# THE SIX ROLES OF
# PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS

In the revitalization of the court of public opinion underway since the 60s, a broader scope has been opened to public relations professionals. The innumerable case problems shared with us each year mandate six roles for the contemporary practitioner:

1. **Researcher**. All sound public relations begins with research, and ends with it, in the form of evaluation. More than half the steps in the public relations process involve research. (**Additional training needed**: formal and informal research techniques, data analysis.)

2. **Counselor**. A basic skill, whatever your job. It does no good to be a great tactician or strategist if you can't persuade colleagues to adopt your ideas. (**Additional training needed**: organization development, organizational behavior, systems theory, persuasion theory, policy sciences, diplomacy.)

3. **Strategic Planner**. This enables organizations to move from a reactive mode to a proactive mode. The strategic planner aligns activities with specific goals and understands how to measure successes. (**Additional training needed**: trend analysis, futures research, behavior change theory.)

4. **Educator**. Public relationships are not created or "handled" by us but by everyone in the organization, at every level. Must be made aware of this responsibility and trained to carry it out. Our job is to do the teaching & coordinate their efforts. (**Additional training needed**: learning theory, group psychology, motivation.)

5. **Communicator**. Our original assignment, now immensely complicated by emerging technology. Internal, external, print, video, broadcast, mass, social, personal – practitioners must master all. (**Additional training needed**: diffusion process, methods of persuasion, graphic psychology, information mapping.)

6. **Cheerleading**. Every group needs cheering on or up. Basic human psychology. Who is better able, or situated, to do it than the public relations department? (**Additional training needed**: cultural anthropology, listening & empathy skills, recognition & reward programming, feedback systems.)

## Section 1: *Researcher*

1. **When an assignment is given, I more often than not gather data first – primary or secondary – before beginning the work.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | | Strongly Agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

2. **I usually confirm my feelings about what specific stakeholders are thinking or feeling about most of my organization's activities with some type of data gathering.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | | Strongly Agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

3. **I'd rather do some quick, overnight research to verify our direction than go with gut instinct.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | | Strongly Agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

4. **I build research into my organization's budget and advocate for it as a priority.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | | Strongly Agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

5. **I conduct baseline research so I can measure progress against goals over time.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | | Strongly Agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

6. **I often use research as proof of success when debriefing with my boss or my team on a specific project.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | | Strongly Agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

Section 1 ***Researcher*** : Total # of Points: _____

## *Section 2: Counselor*

7. **When persuading my boss/colleagues to consider their options for a decision, I build my case by thinking through the pros and cons of each option and identifying potential outcomes of those options.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecide |

8. **I know I've done a good job when my fellow managers/clients think that my ideas are their ideas.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

9. **Though it is easier to do the work myself, I chose to support others in getting it done.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

10. **More often than not, my ideas are listened to and integrated into the final products**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

11. **I am usually successful in getting the CEO/boss/client to listen to and follow my advice.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

12. **I'm skilled at finding third party advocates outside the organization to help me build my case inside.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

Section 1 ***Counselor***: Total # of Points: _____

## *Section 3: Strategic Planner*

13. **I enjoy developing a roadmap of our department's activities and checking on our progress toward identified goals on a regular basis.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**14. I understand how our department goals fit into the big picture of our organizational goals.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**15. I am good at identifying long-term goals and I understand how the tactics we employ are contributing to those goals.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**16. Prioritizing audiences and identifying desired outcomes is usually easy for me to do.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**17. I enjoy spending time with colleagues planning things out, dividing tasks and looking at the end goal.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

18. **I will recommend abandoning a strategy or tactic when it looks like it is not furthering our organizational goals.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

Section 3: Strategic Planner - Total # of Points: ____

## *Section 4: Educator*

**19. I spend a great deal of time educating and training colleagues/clients about communications and public relations.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**20. Though I work in the area of public relations, I feel everyone in the organization is responsible for our organization's good reputation.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**21. I have helped the average employee in my organization understand their role as a pr ambassador for the organization.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**22. My CEO/boss understands what good public relations is and what it isn't.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**23. I'd like to teach or lecture about the profession of public relations to others.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**24. I enjoy working on a cross-disciplinary team and educating my colleagues about how pr principles apply to what we're doing**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

Section 4: Educator -- Total # of Points: _____

## *Section 5: Communicator*

**25. I am comfortable as the media spokesperson for the organization and can deal with reporters appropriately.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**26. I feel my points are heard and understood most the time by colleagues/clients.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**27. I like public speaking and giving presentations.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**28. My networking skills are strong.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**29. I am skilled in social media techniques and I am comfortable using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, writing blogs, etc.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**30. I am skilled in most of the standard communication vehicles (newsletters, brochures, annual reports, internet and intranet communication, etc.)**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

Section 5: Communicator -- Total # of Points: ___

## *Section 6: Cheerleader*

**31. I enjoy "management by walking around" and getting to understand the various functions that make up our organization**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**32. Most of my colleagues would consider me an optimist.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**33. I am usually the one in the room telling everyone how we can get things done when the tasks seem overwhelming**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**34. I consider myself a positive ambassador and often tell friends about the great things my organization does.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**35. I know who the other internal opinion leaders in the organization are and I go to them first to sell an idea or help others get enthused about it.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

**36. I am an advocate of internal recognition and reward programs.**

| Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Undecided |

Section 6: Cheerleader: Total # of Points: _____

**CHARTING YOUR ROLE SCORES: Plot your total score in each category by making a mark or shading the corresponding number.**

| | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Researcher** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Counselor** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Strategic Planner** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Educator** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Communicator** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Cheerleader** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

If you agree with the premise that each of these roles is important to being a successful public relations practitioner, then you may want to strengthen those areas that fall below “17” (through further training or education) or find other ways to compensate for that missing piece by seeking out colleagues to work with who are strong in those skills.

For those ratings between “18” and “24”, pay closer attention to the need to exercise those skills for your own benefit and the benefit of your employer.

For those ratings “25” and over, be sure that you don’t rely exclusively on the skills you are most comfortable with or enjoy the most. They may not always be the best answer to a problem or opportunity.