

Nigeriana
Stirling-Horden
Encyclopaedia

of

Mass Media

&

Communication

Principles and Practice

Volume 2

Edited by

Oshiotse A. Okwilagwe



NIGERIANA

**Stirling-Horden
Encyclopaedia of Mass
Media and Communication**

Principles and Practices

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Oshiotse A. Okwilagwe

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Preface

Mass Media and Communication practices in Nigeria have immensely contributed to national integration and development in the face of serious national, economic, social and politically inhibiting problems. The practitioners in the Nigerian Mass Media and communication spheres have attained a great deal of professional competence and efficiency in their various domains of activities such as the radio, television, print and other media of communication. They would seem to have successfully created a Nigerian mass media and communication practice phenomenon, peculiar to Nigeria and worthy of emulation by other nations of the world.

While the Mass Media practitioners have more than enough evidence to showcase their direct contributions to national development and integration in terms of output and effects, the scholars in the academia often point to the fact and pride themselves with the satisfaction that the Mass Media practitioners are the direct products of their scholarship. However, the consensus seem to be that the mass media practitioners were bred by mass communication teachers mainly on foreign mass media instructional materials when they were students at various levels. The problem of lack or shortage of indigenous relevant instructional materials, have always been with us in Nigeria. This situation has grown more precarious because of the recent developments in teaching and learning in the Mass Media and Communication disciplines in Nigeria.

The issues of rising number of mass communication departments and a corresponding rise in the number of mass communication students at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels have made the writing and publishing of indigenous instructional materials imperative. This is the situation that necessitated and guided the perspectives that initiated and executed the Mass Media and Communication Instructional Materials Writing and Publishing National Conference that resulted in the publishing of these volumes of encyclopaedia.

The present published set of four volumes of *Stirling-Horden Encyclopaedia of Mass Media and Communication* was meant to

bridge the gap between indigenous curriculum, instructional materials needs, teaching and learning outcomes in the various sub-units that make up the Mass Media and Communication disciplines. The publications contain intrinsic Nigerian and global generic issues in mass media and communication disciplines.

Nigeria boasts of indigenous scholars in almost all disciplines of human endeavour and the mass media and communication realms are no exceptions; this is apparent. The authors of the articles in the first four volumes of the proposed set of twelve volume Encyclopaedia of Mass Media and Communication are teachers and practitioners who are in the various academic departments and media houses of the universities that run such programmes in Nigeria. The publishing of these books is a marked demonstration of the greatness of our nation in this discipline. The depth, contents, style and insightful treatment given by the authors to the contents of the publications, in part, reveal the reason for the dynamism of the Nigerian journalists both in print and electronic media.

With these publications, these authors and teachers of journalism have further strengthened the foundation and framework for academic research and professional practice of journalism in Nigeria. They must be commended for their professional ethos, determination and the innovation that resulted in the publishing of these very relevant instructional materials. These publications would be found relevant for teaching, learning and research internationally.

The first four volumes that make up the first set of the encyclopaedia cover four basic themes:

- Volume 1: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives of Mass Media and Communication in Nigeria.
- Volume 2: Principles and Practices of Mass Media and Communication in Nigeria.
- Volume 3: Social and Entrepreneurial Imperatives of Mass Media and Communication in Nigeria
- Volume 4: Technology Imperatives of Mass Media and Communication in Nigeria

We are convinced that readers; students, teachers, researchers and the practitioners would find these publications relevant to their various needs. We wish to thank all the contributors and those who attended the First National Conference on Communication with the theme: *Development of Instructional Materials (Textbooks in Mass Communication and Communication Studies in Nigeria in the 21st Century* and the members of the editorial board. The authors are responsible for the contents of their articles and the observance of the copyright law.

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Styles and Peculiarities of the Mass Media

Print Media (Newspaper)

The newspaper is one of the most important media through which Public Relations practitioners send their messages to their audience; because it is tangible and enduring, the message placed in it also endures and can be referred to from time to time. The newspaper generally aims at giving its audience latest news and this determines what is published.

The development of the newspaper has been dramatic over the years. It evolved from pamphlets and newsletters around 1609 into the modern newspaper we have today. The power of the newspaper constantly grew over the years until the advent of the electronic media when it began to diminish (Clear & Weideman, 2002). The newspaper has ever since been trying to reposition itself on the media scene, thereby, resulting into a lot of development. Consequent upon the repositioning, it created for itself the identity of being the best medium to supplement news broken by the broadcast media.

1. Types of Newspapers

Newspapers have become a part of the daily lives of people. They are seen almost everywhere and are a common feature of the reception rooms of most offices. It is also a common sight to see people carry newspapers around or read them in public places. Newspapers have contents that are directed to a cross section of people, hence, they attract a wide range of readership. They inform, entertain, and educate their audience. Though, newspapers are very common, not all types are available everywhere, some are only available in some specific areas or nations. The availability of newspapers, therefore, determines their classification.

Newspapers are classified according to the following criteria:

- i. ***Area of distribution:*** this implies the range covered in the distribution of a newspaper. National newspapers are available in every part of the nation, while regional and local newspapers are limited to some regions and localities respectively. The range covered in the distribution of a newspaper indicates its readership, and its demand.
- ii. ***Frequency of distribution:*** some newspapers are 'dailies', others are 'weeklies' or 'monthlies'. A newspaper cannot be published everyday if its readership strength is low. On the other hand, a newspaper that is in high demand must publish daily, so as to satisfy its audience's crave for information. Hence, how often a newspaper is published determines its classification.
- iii. ***Paid or free newspaper:*** the prices of newspapers vary. Some are very expensive and others are quite cheap or even free. Most national newspapers are expensive and this may be for a number of reasons. First, because of the high demand, more news stories are covered and more adverts are placed, hence, the number of pages increases. This in turn affects the cost of production. Secondly, the cost of nationwide distribution may also increase incurred expenses. On the other hand, local newspapers are usually very cheap because they have fewer news stories and a limited circulation range. Some newspapers are even given out free of

charge (this is typical of new newspapers in a bid to establish their presence). It is safe, therefore, to conclude that the higher the status of the newspaper, the more expensive it is.

The above factors are very important considerations for PR practitioners when undertaking their media planning. Though, all three factors are important, Public Relations practitioners should pay more attention to the area of distribution. It would be a waste of time and resources to attempt to reach a local audience with a national newspaper, simply because it has a high frequency of distribution. Here, we shall take a closer look at newspaper classification according to the area of distribution.

- i. ***National Newspapers:*** national newspapers are those newspapers that are distributed nationwide. *The Punch, Vanguard, and The Guardian* are examples of national newspapers in Nigeria. The newspapers in this category cover national and international issues, politics, crime and violence, economics, human interest stories, sports, and others. National newspapers, sometimes, allocate space for local news, or merely report newsworthy local stories once in a while.
- ii. ***Regional Newspapers:*** the newspapers in this category are similar to national newspapers, though, they are only distributed in certain regions. These newspapers cover national news, sports, politics, and others, but they also have stories that are of regional interests. Examples of regional newspapers are *The Tribune* and *New Nigeria*. Regional newspapers are very valuable to Public Relations when its target audience are regional.
- iii. ***Local or Community Newspapers:*** these newspapers can only be found in certain localities or communities. In most cases, their names reflect the community or area they serve. They are usually very popular with their readers and are very cheap or even free. Although, these newspapers are dominated by advertisement, they also focus on local interest stories, such as happenings at local schools, churches, organisations, communities, and others. Examples of some local newspapers are *Gateway News* and *Kaduna Chronicle*.

2. Appearance and Style of Newspapers

One of the most noticeable physical attributes of newspapers is that, they are printed on relatively low-grade paper. Newspapers vary in volume and thickness. The volume of a newspaper as well as the available space for editorial matters is largely determined by the space taken up by advertisements. Since advertisement spaces are paid, adverts are given prominent positions in the newspaper. Even the front page that is considered the most important page of a newspaper can be sold to advertisers depending on the importance of the advertisement and payment of the fee. The following are some of the physical characteristics of newspapers:

- i. **Visual layout:** each newspaper strives to create for itself a distinctive appearance. While some prefer a sensational layout with large news photographs, big bold headlines and contrasting colours and image sizes, others use a more conservative layout. Nevertheless, specific newspapers can be identified by their custom style of appearance. Most newspapers now use colour picture, particularly for their front page.
- ii. **Legibility:** it is very important that a newspaper should be legible. This is because readers often spend limited time reading newspapers and they want to use as little energy as possible in reading them. Though, newspapers use small font size, they are still expected to be very clear. Hence, most standard newspapers make use of legible typefaces, short sentences and short reports. Also, the language of newspaper is usually simple and is aimed at as many readers as possible.
- iii. **Style:** the style of a newspaper is the specific manner in which it is produced, which is unique and makes it different from others. This uniqueness may be in terms of colour, font, logo, editorial, or layout. The style of a newspaper is its identity and this becomes its unique selling point.

The contents of a newspaper are usually organised or structured according to a standard layout. This means that certain types of articles or news are allocated to certain columns.

The following is a description of a newspaper layout:

- i. **Front Page:** the front page of a newspaper is the first page or the cover page. The most important news stories, which are referred to as the headline news are placed on this page. The name of the newspaper always appears in big bold letters on the front page. The top part of the paper occupied by the name is called the mast-head. Since the front page sells the newspaper, it is usually as visually attractive and inviting as possible. The front page also contains some 'teasers'. Teasers are titles (sometimes placed in small boxes) indicating the stories that can be read inside and the pages where they can be found. The front page does not usually carry more than four to five news reports (hard news). The other important news reports are usually printed on pages 3 and 5 (odd numbered, right-hand pages) which are also considered important pages. Hence a PR practitioner can take advantage of these pages if he has news of importance to pass across.
- ii. **Editorial Page:** editorials are usually placed on even-numbered pages (page 2, 4, 6, and others). The editorial page has a standard layout. The editorial comments reflect the opinion of the newspaper about certain issues.
- iii. **Women's Page:** this is a way of making sure that women read newspapers. The type of information found on this page includes articles about healthcare, childcare, child education, fashion, cooking, beauty, and others.
- iv. **Financial Page:** this page contains important financial news that is considered relevant to readers. This includes stock exchange news, political uncertainty, wars, financial investments, labour, economic development, and others. Hard financial news, however, appear on one of the other news pages.
- v. **Entertainment /Social Page:** this page gives information on the latest entertainment at cinemas, clubs, television, and others. It also provides information about the showbiz industry and celebrities.
- vi. **Sports Page:** though, most sports news can be found on the back page (in some cases the last three pages), important news should be carried on the front page.

3. Structure of the Editorial Staff

The editorial staff of newspapers differ from one organisation to another. Nevertheless, some positions and duties are general in the press. The following is a general structure of the editorial staff of a newspaper.

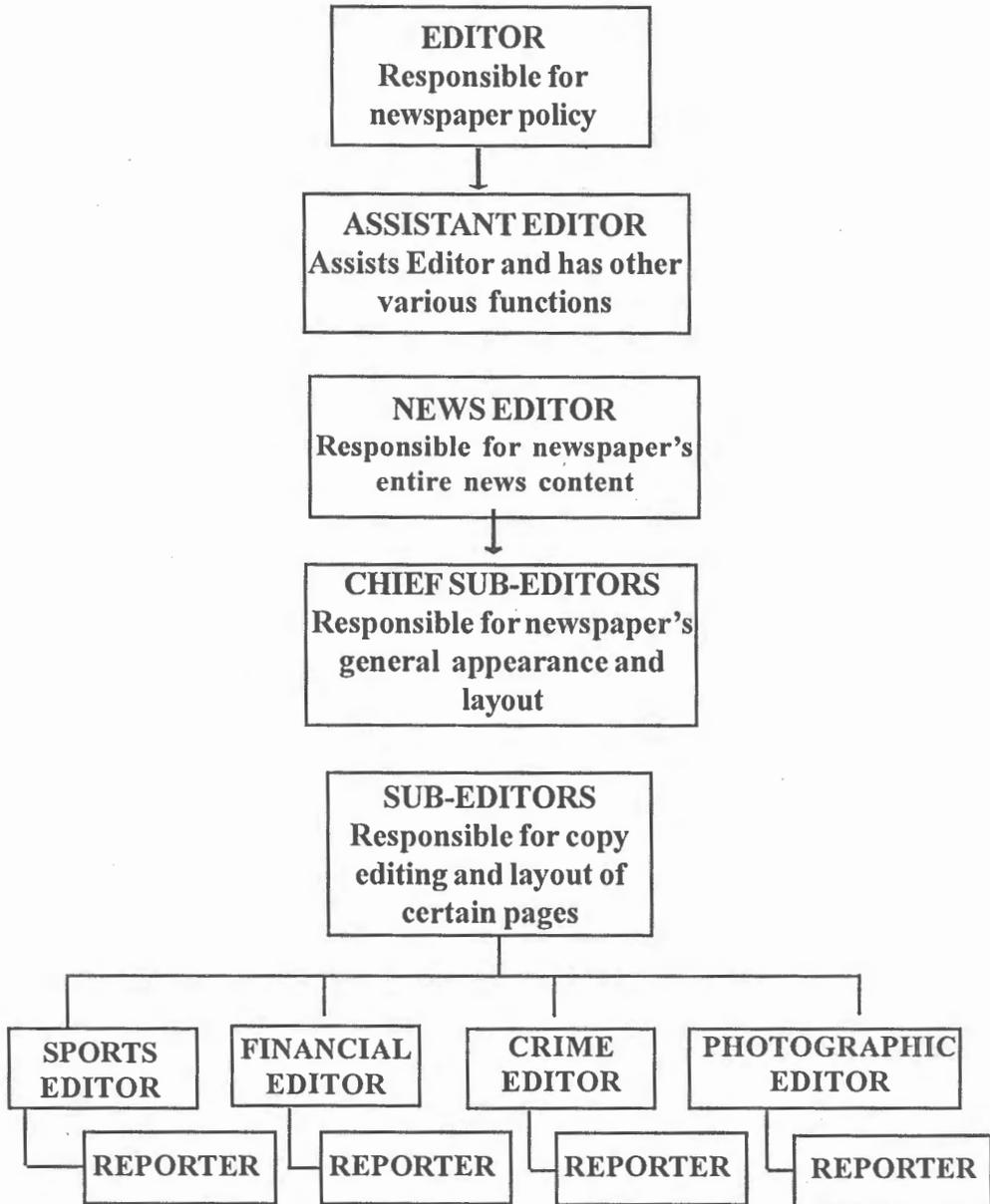


Fig.1: Structure of the Editorial Staff

Source: Clear and Weideman, 2002

Public relations practitioners must contact the appropriate person at the newspaper office for their stories to be attended to. During their first visit to the newspaper, the first contact should always be made through the news editor. If the news editor is not available, his/her secretary will forward any information to him/her and a reporter who covers the specific field (beat) will be assigned to the story. After this initial contact, the PR practitioner is likely to limit his subsequent contacts to the reporter assigned to him. The editor of a daily newspaper normally has little contact with the public, hence, it is inappropriate for Public Relations practitioner to attempt to contact him with a news story.

Magazines

It is a common opinion among Public Relations practitioners that general magazines are not the best media option when sending PR messages. The reason for this is that a general magazine targets all classes of readers and this is inappropriate for PR. Every Public Relations message or campaign is channeled towards specific publics. The classes of magazines suitable for Public Relations purposes are specialised ones. By identifying the target audience of a particular magazine, PR practitioners would be able to determine if they are relevant to the campaign or not.

Magazines are different from other publications because they are usually produced in full colour separation. They are also printed in an A4 format on high quality paper. Magazines are never published daily, rather, they can appear weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, or even quarterly. They are relatively expensive and are usually voluminous. Magazines cover a wide range of issues, depending on their theme and they contain a lot of good quality photographs. Another significant attribute of magazines is that, they contain a high percentage of advertisement. In fact, adverts go a long way in determining the number of pages a magazine contains.

1. Types of Magazines

There are several types of magazines, since they can cover almost any topic under the sun. The function of most magazines can be easily identified by their names, e.g. family magazines, farming, agricultural and wild life magazines, professional magazines, business and trade magazines (hobbies, tourism, and others.) Though, some magazines possess fanciful names that don't betray their category, their editorials do a good job of crystallising their focus. The following are some types of magazines:

- i. ***News Magazine:*** this type of magazine is serious-minded. It contains feature articles on burning social, political or economic issues. The issues may or may not be current but the magazine gives a more detailed insight into them, offers a historical perspective or brings another dimension into the discussion. This is one of the most suitable magazines for Public Relations, because it has the capacity for detailed features articles on personalities and organisations.
- ii. ***Family Magazine:*** this type of magazine focuses on stories that are suitable for the whole family. They may cover issues relating to mortgages, the use of home appliances, raising a family, the challenges of raising children, family finances, and others. This magazine can be considered by PR if the focus of the campaign is the family.
- iii. ***Fashion Magazine:*** this magazine focuses on issues related to beauty treatments and outfits. It may be male or female-oriented. The magazine covers stories on fashion shows, celebrities and their appearances and others. Public relations practitioners can use this medium if their organisation is into fashion business or a related field. They can also target the fashion magazine audience, if they are a relevant public of their organisation.
- iv. ***Financial Magazine:*** a financial magazine is channelled towards business or financial people. It can also provide financial education for fresh financial minds. It may contain simple financial tips or complex financial analyses. Financial magazines are very important

to Financial Public Relations professionals because they are like sources to be consulted by their financial publics.

- v. ***Technical/Professional Magazine:*** this type of magazine services a specific profession or discipline. It usually covers issues relevant to people in the specific field and may use terminologies associated with it. Technical/professional magazines can cover fields such as education, medicine, engineering, artistry, film-making, and others. When aiming at the members of a particular profession, PR practitioners can use this magazine.

2. Editorial Structure of Magazine

Magazines have some unique attributes that differentiate them from other media. For instance, they make use of freelance writers and photographers. Intensive researches are also carried out on all possible sources for interesting articles, so as to find fresh innovative angle to stories. They also re-write standard news release sent to them, so as to exhibit another angle to the story. Since magazines make use of more freelance staff, the permanent ones are trimmed to fill only the most important positions.

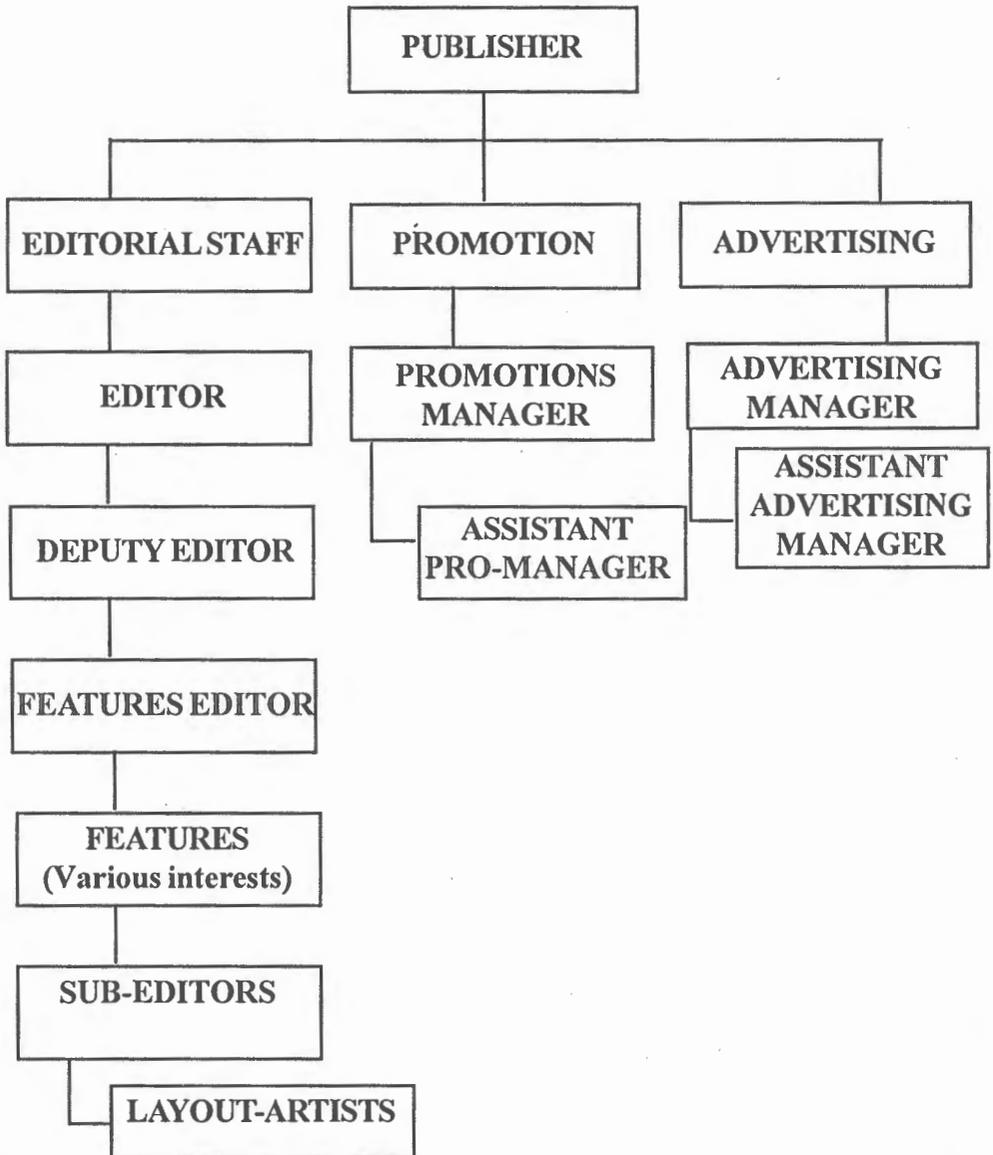


Fig. 2: Editorial Structure of Magazine

Source: Clear and Weideman, 2002.

i. Editorial Staff

The role of a magazine editor differs from that of the newspaper editor. While newsworthiness determines what is published in newspapers, the magazine editor decides what a magazine contains. The magazine

editor suggests ideas or topics to be covered and other sub-editors are responsible for materials in their specific fields. Each member of the editorial staff has well-defined duties.

ii. Promotions

Promotions are very important in magazine publishing. People in this department manage free publicity opportunities that provide added value for readers. An example of promotions is a competition offering sponsored prizes, like overseas trips sponsored by a travel agent. The staff in this section are responsible for writing promotional articles.

iii. Advertising

The staff in this section are responsible for selling advertising space. The advertising department is of particular importance, since income from advertising is used to cover part of the production cost. Magazine preparation requires a lot more planning than newspaper preparation. This is because magazines' feature articles are longer and need more research than those in newspapers. Though, magazines also work on deadlines, they are published weekly, fortnightly or monthly, which naturally reduce the pressure.

Meetings are usually held to discuss the contents of each edition. The meetings also serve as avenues for determining the material available for the next issue as well as new possibilities. Apart from specialised magazines which, in many cases, are the better option for Public Relations efforts, promotional articles in general magazines are another way of getting publicity for an organisation. The PR practitioner should also note that personal contact with magazine personnel is important.

Broadcast Media

1. Television

Although television is regarded as the most powerful mass communication medium because of its audio visual impact, it is also the most difficult medium the PR practitioner has to deal with. This is so because about 95% of the stories submitted to television stations

by PR practitioners are turned down. The main reason for this is that PR practitioners disregard the newsworthiness of information in favour of promoting a product or an institution. It is often found that bad news has better chance of being broadcast than good news (Clear & Weideman, 2002). Also, meeting deadlines is a major problem for PR practitioners.

a. Types of Television Programmes

It is almost impossible to mention all the programmes on television. Here, we shall consider a few categories:

- i. News Bulletins:* these are the news programmes on television. They are run at specific and strategic times so as to keep the audience informed on important news. This category of programmes can be targeted by Public Relations practitioners for coverage of important and newsworthy events.
- ii. Current Affairs Programmes:* this category includes programmes that focus on the recent developments in the country, and how it affects the citizens. Analysts or professionals in certain fields are invited to discuss the issue at hand. This category can be used by Public Relations practitioners, particularly, to reinforce their organisations' relevance to the day-to-day life of people.
- iii. Sports Programmes:* these are programmes focusing on sports both within and outside the country. They also showcase indigenous sports stars who have made it on the international scene. Though, this category may seem less appropriate for PR use, we must not underestimate the influence of sports on media audience. Hence, the PR department of an organisation may encourage the organisation to sponsor a major tournament on television and place its advertisement on the programme. This will doubtlessly result in a lot of visibility for the organisation.
- iv. Chat Shows:* in this category of programmes, guests are invited to the studios and are asked salient questions about what they stand for. It is more like a discussion programme. PR practitioners

may take advantage of this category by arranging for management representatives of their organisations to be invited to discuss about their operations. This can also be very effective in crisis management.

- v. **Dramas:** this category includes programmes such as plays, films, serials, and others. They are mainly entertainment programmes, though, some may have elements of education or information. There are several ways by which these programmes can be useful for Public Relations depending on the creativity of the persons involved. Nevertheless, one of such ways is to use the programmes to project the organisation's commitment to social responsibility. For instance, a company may sponsor a TV drama on HIV/AIDS, and then place its adverts at intervals.

b. Editorial Staff of Television

- i. **Head of News:** this staff oversees news gathering and production.
- ii. **Chief Executive Producer:** ensures accuracy, fairness, balance of news output. He also coordinates between bulletins.
- iii. **Home Desk:** here, incoming news is received and events to be covered are decided. The staff, here, is also responsible for assigning news stories to journalists.
- iv. **Planning Desk:** this office carries out the future projects of the television.
- v. **Editors:** editors oversee the coverage of events.
- vi. **Executive Producer:** the content and shape of bulletins are determined by the executive producer.
- vii. **Studio Director:** the staff, here, is in charge of all studio operations.
- viii. **Journalists:** they gather news and uncover stories through interviews.
- ix. **Newsroom staff:** they prepare stories forwarded by journalists for broadcast.

Public relations practitioners can place their messages on television by contacting the Home Desk. The editor in charge of this department assigns the relevant journalist or a camera crew to the story.

2. Radio

The radio is a very fast and effective medium of communication. It is very suitable for Public Relations activities because of its availability. The fact that it is less dependent on infrastructure (electricity, in the case of battery powered radios) also makes it a ready choice for Public Relations. It can reach rural dwellers in most remote areas and can be used to communicate with illiterates easily.

a. *The Structure of Radio Service*

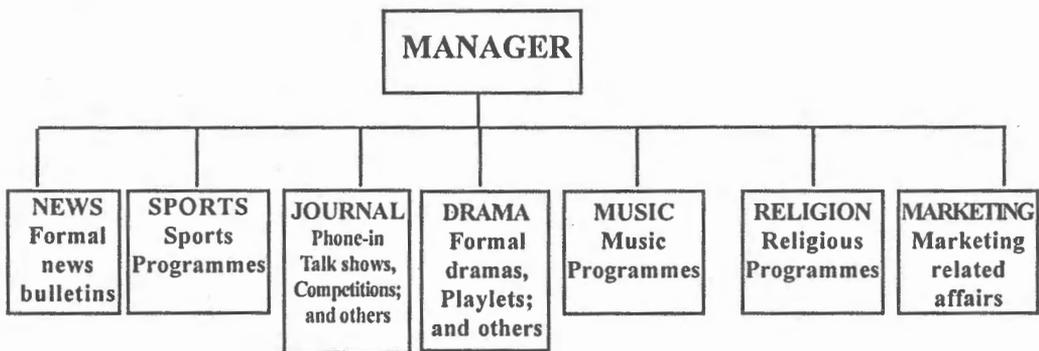


Fig. 3: The Structure of Radio Service

Source: Clear and Weideman, 2002.

b. *The News Room*

The newsroom serves as the work base where news and actuality programmes are compiled. The staff who work in the newsroom include executive producers, editors, and journalists. PR practitioners who have messages to place on the radio first make contact with the news editor who then assigns the relevant journalist to the work. Subsequent contacts by the PR officer will be limited to the assigned journalist.

c. Types of Radio Programmes

Similar to the case of the television, there are too many radio programmes to mention. However, here are a few categories:

- i. **News Programmes:** just as in the case of television, the programmes in this category are news-based e.g. news in brief, network news, news round off; and others. Here too, PR practitioners can place their news materials.
- ii. **Live Studio Programmes:** these category of programmes take place in the studio of the radio station in real time. One of the programmes in the category is live interview. In this case, an individual is invited into the studios for discussion, which the audience can listen to as it is being transmitted.
- iii. **Tape Programmes:** in this case, journalists and reporters go to the location of an event that cannot be transmitted live and they make a recording of it, to be played on air at a later date. These programmes may be used by PR for product launch or facility visit. The programme may also take place in the studio, but it is not transmitted live.
- iv. **Phone-in Programmes:** this category includes mostly live programmes in which the audience are encouraged to participate by calling into the programme. Phone-in programmes can be on any topic at all ranging from music to politics. This category can be particularly beneficial in helping Public Relations practitioners to establish mutual understanding with their publics by listening to them and replying them immediately.

Media Use in PR Campaigns

In Public Relations, after proper research has been made into a particular situation, and objectives are set, the next thing is to undertake a given plan of action. This plan of action is known as a Public Relations campaign. PR campaigns are executed from time to time to achieve different purposes. One of the major steps in planning and executing a

PR campaign is communication. Communication is so important to a campaign that without it, nothing can be achieved. After a Public Relations officer has carried out a research, and has planned a program of action, the next thing he is expected to do is to communicate his plans. This communication is usually in two major dimensions. First, he communicates his findings and planned programmes to the management of the organisation to seek their support and funding. And secondly, he communicates his plans to the various publics of the organisation in the execution of the campaign.

Taking a closer look at the two dimensions of communication above, it is quite obvious that the media cannot be used to communicate with the management of the organisation. Hence, the communication with the various publics of the organisation is the target of media use in PR campaigns. The media are the only channels that can be used to reach the widely-dispersed publics of public relations.

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Jefkins, F. (2000). *Advertising*. Edinburgh: Pearson Educational Limited.

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Some Other Relevant Books

- ◆ Writing for Mass Communication – *Hugh W. Cunningham*
- ◆ Theories of Mass Communication – *Babatunde Folarin*
- ◆ Fundamentals of Human Communication – *Des Wilson*
- ◆ Mass Media in Nigerian Democracy – *Fred I. A. Omu et al*
- ◆ Issues in Applied Communication – *Babatunde Folarin*
- ◆ Element of Journalistic Style – *Babatunde Folarin*
- ◆ Merchants of Discontent: Critical Issues on Advertising – *Muhammad S. Rabiu*
- ◆ Introduction to Print Media – *Des Wilson*
- ◆ Issues in Media Practices – *Nkereuwem Udoakah*
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