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Abstract

Everyone seems to have a personal idea of what public relations (PR) is, though only very few really know what it actually is. To some, PR is the way an entity (or entities) is seen or perceived by people. While this is one of the attributes of PR, it is hardly the entire picture. To some others, PR is the smoke-screen that is used for concealing wrong doings. This is actually one of the strongest and most common perceptions about public relations, and which has been the most difficult to shake off by PR practitioners. It also doesn't help the situation that the insincerity of some PR practitioners in dealing with crises in their organizations contradicts the noble claims of the profession. This chapter therefore presents some definitions of PR and attempts to assert what the profession is. By so doing, there would be an insight into its nature thereby clarifying what it is not. The chapter also provides a background into the relationship between PR and the mass media, and proceeds to examine the characteristics of the media.