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The Public Relations Writer's Handbook: The Digital Age



Synopsis

The second edition of the *Public Relations Writer's Handbook* offers a simple, step-by-step approach to creating a wide range of writing, from basic news releases, pitch letters, biographies, and media alerts, to more complex and sophisticated speeches, media campaign proposals, crisis responses, and in-house publications. In addition, the thoroughly expanded and updated second edition shows how to keep up with the best practices of the public relations profession, as well as with the speed made possible and required by the digital age.

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Customer Reviews

“Essential for any PR professional. Well written and easy to understand.”

--Richard Edelman, president and CEO, Edelman Public Relations Worldwide

“Despite all the rapid advances in technology, good writing is still the key to effective communications. And good writing comes from clear thinking. This book provides an excellent,

step-by-step approach to both.”

--Jon Iwata, senior vice president, Communications, IBM

“Good writing is still at the core of all great communications campaigns, and this book

provides aspiring and experienced practitioners with practical guidelines and effective approaches

to consider.”

--Andy Polansky, president, Weber Shandwick Worldwide

“This is a practical, direct, and easy-to-use handbook for public relations writing, authored by top

communications professionals. It's a must-read for anyone serious about a successful

career in public relations.”

--Carl Folta, executive vice president, Corporate Communications, Viacom, Inc.

“This book offers no-nonsense, straight-ahead advice on how to

compete and win in today's digital world of public relations. -- Paula D. Woodley, lecturer, Annenberg School for Communications, University of Southern California

The first edition of the Public Relations Writer's Handbook has become the gold standard reference in the PR industry. However, since the book was first published, the digital revolution has changed the way we live and do business. Computers, e-mail, cell phones, and the World Wide Web have become a part of everyday life. The second edition of The Public Relations Writer's Handbook offers a simple, step-by-step approach to creating a wide range of writing, from basic news releases, pitch letters, biographies, and media alerts, to more complex and sophisticated speeches, media campaign proposals, crisis responses, and in-house publications. In addition, the thoroughly expanded and updated second edition shows how to keep up with the best practices of the public relations profession, as well as with the speed made possible and required by the digital age. The Public Relations Writer's Handbook is a handy guide for PR writers who must communicate ideas, information, and emotions in a clear, concise, accurate, and credible manner in many styles, tones, and voices, for many different audiences. The Handbook helps to simplify and demystify the writing process, so that your skills can be honed and your talent developed. In this extraordinary resource, authors Merry Aronson, Don Spetner, and Carol Ames offer their secrets to cracking the public relations barriers and getting your message heard by as wide a public as possible.

The book is kind of outdated, but that's the book Purdue University online M.S. Program in Communication chose for the Strategic Communication Professional Writing Class. I would have preferred a book more recent. Overall, most of the information is useful for what I need it for, mostly class discussions and preparing written documents.

I tried on multiple occasions to download this book and was unable to do so until months after my class had ended for the semester. So, I spent money on a textbook that I needed and couldn't use. Very disappointed.

If you're sent to a desert island and can only bring one book on public relations--this is the book. The original The Public Relations Writer's Handbook has long been the best how-to on PR written deliverables. The 2007 Second Edition brings the book into the Digital Age, per the amended title. Press releases, pitch letters, backgrounders, investor relations, Web content, event planning, PR plans--they're all here. Even experienced pilots use a checklist before takeoff. This book serves the

same critical function for both PR pros and novices. Keep it on your shelf along with the rest of your reference canon, which should include *The Elements of Style* and *The Associated Press Stylebook* as this book recommends.

Really useful desk reference for beginner and advanced practitioners.

I'm reading this book for a graduate level course in professional writing and public relations. The book is full of practical tips and best practices for writing media releases and pitches, speeches, blog posts - everything that a public relations practitioner may be called upon to write for their organization or client. I can see myself pulling this off the shelf for reference in the future. Even if you are a seasoned PR professional, you'll pick up a few tips and fine tune your skills.

This book should be a desktop essential for every public relations writer. It is a manual for all aspects of writing in this field, from news releases to brochures to speech writing to obituaries. This all-encompassing handbook provides step-by-step instructions for the different types of public relations writing and applies them to real-life examples and hypothetical situations. As an aspiring public relations writer, I found this book to be quite effective. It breaks down each type of document and walks the reader through the process. It gives the reader a sense of priority-importance, chronology within the text, what to always include and things to avoid. The writers' explanations are understandable, and the concepts are easy to grasp. There is no question that the most vital factor in a news release is newsworthiness: "If your release is to be read and considered for coverage, it must offer a newsworthy story, stated clearly and simply, long on information and short on adjectives." The authors state their point clearly and simply, just as we should when we write our news releases. Although the descriptions and directions are thoroughly helpful, the examples are somewhat stale. Aronson and Spetner say that the purpose of the lead in a news release is to "grab the reader's attention and compel him to continue reading." The example they give, however, is anything but compelling. "Welch Foods has announced it will market a new selection of all-natural frozen juice concentrates that will be available to consumers in supermarkets this November. The new Welch's Orchard 100 percent Natural Frozen Concentrate products include three tangy flavors-Grape, Apple-Grape and Harvest Juice Blend." (Yawn) It is the pitch letter that often determines whether a reporter pursues a story. So, not only must the news release be newsworthy and informational, the pitch letter must be catchy in order to spark the reporter's curiosity. Aronson and Spetner suggest an initial phone call to the editor before pitching the letter in order to determine

the correct angle to take in the letter. Speech writing can be one of the most difficult tasks in public relations. It is so important to understand the speaker's style, speaking rhythm, and voice pattern. It requires a good deal of research and many rough drafts. Aronson and Spetner have made speech writing easier by breaking down the process into ten steps. Having a guide facilitates the writing of a good speech. While it is always important to personalize each speech, following the guidelines can guarantee a well-rounded speech. This book, published in 1993, is already outdated when it comes to electronic media. The internet plays a large role in public relations today, and this book is missing the entire genre. Electronic mail is mentioned once, but discounts it as an effective way to send messages because of "the limited number of terminals with modems that are accessible in newsrooms and the inability to transmit photographs." It is amazing how far we've come in seven short years. As strictly a writing guide, this book is extremely useful. I checked it out from the library in order to write this review, and I am going to buy a copy to use as a guide in the future. The guidelines are clear and precise, and I learned a lot about correct format and presentation. Aronson and Spetner lacked originality and spunk in their examples, but personal writing style is something that will come with time and experience. I recommend this book to other aspiring public relations writers because, as Aronson and Spetner said, "good writing is always at the core of effective public relations."

With the little experience I have in this field thus far, it is by far that only as time goes on, will you become better at being a professional in public relations. Books, google, forums can only do so much for an inexperienced individual. BUT, this book does give you a SOLID FOUNDATION to your career. Obviously so does a good education, but this book attributes to that greatly. I recommend it, I thank those writers for creating this book, and hope all that are seeking to get better in this field find their own way.

Not terribly useful to a pro, I've been told, but it certainly helped me shape my work as a novice doing PR writing.

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