senior Educator Person to be appointed No one

Other (Specify) _____

18.2.2 Does this written Public Relations Programme attempt to analyze new trends in relation to the new demands of commerce and industry.? (if applicable)

YES UNCERTAIN NO

18.2.3 Does this Public Relations Programme attempt to predict possible outcomes/results of the Public Relations strategies outlined in the programme. (if applicable)

YES UNCERTAIN NO

18.2.4 Briefly outline some of the strategies (plans of action) included in your school Public Relations Programme :

19 What, would you consider, is the overall public image the community has of your school ?

Excellent Good Average Fair Poor

Possible reasons for this image : _____

- 20 How would you describe present attitudes of parents towards greater parental involvement in the activities of your school ? Parents are generally :

Strongly Interested Interested Not Interested Not Interested At All

- 21 Briefly outline what attempts have been made by you to change parental apathy or lack of interest : (if applicable)

- 22 Which of the following do you think is the general image the public has of your school :

Your school produces :

Academic Excellence Outstanding Sportspersons Mainly Dropouts

Pupils of Average abilities

Other (Specify) _____

Possible reasons for this image :

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATON !!!