

**CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

**THE SELECTED PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC  
RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS ABOUT THE PUBLIC  
RELATIONS INSTITUTE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA  
(PRISA) NAMIBIA**

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AFRICA (PRISA) NAMIBIA**

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any university for a degree.

14 June 2013

Signature

Date

## **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to investigate the selected perceptions of Public Relations Practitioners about the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) Namibia, in order to recommend to PRISA Namibia ways they can attract membership and gain support and recognition from PR practitioners. This research was conducted through in-depth interviews. The participants in this study were divided into three groups, namely, the members, non-members and the Chairperson (current and previous) of PRISA Namibia. A total of 10 participants were interviewed. The results of the study indicate that PR practitioners in Namibia know relatively little about PRISA Namibia activities in Namibia. Most of the Participants are frustrated with PRISA Namibia's lack of visibility and accessibility. However, most members acknowledged that PRISA Namibia had, in the past, added immense value to their Public Relations (PR) careers. The recommendations of the study include:

PRISA Namibia organising conferences or workshops on ethics; PRISA Namibia publishing an ethics booklet that can be used by PR students and professionals to illustrate how practitioners can practically adhere to PRISA code of ethics on a day to day basis; and PRISA Namibia creating social media pages on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

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## **GLOSSARY**

<b>AGM</b>	<b>Annual General Meeting</b>
<b>APR</b>	<b>Accredited Public Relations</b>
<b>CIPR</b>	<b>Chartered Institute of Public Relations</b>
<b>CPD</b>	<b>Continuous Programme Development</b>
<b>CPRP</b>	<b>Chartered Public Relations Practitioner</b>
<b>EXCO</b>	<b>Executive Committee</b>
<b>IABC</b>	<b>International Associations of Business Communicators</b>
<b>IMM</b>	<b>International Marketing Management</b>
<b>INTEC College</b>	<b>Distance learning institution</b>
<b>IPRA</b>	<b>International Public Relations Associations</b>
<b>MISA</b>	<b>Media Institute of Southern Africa</b>
<b>PR</b>	<b>Public Relations</b>
<b>PRISA</b>	<b>Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa</b>
<b>PRO</b>	<b>Public Relations Officer</b>
<b>PRSA</b>	<b>Public Relations Society of America</b>
<b>SA</b>	<b>South Africa</b>
<b>UNISA</b>	<b>University of South Africa</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>United States of America</b>

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

More and more organisations are realising the value that public relation (PR) adds to their reputation. With the escalating labour strikes that have taken place in many organisations in recent times, the need to communicate effectively has become paramount. Hence, it has become essential for PR practitioners to receive the correct training and be members of associations that can assist them in dealing with industry-related issues.

Currently, PRISA Namibia is the only PR association in the country that assists PR practitioners to operate more effectively. This study will assess how some PR practitioners (members and non-members) have perceived PRISA Namibia's activities. Moreover, the study will: identify opinions of PR professionals about PRISA Namibia; state the expectations of PR practitioners regarding the association; and provide solutions to improve PRISA Namibia operations.

This study will be presented to PRISA Namibia so that it can have a better understanding of how Namibian PR practitioners feel about the association. Moreover, other PRISA bodies can use the recommendations that will be given in this study to attract more members and to gain support and recognition from PR practitioners in their countries.

### **1.2 Background and Rationale**

The collapse of the world economy since 2009, together with the recent economic crisis in Europe, led to a shift in the way organisations run (Steyn & de Beer, 2011:1). This shift also had an impact on the PR profession. Steyn (2011:7) states that PR is required to be a strategic management function which operates on the macro or societal level within an organisation. Steyn (2011:7) further notes that PR in its "strategic role, assists an organisation to adapt to its societal and stakeholder concerns or expectations".

In addition, issues that emerge around publics are identified and their expectations and concerns, together with societal and stakeholders' expectations and concerns, are incorporated in the organisation's strategy formulation process (Steyn, 2011:7). This is vital, as stakeholders have become opinionated towards organisations' activities within the external environment.

Moreover, investor relations have recently become a crucial role for PR practitioners. Investors want a form of reporting that accurately communicates financial information in plain English (Atkinson, 2002:217).

In addition, investors want reports that clearly outline how the company is applying the triple bottom-line strategy to its business (Atkinson, 2002:217). This means that PR practitioners have an ethical role to play in the preparation of financial reporting documents. They can, for example, ensure that financial reports reflect the “four primary pillars, which are fundamental to international guidelines of corporate governance” (King Report II, 2002:13). These pillars include fairness, accountability, responsibility and transparency (King Report II, 2002:13). Due to a change in the roles and responsibilities of PR practitioners, it has become fundamental that public relations practitioners are regulated similarly to medical doctors and accountants. If they are not regulated, investors and other stakeholders will lose trust in the profession. In an attempt to ensure that PR practitioners are regulated, institutions such as the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA), founded in 1957, were established to ensure that the PR profession maintains its integrity and quality standards.

PRISA Namibia has approximately 61 members (Blohm, 2011). The membership is not compulsory for PR practitioners, unlike other professions such as medical doctors, accountants and lawyers, who by law are required to be members of their respective associations (van Rooyen, 2011). This is due to the fact that there is no law to govern the conduct of PR practitioners and this, to a large extent, may be the reason why the PR profession, which is rapidly growing, is not taken seriously in Namibia (van Rooyen, 2011). According to Wilfried Hähner, a member of PRISA, PR practitioners in Namibia do not take PRISA Namibia seriously (Hähner, 2011). Therefore, the way PR practitioners perceive PRISA Namibia will be investigated.

### **1.3 Research Problem**

PRISA Namibia has been in existence since 1999. However, based on observation, many Namibian PR practitioners are still not members of PRISA (PRISA, 2011). According to Claudia Blohm, one of the PRISA Namibia committee members, only 61 members are registered with PRISA Namibia, although there are more individuals practising PR in Namibia. The low membership may be attributed to various factors, one being that PR practitioners are not aware of PRISA Namibia or their activities. Therefore, it would be vital to find out what the perceptions of PR practitioners are with regards to PRISA Namibia and whether they are aware of its existence in Namibia.

## **1.4 Research Question**

What are the selected perceptions of Public Relations Practitioners about the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) Namibia?

### **1.4.1 Sub-questions**

- How would PRISA Namibia benefit the PR profession in Namibia?
- To what extent are PR practitioners in Namibia aware of the work that PRISA Namibia does for the profession in Namibia?

## **1.5 Significance of Study**

The findings from this study will be shared with PRISA Namibia so that it can have an understanding of how Namibian PR practitioners feel about the association. PRISA Namibia will benefit from this study, as it will be able to know its perceived shortcomings as well as the expectations and opinions of PR practitioners in Namibia. Moreover, PRISA Namibia can use the solutions that will be given in this study, to improve its operations, attract more membership and gain the support and recognition of PR practitioners nationwide. The findings of the study could then be applied to other PRISA bodies within Southern Africa.

## **1.6 Aim of the Study**

To identify selected perceptions of Public Relations Practitioners' about the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) Namibia, in order to recommend to PRISA Namibia ways they can attract membership, gain support and recognition from PR practitioners.

### **1.6.1 Objectives**

- To identify the opinions that PR professionals have about PRISA Namibia.
- To identify what PR practitioners expect from PRISA Namibia.
- To provide solutions to PRISA Namibia to improve its operations, attract more membership and gain support and recognition of PR practitioners nationwide.

## **1.7 Limitations to the Study**

### **1.7.1 Time constraints.**

The researcher has until November to conduct the study, which means that there is a few months to complete the study.



### **1.7.2 Mini dissertation.**

Due to the fact that the study is only a mini dissertation, it is not required from the researcher to apply rigorous methods to fully explore the problem. Hence, the sample population consisted of 10 PR practitioners who were approached to participate in comprehensive interviews. The sample size was kept small to ensure that the time-consuming task of capturing and analysing interviews was accurately carried out.

### **1.8 Assumption**

PRISA members perform better than non-members.

### **1.9 Format of the study**

This study comprises of five chapters. The first chapter introduces the topic, gives the background to the topic, and outlines the research problem, aim of the study, research objectives, research questions as well as the significance of the study. Chapter two highlights what other researchers have found in respect to the topic being investigated. The main themes explored are: definition of PR, PR purpose and responsibilities, PR ethics, PR education, membership management, accreditation, continuous professional development, relationship management, PR associations, accessibility and awareness of PR associations.

Chapter three outlines the research methodology selected for this study, the rationale for the methodology and data collection instruments used. Moreover, this chapter gives an overview of the reliability and validity of the study; ethical issues of informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity of research.

Chapter four provides the findings, and analyses and discusses the findings of the research study. Chapter five concludes the study and recommends ways in which PRISA Namibia can attract members and gain support and recognition from PR practitioners.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2. Introduction**

This chapter highlights what other researchers have found in respect to the topic being investigated. The main themes covered are: the definition of PR, the purpose and responsibilities of PR, the ethics of PR, PR education, membership management, accreditation, continuous professional development, relationship management, PR associations, accessibility and awareness of PR associations. This chapter will also explain the theoretical framework on which this thesis is built.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this research project is based on the reflective paradigm. This paradigm is highly relevant to this research project, because, as Steyn points out, “concepts such as reputation, trust, legitimacy, transparency, governance, socially responsible behaviour and sustainable development are monopolizing strategic conversations in this century and are becoming a strategic priority for organisations” (Steyn, 2009:517).

The reflective paradigm is based on Holmström’s (2002) observations on the changing roles, responsibilities and practices of business in Western Europe during the 1960s. This paradigm refers to the ability of a social system to see itself in relation to other social systems and to act on the basis of this recognition to survive in the long-term (Van Riel in Badenhorst, 2008:10). Holmström (2002) further adds that the reflective paradigm implies that the business sees itself as part of a larger social network. Therefore, it “thematizes” its identity, role and responsibility in society, which in turn influences corporate policies (Holmström & Kjaerbeck, 2007 & Holmström, 2002 ).

Holmström (2002) and Luhmann (in Holmström & Kjaerbeck,(2007) also states that organisations that reflect well are capable of being more open than conventional regulated organisations and they can endure the challenge of taking an open and understanding position towards other perspectives than their own, without losing their identity .

Moreover, the role of PR in the reflective approach is more than just a matter of communicating with the organisation’s stakeholders. It also needs to analyse, reflect and integrate the characteristics of the public sphere process (Holmström, 2002). This research project will seek to analyse, reflect and integrate the perceptions of PR practitioners towards PRISA Namibia.

Tools such as environmental scanning, cyber scanning, boundary-spanning and forecasting are part of the reflective approach, as they reflect, track, and identify stakeholders, issues, activists and publics who have an impact on the organisation. Steyn and Puth (2000:165) define environmental scanning as a “process in which an organisation learns about events and trends in the external environment, establishes relationships between them and considers the main implications for problem definition and decision making”. According to Abdullah and Threadgold (2008:9) boundary-spanning is important in determining the specific roles of PR practitioners and can be used to improve the image of PR professionalism.

## **2.2 Public Relations definition**

Cutlip, Centre and Broom (in Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2000:4) define PR as a management function that “establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and the public on whom its success or failure depends”. Fitzpatrick (1996:241) defines PR as the conscience of a company. As universal as PR might seem, Verčič, van Ruler, Bütschi and Flodin (2001:376) noted that the German definition for PR is completely different from that of the United States. The German term for “public relations” is known as “Öffentlichkeitsarbeit,” which means “public work” and it is explained as “working in public, with the public and for the public”. This means that European PR considers the general public as its stakeholders, unlike the American perspective, which segments the general public into specific target publics.

The USA general definition of PR is defined as “the management of relationships between an organisation and its publics” (Hykadeada, 2012). The European perspective of PR goes beyond just managing relationships with various groups which constitute the public. Authors like Oeckl from Germany and Van der Meiden from the Netherlands, believe PR is about managing and understanding relations in the public sphere and for the public sphere (Verčič *et al.* 2001:376; Hykadeada, 2012).

They further stated that the quality and quantity of the public sphere is measured by ‘public opinion’ (Verčič *et al.* 2001:376). But this public opinion “is a type of political authority that developed in the nineteenth century, in opposition to monarchic rulers and was the foundation on which some European democracies were built” (Verčič *et al.* 2001:376).

Kitchen (in Steyn, 2011:2) also added that PR is concerned with “assisting organisations to both formulate and achieve socially acceptable goals, thus achieving a balance between commercial imperatives and socially responsible behaviour”. In the United Arab Emirates, PR practitioners view PR more as public diplomacy, placing much emphasis on receiving delegations (Creedon, Al-Khaja & Kruckeberg, in Curtin, 2006:10), whereas in Egypt PR is perceived to be no different from sales and marketing. Egyptian PR practitioners view PR as a hospitality-related function (Keenan in Curtin, 2006:10).

### **2.3 Purpose of Public Relations**

The PR profession has moved from a “nice-to-have” to a “must-have” during the past few years. Apart from just managing and establishing relationships with the public, as stated by Cutlip *et al.* (in Broom *et al.* 2004:4), PR also has a fundamental purpose of acting as a watchman for an organisation. This means that PR practitioners should be at the forefront of whatever is happening in the organisation. They should be the first to know about trends, issues and problems that will have an impact on the organisation and its stakeholders. The watchman function was affirmed by Kitchen (in Steyn, 2011:2), when he defined PR as “the art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organisational leaders and implementing planned programmes of action, which will serve both the organisation and the public’s interest”.

Moreover, the PR practitioner acts as a counsellor to management or mediator, who “translates private aims into reasonable, publicly acceptable policy and action” (Public Relations Society of America Foundations, (in Fitzpatrick & Gauthier, 2001:193; Horton, 2007). Steyn (2011:7) further notes that PR plays a “strategic role, which assists an organisation to adapt to its societal and stakeholder concerns or expectations.” Skinner, Von Essen, Mersham and Motau (2010:5) outlined the characteristics of PR, which could be construed as purposes of PR as well.

The above cited authors state that the characteristics of PR include being dynamic in managing and maintaining both old and new relationships; in analysing trends and issues that the organisation might face; in planning effectively; in being proactive, in evaluating their performances with respect to how they have achieved their goals and in quickly adapting to change.

In order for PR to effectively analyse trends, predict their consequences, counsel organisational leaders, assist organisations to formulate and achieve socially acceptable goals and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and its publics, this field of study needs to be active on a strategic management level (Steyn, 2011:7; Skinner *et al.* 2010:6-7). All the decisions which have an impact on how the above-mentioned activities are implemented, are made on a strategic level. In addition, PR can no longer afford to play a simply technical role. Chief Executive Officers need PR inputs, knowledge and skills in order to address important societal issues that can have a detrimental impact on the organisation's reputation and image.

If PR practitioners want to be taken seriously on a strategic level, they need to take their roles and responsibilities seriously. They need to account to both their organisations and the society in which their organisations operate. Van Hook (2011) agrees with the above statement when he states that PR practitioners not only represent their organisation to the public, but are required to present the public to their organisation as well. Hence, there are now certain governance practices that have been stipulated in reports, such as the King III Report, which PR practitioners should adhere to when dealing with their organisations' stakeholders, including the public. The King III Report, is a report on governance for South Africa, and provides a list of best practice principles to assist and guide CEOs, directors, and managers to make responsible decisions for their organisations (Deloitte, 2014).

The King III Report, in particular Chapter 8, outlines how PR practitioners are accountable in the way they communicate with their organisations' stakeholders (King III Report, 2009:5). It also states that all communication to stakeholders should be clear and relevant, whether it is positive or negative (King III Report, 2009:5).

The language that PR practitioners use should be simple and structured, to make it easier for stakeholders to understand the message (King III Report, 2009:5). Moreover, PR practitioners should provide complete, timely, relevant, accurate, honest and accessible information to their stakeholders, by using communication channels that are accessible to their stakeholders (King III Report, 2009:5). These governance practices not only enable PR practitioners to build and maintain relationships with stakeholders, but also outline the codes of ethics, which PR practitioners need to adhere to in order for them to behave ethically in all their endeavours,

## **2.4 Roles and Responsibilities of PR practitioners**

Steyn (2007:3-8) identified the roles that PR professionals perform. The first role is that of a PR strategist who assists the organisation to adapt to its environment by “feeding intelligence” to top management on strategic stakeholders issues, concerns and expectations. They are also required to gather, identify, analyse, interpret and inform top management on reputation risks and other strategic issues identified in the environment.

This stakeholder information, in turn, is used to “feed intelligence” into the organisation’s strategies and ensure that organisational goals and strategies are aligned with stakeholder expectations and concerns (Steyn, 2007:5). In Skinner *et al.* (2010:6) the PR manager fulfils the strategist role. He/she collects, analyses and interprets information from internal and external publics, evaluates the needs and opinions of both internal and external publics on a continuous basis and counsels management on stakeholder issues. According to the above-mentioned purpose and roles of PR, it can be deduced that the role of PR is reflective, as explained by Holmström (2002) earlier.

The PR manager fulfils the role of planning, organising, leading, controlling and budgeting. Moreover, PR managers are expected to counsel other divisional heads on their communication responsibilities towards their employees and ensure that they manage the support that the PR function gives to other divisions (Steyn, 2007:6; Skinner *et al.* 2010:7). She further defined the manager’s role by noting that PR managers contribute to strategic management by identifying what messages must be communicated to stakeholders. Although PR managers are expected to fulfil the above-mentioned roles, the findings of the South African Excellence Study (Groenewald in Steyn, 2011:28) revealed that “effectiveness of corporate communication managers in management skills, strategic communication skills and management communication skills were significantly lower than their training in technical communication skills”.

The South African Excellence Study also revealed that CEOs were not pleased with most senior PR managers, because they were not proactive with internal communication, tending to be more reactive than proactive. They felt that PR managers are not playing a strategic role, nor do they think strategically, and at times

they fail to anticipate events which have or will have a negative impact on the organisation if not properly managed (Steyn 2011:33).

In addition, the study found that most PR managers do not anticipate the needs of their CEOs, nor are they focused on business strategies. Lastly, the study felt that PR managers are limited in strategic knowledge and understanding, and do not have a vision or mission for their communication department (Ibid).

A PR technician on the other hand must decide how to communicate the intended message to the target publics. They are also expected to align the PR activities with the organisation's vision, mission and strategic goals (Steyn, 2007:11). Moreover PR technicians deal with the media by organising conferences, planning exhibitions, writing for and producing publications such as newsletters and annual reports, preparing audio-visual material, writing press releases, networking and lobbying (Skinner *et al.* (2010:8-10).

In addition, although it is not indicated in the literature reviewed in the roles and responsibilities of PR, it is important that PR practitioners take up the role of being ethics officers in their organisations, to 'divorce themselves from perceptions such as 'spin doctors'. Grunig (in Leonard & Stroh, 2002:42) concurs with the above statement when he cited that PR managers' new role is to be responsible for providing moral leadership within and on behalf of an organisation. He further noted that PR managers' role requires them to operate as the ethical consciousness of the organisation.

## **2.5 PR Ethics**

This section looks at what constitutes PR ethics, the codes of ethics, ethics training and PRISA Namibia's code of ethics.

A statement in the Professional Bond Report of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) (2006) states that "no PR practice should exist in contemporary society without a full commitment to ethical practice". This statement indicates that PR ethics are vital to the PR profession. Holt (2002), Bowen, (2008:284a) Lee and Cheng, (2011:69) note that if PR practitioners hope to gain professional status in the eyes of other professionals, they must emphasise ethics education amongst PR practitioners, to inspire them to attain higher standards. Currently, PR ethics are upheld by codes of ethics held by major PR associations, like the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management and the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) (Bowen, 2007).

Moreover, these codes of ethics are used to develop an organisational culture which supports ethical decision-making based on cross-cultural and universal moral principles of honesty, fairness and transparency (Ibid).

The codes of ethics, however, vary from country to country, as some codes offer guidance and other codes identify general moral principles of ethical behaviour such as dignity, respect, and human rights (Ibid Coleman & Wilkins, 2009:48; Lee & Cheng, 2011:319). Abdullah and Threadgold (2008:2) agree with Bowen (2007) that different PR associations subscribe to different forms of codes of ethics. However, the Professional Bond Report (2006) states that there should be standard codes of ethics that can be applied across different countries and regions.

Many PR practitioners consider that codes of ethics are too vague to be used in their careers and do not give specific guidance to issues they are required to deal with daily (Bowen, 2007; Harrison & Galloway, 2005:3). Some practitioners indicated that they read through codes of ethics once and never refer to them again (Ibid). They simply choose to focus on their client's or employer's interests (Harrison & Galloway, 2005:3).

Bowen (2007) and Lee and Cheng (2011:319) also state that most codes of ethics do not provide enforcement, monitoring or recourse when they are violated. PRISA Namibia's (2011) code of ethics has an enforcement section within it, but it only states that if a PR practitioner is found guilty of violating one component of the code of ethics, their membership will be terminated. That is not really effective. If PR practitioners commit gross misconduct, they should also be barred from practising, as is the case with medical doctors or lawyers.

The perception that PR professionals are "spin doctors" has led to PR practitioners frequently being criticised for unethical conduct. Fitzpatrick and Gauthier (2001:195) state that PR professionals are inundated with charges of unethical conduct. Moreover, many critics and scholars have argued that the PR profession is unethical and uses propaganda and manipulation to influence public opinion (Bowen, 2007; Van Hook, 2011).

An article in the Economist Intelligence Unit (2004) also concurs with the above authors, when they state that an unethical image associated with PR has affected the income of legitimate PR agencies and has prevented major western companies from becoming sensitive about the integrity of their brand.



This is a reason for concern, as PR practitioners are expected to represent the interests of both the public and the organisation in an honest and transparent manner. Fitzpatrick and Gauthier, (2001:195) further adds that when an institution behaves irresponsibly, the PR practitioner shares the blame irrespective of his or her involvement in or knowledge of the alleged irresponsible conduct. Hence, this “guilt by association” has become disadvantageous to the PR profession.

However, top management still trust PR practitioners to advise them on ethical dilemmas. This was proved by a study by Bowen, Heath, Lee, Painter, Agraz and McKie (in Bowen, 2007). The study revealed that 49.9% of PR practitioners advise top management on ethical dilemmas and decisions. Moreover 68% of the participants said that they “felt well-prepared to counsel management on ethical dilemmas” and confirmed that PR practitioners play a “corporate conscience” role in an organisation.

Another study by Heath and Ryan (in Fitzpatrick, 1996:249, 250), however, found that PR practitioners are regularly left out of ethical decision-making processes and play only limited roles in the development of corporate organisations’ codes of conduct. Moreover, the study found that CEOs from various companies in the USA appointed 81 senior staff members, primarily in the legal department, to serve as ethics officers.

Sadly, these ethics officers only spend 21%-40% of their time on ethics-related responsibilities (Fitzpatrick, 1996:249,250). Lindenmann and Lapetina (in Fitzpatrick, 1996:256) also found that CEOs think that PR practitioners do not have a comprehensive understanding of social, political and business problems, hence they cannot be effective ethics officers. Perhaps if PR practitioners were trained to be ethics officers, they could give valuable input to CEOs.

Bowen’s (2008:281a) study also revealed the same issues found in Heath and Ryan’s study. He states that PR managers should play the role of ethics counsellors in the organisation, but found that in practice it does not happen. Participants in his study indicated that there is usually confusion between ethical issues and legal issues. One of the participants said, “We are often very torn between our senses of what is ethical versus what is legal”. “The organisation often leans toward what is legal, more than what is right, or what I and others think is right”. PR managers also do not feel adequately prepared to confront legal counsellors on issues of ethics or legal, as they feel they lack credibility with the CEO or top management, to be able to argue effectively against the above issues.

Some practitioners in the study also noted that they often avoided arguing ethical issues, due to the “higher level of perceived prestige or expertise of legal practitioners within the organisation”. This in turn has disheartened many PR managers, to a point where they reasoned that counsel on ethical issues was not part of their function (Bowen, 2008:283a). Bowen, Heath, Lee, Painter, Agraz, McKie, (in Bowen, 2007) found that 70% of the PR practitioners who participated in the study, were not adequately trained or prepared to handle ethical issues nor to make sound ethical decisions. In fact, some practitioners noted that they only learned about ethical issues from experience, not through formal educational training.

Therefore, PR practitioners, who want to occupy managerial positions or establish themselves as professionals in the industry, should undertake to do an ethics training programme (van Rooyen, 2011). This was confirmed by a report of the Commission on Public Relations Education titled “The Professional Bond: Public Relations Education for the 21st Century” report (2006), stipulates that PR education can equip PR practitioners about the process of ethical decision-making that can help them not only to recognize ethical dilemmas, but to use appropriate critical thinking skills to help resolve those dilemmas and advise management in a way that results in an ethical outcome. Moreover, ethical training can assist PR practitioners in dealing with legal issues such as privacy, defamation, copyright, product liability, financial disclosure, regulations and compliance (Professional Bond Report, 2006).

PRISA Namibia adapted its Code of Ethics and Professional Standards for the Practice of Public Relations and Communication Management to the Global Alliance’s protocol (PRISA, 2012). PRISA’s code of ethics pertains to professional conduct when dealing with clients and employers, colleagues, the business environment, the state, and the channels of communication. In terms of conduct towards clients and employers, the code outlines how members of PRISA Namibia should maintain the confidentiality of both present and former clients and employers (PRISA, 2012; Skinner *et al.* 2010:14-15).

The code of conduct towards colleagues stipulates that members of PRISA Namibia are not allowed to maliciously tarnish the professional reputation or practice of another PR practitioner. In terms of conduct towards the business environment, the code of ethics stipulates that PRISA Namibia members are not allowed to do business with an organisation in which, they have a financial interest, unless they declare their interest upfront. In terms of the state, PRISA Namibia members are required to respect the principles contained in the constitution of the country.

In terms of conduct towards communication channels, PRISA Namibia members are not allowed to engage in any practice which intends to corrupt the integrity of the media or other communication channels. If any of the laws are breached, the PRISA Namibia board will terminate the member's contract. The code is available on the website, and every member that signs up with PRISA Namibia is required to read and sign it (PRISA, 2012).

Although it was noted earlier that codes of ethics vary from country to country, there are associations that embrace similar codes of ethics. PR associations such as the IPRA, the Italian Federation of Public Relations, the Public Relations Institute of New Zealand and PRSA, all embrace the values of honesty, transparency, fairness, pursuit for excellence and professionalism (Global Alliance, 2011). The Italian Federation of Public Relations also expects its members to have direct responsibility to maintain the reputation of the profession, which was also noted in the PRISA code of ethics (Global Alliance, 2011).

As stated above, PR practitioners are required to represent both the stakeholders and the organisation in an honest and transparent manner. According to Holmström, that approach will be reflective, as the approach, as earlier stated, involves more than just communicating with the organisation's stakeholders. It seeks to "thematise" its identity, (Holmström, 2002). In order for that to effectively happen, the communication between society and the organisation needs to be honest and ethical.

## **2.6 Public Relations Associations**

### **2.6.1 Brief description of Public Relations Associations**

This section will look at three associations and their awareness, accessibility, training, continuous professional development and accreditation programmes.

There are various PR professional associations around the world, and the Global Alliance for PR and Communication Management is the world's largest public relations and communication management association, representing 160,000 practitioners and educators throughout the world (Global Alliance, 2011).

The Global Alliance's mission is “to unify the public relations profession, raise professional standards all over the world, share knowledge for the benefit of its members and be the global voice for public relations in the public interest” (Global Alliance, 2011). The Global Alliance has various PR associations affiliated to them such as those of Canada, China, USA, the United Kingdom, Australia and Southern Africa.

The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) is the leading public relations professional association in the United Kingdom (UK) (CIPR, 2011). The association was established in February 1948, and currently has over 9000 members (CIPR, 2011). Furthermore, CIPR is a member of the European PR Federation and also a founding member of the Global Alliance. CIPR (2011) aims to serve the interests of people working in PR in the UK and abroad. They provide a platform where members can have access to information and network. Moreover, CIPR offers training opportunities through various events, conferences and workshops (CIPR, 2011).

PRISA represents professionals in PR and communication management in most countries across the Southern African region, such as Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland and South Africa (PRISA, 2011). Based on information on their website, only the organisations in Namibia and South Africa (Durban, Gauteng, Western Cape and Kwazulu Natal–Zululand), seem to be active. Moreover, PRISA is also a founding member of the Global Alliance and initiated the formation of the Council for Communication Management (CCM) in South Africa (PRISA, 2011).

Skinner *et al.* (2010:22) state that PRISA is recognised as one of the leading PR professional bodies in the world, with over 2500 members. However, only fifty-five (55) PRISA members are recorded on the website. PRISA Namibia has sixty-one (61) members (Blohm, 2011).

PRISA aims to foster the professionalisation of PR practice in Southern Africa; to establish PR as a strategic management function; to uphold professional ethics and standards amongst members and to provide value-added services to members,. (PRISA, 2011; Skinner *et al.* 2010:22). Moreover, Skinner *et al.* (2010:22) state that PRISA's vision is to “recognise PR professionals as role players of significance in South Africa and beyond”. PRISA Namibia offers workshops, seminars, conferences and courses related to the PR industry (Blohm, 2011; Skinner *et al.* 2010:22).

All the above-mentioned associations have similar benefits for their members; however the Global Alliance association offers PR practitioners a wider variety of benefits.

The benefits offered by most of the associations include providing a platform where members can interact and share knowledge with senior leaders from the world's key communication associations from the Americas, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa; affording members an opportunity to participate in international research projects with other Global Alliance member associations around the world, in order to raise the standards and advocate for the standardisation of the PR profession; giving members a platform for voicing their comments and contributions in setting standards in topics, such as PR education, governance and ethics at a global level (Global Alliance, 2011).

All three associations offer membership to students, consultants and practitioners working in the corporate and public sector (Global Alliance, 2011, PRISA, 2011; CIPR, 2011). In terms of membership fees, they all require their members to pay a fee. Whether the fees are reasonable, is something that needs to be investigated. Nevertheless, it was not clear on the websites how the associations manage their membership.

## **2.7 Membership Management**

Much literature has covered the aspect of relationship management, but there is limited literature on membership management. Gruen, Summers, and Acito (2000:35) concurred with the above statement, when they indicated that they did not find many published studies on membership management. Gruen *et al.* (2000:35) further states that membership management qualities are completely different from those in relationship marketing management.

In membership management, membership managers place their focus on retention of members, as this is one of the aspects that some associations struggle with, as reflected in PRISA Namibia's membership records (Blohm, 2011; PRISA, 2011). The retention rate is defined as "the percentage of the membership that renews its membership from one membership year to the following membership year" (Gruen *et al.* 2000:36). PRISA South Africa deployed a number of retention strategies and to attract new members ( see Appendix B) for these strategies.

Membership managers also focus on increasing the quality of membership, firstly, through members' participation and how they use the association's benefits. (Bhattacharya, Rao, & Glynn 1995; Sheth & Parvatiyar in Gruen *et al.* 2000:34).

In terms of member participation, Gruen *et al.* (2000:36) defined it as the "extent to which a member consumes the association's services and products". Exploratory research by Gruen *et al.* (2000:36) showed that some associations have a higher percentage of members who are not fully participating in the activities of the association, whilst other associations have members who fully participate by using the association's website, reading or subscribing to trade magazines and attending local conferences and workshops.

Secondly, co-production increases membership quality. Co-production is defined as the extent to which the membership is involved in the production of the association's products and services.

Some of the aspects that characterise co-production include leadership; participating in the organisation's public relations activities; promoting the organisation by word of mouth, making suggestions that can improve products and services and proactively communicating anticipated problems or issues that might arise (Sheth & Parvatiyar, in Gruen *et al.* 2000:36,37).

For members to be involved in co-production, they should be satisfied with the services offered by the organisation. Hence, Verhoef (2003:33) states that satisfaction is essential to members' commitment and retention. Satisfaction in his study was defined as "an emotional state that occurs as a result of a customer's interactions with an organisation over a period of time".

The third aspect is membership commitment. Gundlach, Achrol, Mentzer and Wiener (in Gruen *et al.* 2000:36,37), define commitment as "the degree of the membership's emotional attachment to the association". Moorman, Zaltman, and Desphand (in Verhoef, 2003:31) define commitment as "the extent to which an exchange partner desires to continue a valued relationship".

However, both Verhoef (2003:31) and Gruen *et al.* (2000:36) chose to focus on the aspects that lead to members/customers being psychologically attached to an organisation through loyalty programmes. Mowday, Porter, and Steers (*Ibid*) noted that people who are committed to an organisation are dedicated to the association and usually go the extra mile to promote it.

Wallace (1995:228) also posits that members only become committed to an organisation that is perceived to offer opportunities for career advancements.

Mowday *et al.* (*Ibid*; Wallace, 1995:228) further notes that members are more likely to be more committed to associations that offer more quality programmes than associations that do not. Verhoef (2003:30) cited that loyalty programmes provide economic incentives to customers and contribute to customer retention.

The fourth aspect is membership recognition. This is defined as the extent to which an association demonstrates to its members that it values their contributions (*Ibid*). A study by Gruen *et al.* (2000:38) found that recognition was identified as the “fundamental extrinsic reward for members’ contributions” and participation in an association. Hopefully this study will be able to find another fundamental extrinsic reward to encourage members to contribute and participate in an association. The PRISA literature reviewed did not indicate whether recognition or any other attribute is offered as a reward for members who participate or contribute to the association.

The fifth aspect is member interdependence enhancement, which is the extent to which the association provides its members with the platform, opportunity and ability to exchange ideas and information with each other (*Ibid*). It was found that one of the highest-rated benefits of being a member of an association is the ability members have to network with each other easily.

It was also found that associations that communicate aspects such as goals, mission, vision, ethics codes, values and culture, enable members to understand the association better and have a sense of belonging. This study will ascertain whether the above-mentioned aspects actually do enable members to understand the association better.

The sixth aspect is external membership. This is the extent to which an association persuades an employer to use his/her authority to encourage or coerce individuals to join an association (Gruen *et al.* 2000:47). It is important that employers invest in their employees by offering them training that will enhance their PR careers.

Employers can, for example, offer to pay for their employees to attend conferences and other activities offered by the association. Lastly, the dimensions of relationship management could enhance membership management.

### **2.7.1 PRISA Membership Management**

In the literature reviewed, not much was stated with regard to how PRISA manages its members. However, the *Communica* newsletter of November 2011 contained an article which noted advantages PRISA provides to its members (See Appendix C).

According to PRISA's mission statement, "PRISA provides dynamic, value-added services to its members". Sandile Xaso, a member of the Executive Committee of the University of Johannesburg Students' Public Relations Association, stated that the association provides "leadership by uniting professionals, direction, purpose, guidance and transformation" to members (Xaso, 2012:20). He further states that PRISA provides members with networking platforms, discounts at PRISA events, access to PR and communication related materials, monthly and quarterly newsletters, the PRISA PRISM awards and continuous development programmes are some of the benefits offered to members.

### **2.8 Relationship Management**

When one looks at the earlier cited definitions of PR, relationship management is one of the key and fundamental aspects of PR. Relationship management is however, made up of various dimensions. Ledingham and Bruning (2003:185) cite that relationship management dimensions, which include trust, openness, involvement, investment and commitment, are used to build and maintain relationships. Moreover, they noted that the above-mentioned dimensions create a sense of loyalty between an organisation and its stakeholders (Steyn, 2011:4).



An organisation deemed *trustworthy* is seen to “tell it as it is” and *openness* indicates that an organisation is transparent in all its dealings. *Involvement* is described as an organisation not being isolated from its environment, but rather engaging with it on several platforms such as sponsorships. *Investment* is seen as an organisation *participating* in its community and providing for it, for example building schools or homes for its employees. *Commitment* is seen as an organisation being dedicated to serving its community (Ledingham & Bruning, 2003:185).

Hon and Grunig (1999:3) also developed a PR relationship management model. Their model dimensions include control mutuality, trust, commitment, communal relationships, exchange relationships and satisfaction. Hon and Grunig’s model is more comprehensive in measuring long-term relationships between an organisation and its stakeholders. Although Ledingham and Bruning’s, and Hon and Grunig’s, models both consist of dimensions of trust and commitment, Hon and Grunig’s model further expands on these dimensions. *Trust* in Hon and Grunig’s model (in Steyn, 2011:4) is defined as one’s ability to open him/herself up to another person. Moreover, Hon and Grunig (1999:3) broke down *trust* into three dimensions which include: *integrity*, *dependability* and *competence*. Hon and Grunig’s definition for *commitment* was also more comprehensive compared to Ledingham and Bruning’s. *Commitment* in Hon and Grunig’s model (1999:3) is defined as the “extent to which each party believes and feels that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote”. *Commitment* consists of two dimensions. The first one is *continuance*, which refers to a certain line of action and *affective commitment*, which refers to the emotional state of the parties involved.

Relationship and membership management are crucial to any association. They assist an organisation to manage issues and resolve crises in an amicable manner. Moreover, they reduce costs that stem from litigations, legislations, boycotts or regulations (Hon & Grunig, 1999:11).

Furthermore, relationship management assists organisations to build good relationships with their stakeholders. However, before any relationship can occur, there must be a way that members can have access to the associations.

## **2.9 Accessibility and Awareness of PR Associations**

In terms of the three associations reviewed, accessibility of all these associations can be accessed via their websites. Members are also given updates via their emails, newsfeeds, newsletters and social media networks, such as Twitter and Facebook (Global Alliance, 2011; PRISA, 2011; CIPR, 2011). In the literature reviewed, there was not much said about how the respective associations make themselves known to prospective members, except through their training courses, workshops and the communication channels mentioned above.

However, most PR associations indicated in their profiles their ability to offer training and education to PR practitioners (CIPR, 2011; PRISA, 2011).

## **2.10 Public Relations Education and Training**

Various academics and seasoned PR professionals argued over the fact that the majority of work in the PR industry is performed by people who do not have sufficient PR knowledge nor have they received PR education at university (van Rooyen, 2011; Sayımer & van Ruler in Çelebi, 2012:9). In fact, Çelebi (2012:18) cites inadequate training of PR practitioners as a serious cause for concern in the PR profession, as practitioners try to develop their PR skills only through work experience. Berkowitz and Hristodoulakis (in Çelebi, 2012:18) on the other hand, argue why those practicing PR do not need qualifications. They cited that acquiring a specialised PR degree is not a prerequisite for performing the work of a PR practitioner.

However, Çelebi (2012:18) found that half of the participants in the study believed that PR training is essential, while the other half believed that it can be performed by a person whose character, personality and abilities are suitable for the PR profession. According to Bailey (2011) "PR was seen as too commercial and insufficiently academic for the more traditional universities". There have also been debates on whether PR courses should be in the media, mass communication and business schools (Bailey, 2011). Krimel (2012) agrees with the above-mentioned statement, when he states that there is not much consensus amongst educational institutions when it comes to choosing courses that should be included in a PR curriculum.

Cornelissen (2000) argues that the PR curriculum should be included in business schools, as these schools will prepare and teach business leaders the importance and relevancy of PR in their organisations. The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (in Abdullah & Threadgold, 2008) also agrees with Cornelissen, when they postulated that PR should be taught in business schools, to give quality training and appropriate development to PR professionals.

Furthermore, Grunig and Grunig (in Abdullah & Threadgold, 2008) argue that PR should be part of an MBA programme syllabus and include courses such as strategic management, public affairs and corporate social responsibility. Although both the Grunigs and Cornelissen arguments are essential to PR education, it is imperative for PR to be taught at undergraduate level, in courses such as business management, as well as strategic management courses. For PR to be taught in an MBA programme alone is too late, as not everyone in a management position undertakes to enrol for an MBA programme.

A great deal of attention and studies have concentrated on PR undergraduate education (Coombs, 2001; Hardin & Pompper, in Shen & Toth, 2008:309). However, there is not much literature found on PR postgraduate education, especially master's degree programmes, but such programmes are critical for the advancement and growth of PR practitioners (Shen & Toth 2008:309; Neff, Walker, Smith, and Creedon, 1999:40). Yet only a few studies have looked at the Master's in PR curriculum (Professional Bond, 2006; PRSA, 1999; Aldoory & Toth, 2000; Childers, Fitzpatrick & Hall, 2004:125).

A study by Shen and Toth (2008:310) found that a master's degree in PR equates to an MBA programme, but it does not encompass a wide enough variety of aspects. Gibson (1991:178) argues that "public relations curricula must expose students to a diverse set of academic disciplines, such as speech communication, print journalism, broadcast media, business management marketing and economics". Peirson-Smith (in Gibson, 1991:178) confirms that PR practitioners need to be more proficient in a wide range of competency areas.

PR practitioners who have completed an undergraduate programme according to Neff *et al.* (1999:30) and Gibson (1991:178) are required to possess the following competencies: an interdisciplinary foundation and knowledge of general business practices; global multicultural trends, issues management, ethics and social and political trends. The PR practitioners are also expected to have knowledge of non-profit and profit-based organisations, media houses, government and non-governmental entities, and trends and issues facing PR organisations (Neff *et al.* 1999:30; PRSA 1999).

Moreover, they should possess interpersonal skills, as well as skills in writing, technological matters, presentation and small group interaction (Gibson, 1991:178;

Neff *et al.* 1999:30; Tswane, 2012; Professional Bond, 2006; PRSA, 1999; Botan, Stacks & Van Slyke Turk, 1999:3).

They are also expected to be trained to adapt quickly, maintain a positive attitude, take initiative and manage criticism (The Professional Bond, 2006). Botan *et al.* (1999:5) also state that photography, filmmaking and political PR should be included in the PR undergraduate programme, as areas of specialisation.

Lastly, they must be able to understand PR principles and theories and also to conduct formal research (Neff *et al.* 1999:31; Professional Bond, 2006; PRSA, 1999). However, they should not only understand the principles and theories of PR, but also be able to put them into practice. Çelebi (2012:10) maintains that Turkish universities focus more on theory than practice. Akıncı-Vural and Başok-Yurdakul (in Çelebi, 2012:10) found that American universities offer more practical courses compared to Turkish universities.

Hence, it is pertinent for entry-level PR practitioners to complete an undergraduate programme, to gain both a practical and theoretical knowledge of the PR profession (Neff *et al.* 1999:31).

Neff *et al.* (1999:35), however, found that due to a limited number of PR practitioners undertaking undergraduate PR courses, PR firms and organisations experienced the following problems with people who applied for PR positions: lack of critical thinking, problem-solving skills, poor writing and presentation skills. They also found that they did not have a general understanding of business practices and basic knowledge of the mass media nor how to engage with it. Kim and Johnson (2012:6) reveals that PR practitioners hired lacked the following competencies: handling legal issues, research and forecasting, financial skills, applying cross-cultural and cross-gender sensitivity, organisational changes and development, issue management, audience segmentation, design and layout using new media, fluency in a second language and problem-solving. Problem-solving skills seemed to be a general concern amongst PR practitioners interviewed by Kim and Johnson as well as Neff *et al.*

However, neither Kim and Johnson nor Neff *et al.* mentioned in their studies that many PR practitioners need to create, design and manage a website.

Therefore, it is important that PR practitioners become well versed, not only in designing, but also in creating electronic tools, such as websites and social media pages, as these tools are fast and effective in reaching target publics from all over the world (Freitag & Stokes, 2009:660). Similarly, Kim and Johnson (2012:2) posits that PR practitioners need to keep abreast of new technological communication tools and channels, such as Facebook, Twitter and iPads, in order to communicate more effectively with their stakeholders.

The Professional Bond Commission Report (2006) indicates that PR practitioners should be knowledgeable and should monitor and adapt to communication technology as it evolves. Moreover, the Professional Bond Commission Report (2006) maintains that communication technology-related skills needed by PR practitioners include: the use of the Internet, desktop publishing techniques, and public relations writing and production for new media. Hence, it would be advisable to have Web 2.0 and social media courses included in advanced graduate programmes.

The advanced graduate programme prepares PR practitioners for management positions (Neff *et al.* 1999:34). Moreover, the advanced graduate programme affords PR practitioners the opportunity to be part of the dominant coalition, where they can advise top management on issues pertaining to stakeholders.

Furthermore, Neff *et al.* (1999:35) the Professional Bond (2006), PRSA (1999) Botan *et al.* (1999:3) and Tirone (in Çelebi, 2012:10) also suggests that PR practitioners with an advanced-level public relations qualification should possess the following competencies: a perspective on issues and trends happening around the world, knowledge of the role of public relations management, understanding of communication and public relations theory, research competence, advanced interpersonal communication competencies; management of projects and campaigns, as well as communication technologies; ability to make professional contributions, for example, writing academic articles, an understanding of how theory informs public relations practice, strategic management of communication; ability to apply qualitative and quantitative research, interpret and evaluate research results.

Moreover, the above authors believe that PR practitioners should understand how mass communication, leadership theory, negotiation theory; social, cultural and intercultural theories can be applied to PR. Although research was proposed as one of the competencies in PR programmes, O'Neil (2012:3) states that some PR programmes do not have research methodology courses that solely apply to the PR profession. Instead, the courses are combined with advertising research methods.

Research is a fundamental course in most graduate programmes, however, Neff *et al.* (1999:39) and Çelebi (2012:10) claim that both educators and PR managers found that advanced-level graduates are not proficient in research. That is why DiStaso, Stacks and Botan, (in Çelebi 2012:10) proposed that the PR curriculum should place more emphasis on research, ethics and strategic planning in order to prepare PR practitioners for strategic positions. Hence, it is critical that advanced programmes pay more attention to research methodologies and techniques in advanced programmes.

Furthermore, Neff *et al.* (1999:35-36), the PRSA (1999) and Tirone (in Çelebi, 2012:10) all state that a PR advanced graduate should possess advanced interpersonal communication competencies, such as interviewing skills, knowledge and understanding of what corporate social responsibility entails, ability to adhere to corporate social responsibilities standards globally, ability to follow PR codes of ethics and to integrate and align stakeholder issues and needs with the organisation's goals and vision. He/she should also be proficient in managing projects and campaigns should possess budgeting skills, know how to interpret financial results and produce them in an annual report and should be able to integrate technology into practice and keep abreast with emerging technological tools/channels (Neff *et al.* 1999:38, PRSA, 1999). The PRSA (1999) also indicated that accounting, finance, marketing and strategic planning should be part of a PR master programme.

Moreover, the PR practitioner should be knowledgeable and understand the principles of issues management, environmental scanning and crises management (Neff *et al.* 1999:38, Professional Bond, 2006).

Lastly, they should join PR associations, attend professional PR meetings, read professional PR publications, present at professional conferences, get involved in college internships or mentorship programmes, become APR accredited, tactfully handle the media and understand organisational cultures (Neff *et al.* 1999:39; Gruen *et al.* 2000:47).

Moreover, PR practitioners who have obtained their PhDs should contribute to the PR body of knowledge through formal quantitative and qualitative research papers (O'Neil, 2012:3).

Furthermore, it was noted that these PR graduates had problems with budgeting, supervising employees and did not have a global multicultural perspective nor understand its importance to their work.

Hatzios (2006:91) and Neff *et al.* (1999:41) also agree that PR practitioners and educators lacked a global perspective. The lack of a global perspective might be attributed to the fact that not all PR practitioners are exposed to or have knowledge of international PR.

### **2.10.1 International PR Education**

Hatzios (2006:85) defines "international public relations as a communication-centered practice of effectively managing relationships with international audiences to foster intercultural understanding and considering cultural differences in tailoring messages to different situations, markets or publics". Krishnamurthy and Verčič (2009) define international public relations as "strategic communication that different types of organisations use for establishing and maintaining symbiotic relationships with relevant publics, many of whom are increasingly becoming culturally diverse". In all the literature reviewed, Hatzios's definition was the most comprehensive.

Since the world is becoming a global village, the need for PR practitioners to effectively manage and establish relationships with international stakeholders has become important. This is affirmed by Molleda (2009) who postulates that PR professionals are currently supporting their home-based organisations to build and maintain multiple relationships with a variety of stakeholders, whilst also building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders, such as activist groups, global media, and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from other countries. Therefore, it has become crucial for the PR curriculum to incorporate courses that will prepare PR practitioners to work with international stakeholders and their companies.

"The Commission on Public Relations Education Professional Bond: Public Relations Education for the 21st Century" concurs with the above-mentioned statement, as it recommends that "current curricula must be updated to reflect the international and intercultural reality that is modern to public relations today" (in Molleda, 2009).

Hatzios (2006:53) found that PR practitioners argue that writing, research methodology; English literature, international mass media; business courses; international relations; issues management and Spanish courses are fundamental to international PR education.

Other practitioners affirm that an internship in an international company is important, as it creates an awareness and understanding of cultures all over the world (Hatzios, 2006:53). Freitag's (2002:223) model posits "The ascending cultural competence model confirms that increased preparation will result in commensurate increases in levels of perceived satisfaction and success in international assignments and in the desire to seek those assignments". The model presupposes that if PR practitioners are exposed to international PR through, for example, internship programmes where they get exposed to other cultures, they are more likely to work in international PR. Many participants also rated a course in international politics or economics as important for international PR (Hatzios, 2006:62; Freitag, 2002:223).

An anonymous professor at a university in the United States of America once said, "We need a global economics course so that PR practitioners can understand how money markets work, how money flows and how countries make their money" (Hatzios, 2006:62). Religious studies surprisingly were also identified as an essential course in international PR education, as many world conflicts originate from religious differences/intolerance. A professor from a university in the United States concurs with the above-mentioned findings when she cited that more religious courses should be offered, as some governments follow particular religious followings, such as Iran that uses Islamic laws to govern their country (Hatzios, 2006:60-62).

International PR education can also equip PR practitioners to be effective counselors for top management, as they will be able to give advice on societal issues that face international stakeholders. Hatzios (2006:63) believes that PR international courses have contributed to job performance of PR practitioners and have made them more culturally sensitive. A vice Chairperson of global communication for an international financial company agreed with the above-mentioned statement when he said the following: "International courses are very important to a public relations curriculum, because it builds your cultural sensitivities to the values and customs of those particular countries. Moreover, it gives you some historical perspective about where the country comes from and where it is going" (Hatzios, 2006:64).



Globalization has created a platform for the PR industry to be a global player (Sriramesh, 2010:673; Freitag & Stokes 2009:660; Sriramesh, 2002:409). However, not all PR students around the world are open to global PR (Epley, 2003). Similarly, Sun (2011:9) and Sriramesh (2002:410) assert that PR practitioners still need to understand, respect and adapt to different cultures without being judgmental before they can become international PR practitioners.

The Professional Bond (2006) said: "it is not enough to offer a course with a global focus. Global concepts must be integrated throughout the curriculum". Although Sun (2011:18) identified that PR practitioners do not understand international PR, both him and the Professional Bond (2006) failed to provide a list of courses that can adequately train PR practitioners to understand, accept and deal with multicultural communication elements.

In the literature reviewed, many PR practitioners claim that they have a problem with the fact that most case studies and PR literature are from the United States (US) or Europe. This was confirmed by Freitag and Stokes (2009:677) together with Curtin (2006:8) who argue that PR education is based on the United States school of thought. In fact, examples and case studies in most PR textbooks are primarily from the United States or Western Europe.

These textbooks do not have "international case studies or effective strategies to communicate with global publics in different socio-cultural environments" (Freitag & Stokes, 2009:677). In Namibia, most PR books are from the US or South Africa. PRISA uses case studies in South Africa when conducting courses in Namibia. Hence, Sriramesh (in Sun 2011:18) recommends that PR education becomes more holistic, inclusive and multidisciplinary to cultivate effective cross-cultural education (Sun, 2011:17-18).

The Professional Bond (2006) suggests that it is important for PR practitioners to have thorough knowledge about multicultural and global issues. Moreover, PR practitioners need to be competent and fluent in a second language, and they need to be exposed to cultural anthropology, global trends, evolving global codes of conduct, behavioural change and knowledge of local, state, national and international political systems.

### **2.10.2 PR Educators**

In order for PR international education to be effective, the educators/lecturers offering these courses need to have acceptable qualifications. The PRSA (1999) concurs with the above-mentioned statement when it posits that it is important to have lecturers and professionals with the right credentials and experience to teach, as both bring balance and a wealth of knowledge and expertise to PR education. Hatzios (2006:55) found that lecturers who taught PR international courses had either a PhD or MBA in mass communication, journalism, or PR. Their years of experience in teaching full-time PR courses ranged from 5 years to 38 years. The educators ranged from the ages of 42 to 72. Most of them were in their mid-50s. The educators were very active in professional associations and most of them were members of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the PRSA Educators' Academy. Unfortunately, many educators had little international educational experience.

### **2.10.3 PR Education in Namibia**

The University of Namibia (UNAM) and the Polytechnic of Namibia are the only institutions that offer full-time and part-time PR courses. However, PR is only offered as an elective or area of specialisation. Most of the subjects are focused on journalism (UNAM, 2012). UNAM for example, offers a Bachelor of Arts in Media Studies (Honours). This degree is for people who would like to gain skills and professional practice in electronic, print or new media, PR and advertising. However, PR is offered only in the third and fourth year; in the third year, corporate communication is offered as a subject and in the fourth year, advanced PR. The situation is similar with the Polytechnic of Namibia (Polytechnic, 2012).

The fact that there are no institutions that focus on PR exclusively can be a problem, as those graduating with a BA in media studies will not have comprehensive knowledge of the PR profession. Moreover, the courses at both Namibian institutions do not prepare PR practitioners for international PR.

However, the graduates are exposed to other schools of thought that might help them in their PR professions. UNAM and Polytechnic media studies graduates, for example, will have knowledge of and practical experience with desktop publishing programmes such as Adobe Indesign, as well as video editing and web development (UNAM, 2012; Polytechnic, 2012).

If PR practitioners want to enroll for a comprehensive PR course, but do not want to travel or spend a lot of money, then the only option they are left with is South African universities. In this literature only Cape Peninsula University of Technology and Tswane University were reviewed. Both institutions offer PR Management courses and Tswane University offers an international communication course (Tswane, 2012; CPUT, 2012). The international communication course includes subjects such as communication science, English for PR, international relations, introduction to international trade, international law, media studies, French or German and research methodology (Tswane, 2012). PRISA's short courses also do not prepare PR practitioners for international PR. In fact there are no international PR courses that PRISA offers currently (PRISA, 2012).

PRISA Namibia, together with the Global Alliance and CIPR, offer other PR courses. CIPR, for example, offers an advanced certificate, which presents foundational key concepts, techniques, theories and skills needed to assist a PR practitioner to perform effectively in his/her career (CIPR, 2011). CIPR (2011) also offers diploma courses in internal communication, public affairs and crisis communication. PRISA Namibia offers certificates in the basic principles of PR, and creative writing, to mention a few (van Rooyen, 2011; PRISA, 2011).

However, most well-known PR practitioners believe PR qualifications are better recognised and perceived to be more effective at a master's degree level than with a BA or certificate course. (International Public Relations Associations, 2011). Associations like Global Alliance offer internships to students, but PRISA Namibia does not (Global Alliance, 2011; PRISA, 2011; Hähner, 2011).

The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) provides a platform for students to exchange views and knowledge with PR specialists (United States Department of Labor, 2011). Moreover, IABC also provides an opportunity for students to network with these specialists in order to find full-time jobs after graduation (United States Department of Labor, 2011). An article on the United States Department of Labour website (2011) acknowledges that internships are effective in providing students with valuable experience, expertise, knowledge and training.

Lastly, according to the Professional Bond (2006), it is essential that PR professionals are exposed to excellent PR education, in order to be adequately prepared to fulfil multiple roles of managing communication, counselling management and establishing and maintaining long-term relationships with their organisation's stakeholders.

Beyond this, the International Public Relations Associations (2011) posits that lecturers should also work towards providing standardised continuing professional development programmes for PR practitioners (International Public Relations Associations, 2011).

### **2.11 Continuous Professional Development**

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) enables PR practitioners to broaden their knowledge and develop the personal qualities needed to enhance their PR careers (CIPR, 2011). According to Sandile Xaso (2012:21), CPD nurtures professional competencies essential to survival in a dynamic and sometimes volatile business environment (Xaso, 2012:21). He further cites that “CPD equips attendees with personal tools that will improve productivity, help reach a balance between an organisation’s goals and an employee’s own interests and ambitions, and give clearer insights into their profession”. The Public Relations Institute of Australia (2011) further suggests that CPD keeps PR practitioners informed of industry developments, and encourages them to maintain a “high level of competency throughout their career”. Appendix A lists more benefits which PR professionals can derive from a CPD programme.

All the above-mentioned associations have CPD programmes (CIPR, 2011, PRISA 2011; Global Alliance 2011). PRISA Namibia for example, offers formal education, training, workshops, and conferences which create a platform where members can share information with each other through presentations, case studies, mentoring and coaching (PRISA, 2011). The programmes are categorised into specialised, introductory, intermediate and advanced levels, to cater for all PR practitioners.

Nevertheless, PRISA’s CPD programme caters more for the needs of practising practitioners than for those of students. Other associations like the Global Alliance, on the other hand, have development programmes tailored for PR students.

As part of its CPD programme, for example, the Global Alliance offers a one-year internship to one PR graduate to work under the direction of the Executive Officer at the Global Alliance Center in Switzerland. This programme broadens the graduates’ knowledge about PR and develops personal qualities, which are required to help them advance in their PR careers. Another CPD initiative is accreditation of PR practitioners. This is a further step for them to be recognised as professionals within the industry (Global Alliance, 2011).

## 2.12 Accreditation

Accreditation in PR is a voluntary certification programme for PR professionals, administered by the Universal Accreditation Board (2011). This Board accredits PR specialists by granting them the opportunity to participate in an accreditation process for PR (United States Department of Labour, 2011). This process includes a review of the candidate's portfolio, an interview with a panel of three people and an examination (Universal Accreditation Board, 2011; United States Department of Labour, 2011). Skinner *et al.* (2010:23) define accreditation as the "professional designation awarded to PR practitioners who possess special qualifications that characterise a true professional". The accreditation process is internationally recognised, and it is the highest level that a PR practitioner can reach within the PRISA registration system (Skinner *et al.* 2010:23) The candidate must have a minimum of five years of full-time work or teaching experience in PR and a bachelor's degree in a communications-related field in order to be eligible for accreditation (Universal Accreditation Board, 2011; United States Department of Labor, 2011).

Skinner *et al.* (2010:23) gives a clearer breakdown on the number of years and levels of accreditation that PR practitioners go through. The first level is known as affiliate. In this level, the PR practitioner only needs to have less than a year's experience. The second level is known as associate. The PR practitioner needs to have worked for one to three years to be called an associate. The next level is a PR practitioner. For this level he/she needs to have PR experience ranging from three to six years. The next level is known as the Chartered Public Relations Practitioner (CPRP).

The PR practitioner must have work experience ranging from six to ten years to be recognised as a CPRP. The last level is that of an Accredited PR practitioner, also known as an APR. The PR practitioner must have worked for more than 10 years to receive this accreditation (PRISA, 2012). Candidates who do well in their interviews and pass the computer-based examination receive an Accredited in Public Relations (APR) designation (United States Department of Labor, 2011, PRSA, 2014).

PRISA Namibia also gives its members APR accreditation. Van Rooyen (2011) states that candidates are made to write an international exam online, and are interviewed by a panel from South Africa.

According to CIPR (2011) accredited PR Practitioners (PRP) prove that they are committed to being professionals. The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) also has an accreditation programme for professionals in the communications field. Candidates that do their accreditation via IABC earn the Accredited Business Communicator (ABC) designation. Accreditation is also essential for the enhancement and growth of the PR profession, as it aims to advance the profession and singles out PR professionals who have demonstrated vast knowledge, ethics, experience and expertise within the industry (PRSA,2014).

PRISA defines accreditation as “the professional registration awarded to public relations and communication management practitioners who possess those special qualities that characterise a true professional. It is the highest level of the PRISA Registration System, which is based on academic qualifications and experience in the field” (PRISA, 2012). The PRISA website further cites that accreditation measures the depth of the professional’s knowledge and expertise. In addition, the PRISA’s accreditation programme is cited to be on par with internationally recognised APR programmes in the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

With accreditation, PRISA aims to improve the public relations and communication management profession. However, accreditation is only for PRISA members; it is not possible for non-members to get the APR status without being registered with PRISA or a PRISA-affiliated association (PRISA, 2012). On the other hand, associations such as PRSA allow practitioners who are part of organisations who are members of the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) to be accredited (PRSA, 2014).

According to PRISA (2012) A PR practitioner undergoes a written and an oral assessment which measures his/her understanding of the relevance of the topic to the public relations environment as well as the business environment; moreover he or she is given a corporate profile and has to compile communication strategies based on that profile. In addition, the professional who receives accreditation can use the designation APR together with his or her name. However, if the professional behaves unethically and is expelled, his or her accreditation will be automatically revoked.

Lastly, PRISA has an Accreditation Committee, which consists of seven to nine individuals.

The PRISA Board appoints the Accreditation Committee, selecting four to six from among registered accredited members, two experts in other recognised professional fields and one recognised academic from the Public Relations and Communication Management field. This committee meets three times a year to set policies, review the process and formulate new assessment questions and profiles (PRISA, 2012).

### **2.13 Conclusion**

This chapter has given a comprehensive review of the different associations' activities, which include its accreditation process, and the continuous development programmes, what PR practitioners are supposed to be exposed to in terms of PR education, and what PR ethics encompasses. Moreover, this chapter showed that PR is reflective in its roles and purpose. The next chapter will give an overview of the research methodology used in this study.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 3. Introduction

This section will look at the research methodology and design used in conducting the study. Additionally, it will look at the research paradigm and the rationale for choosing the particular methodology, the target population, the sample, the data collecting instrument used and the data analysis method used. Lastly, this chapter will end with a discussion of ethical issues as well as noting the limitations of the study.

This study followed Kvale's (in Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2011:2-3) seven stages of conducting in-depth interviews. The first step is thematising. At this stage, the study explains the purpose of the interviews and what the study wants to achieve. The second stage is designing. At this stage, the researcher will design an interview guide that will assist him/her to get the information required to achieve the purpose. The interview guide will assist the researcher to focus on topics that are important to explore and maintain consistency across interviews with different participants.

The third stage is interviewing. At this stage the researcher will introduce him/herself, **and** ask the participant's permission to record and explain the purpose of the study. The fourth stage is transcribing; here the researcher will write out questions and responses verbatim using an audio recording machine. The fifth stage is analysing; the researcher will carefully go through the responses and note the themes that emerge from the participants' answers. The sixth stage is verifying; the researcher will confirm whether the information is accurate and authentic (see Appendix G for proof of authenticity and accuracy) The seventh and final stage is reporting.

#### 3.1 Research paradigm

"A paradigm is a worldview, a framework of beliefs, values and methods within which researchers work" (Anon, 2012). There are two major paradigms in social science, namely, positivism and naturalism (Kashiimbi, 2012; Anon, 2012:14, 16).

Positivists presuppose that there is only one truth, which is fixed and directly measured by standardised instruments (Anon, 2012:15). Naturalists on the other hand, believe that "reality constantly changes and can be known only indirectly, through the interpretations and the perceptions of people" (Anon, 2012:16).



Since the purpose of this study is to investigate the selected perceptions of PR practitioners' about PRISA Namibia, the researcher chose to use the naturalist paradigm as a lens through which to conduct this study. As noted earlier, this type of paradigm seeks to understand what has happened in a specific setting and relies on the interpretations and the perceptions of selected PR practitioners to bring meaning to the study.

### **3.2 Research methodology**

This research is a qualitative study. "A qualitative study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants conducted in a natural setting" (Cresswell in Anon, 2012). This type of study seeks to understand phenomena by examining people's words, actions and records. Patton (in Golafshani, 2003) confirms the above-mentioned statement, when he explains that qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach, which seeks to understand phenomena in a "real world setting".

### **3.3 Population and sampling**

Before the sampling process can take place, the researcher first needs to establish the characteristics of the population (Pretorius, 2011 & Anon. 2011). These characteristics are determined by a set of criteria for inclusion and exclusion (Pretorius, 2011).

According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:52), a population is the study object, and consists of individuals, groups, organisations, or products from which the sample is selected. The population used in this study includes one current PRISA Namibia chairperson, one former chairperson, three non-members and five members. Firstly, the author chose to have the chairpersons as a sub group, as they have led the association for years. They, therefore, might have better insights as to why certain actions were or were not undertaken. The author wanted to understand how the 'leaders' viewed PRISA expectations, solutions and opinions. Secondly, the author chose non-members who currently operate as PR practitioners in order to: determine the depth of their knowledge of PRISA Namibia's operations; discover their expectations of, and opinions towards PRISA and finally to elicit possible solutions for the association. The researcher wanted to establish whether the non-members, members and chairperson hold similar opinions, solutions and expectations with regard to PRISA Namibia.

The participants were from various professional backgrounds, i.e., private sector, public sector, consultancy, state-owned enterprises and government ministries. Each of the participants had more than three years experience in the field of PR. All the participants occupied managerial positions. Three were consultants, two were executive directors who served on the PRISA Namibia board and the executive committee, two were senior managers and the other two were junior managers.

The inclusion criteria used were that participants must have been members of PRISA Namibia for three years or more and they must currently be PR managers with three or more years of experience in the PR field. Each participant must have worked in one or more of the following sectors: public sector, consultancy, private sector, state owned enterprises or a government ministry. Moreover, the members must have served on the PRISA Namibia committee. The participants were both male and female and they ranged between 30 and 60 years old. The exclusion criteria used did not allow the researcher to interview PR managers who had been in the profession for less than three years.

In terms of sampling, there are two types of sampling methods, namely: non-probability sampling and probability sampling. Non-probability sampling targets specific individuals and not everyone gets a chance to be included in the sample (Welman *et al.* 2005:56; Pretorius, 2011). Probability sampling ensures that there is a possibility for each person in a sample population to be selected (Pretorius, 2011). Cohen and Crabtree (2008) concur with the above-mentioned statement when they said: "probability samples are selected in such a way as to be representative of the population". Non-probability sampling examples include: purposive samples, volunteer subjects, convenient or haphazard sampling and snowball samples. Probability examples include: simple random samples, stratified random samples and cluster samples.

The sampling method used in this study was non-probability, convenient stratified purposeful sampling. This type of sampling divides the population into subgroups. The data in these subgroups are compared with one another, to check for similarities or differences (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008). Patton (1990) further notes that the characteristics of each stratum should be similar. The researcher is aware that this type of sampling method can be biased. However, this sampling method was the best option at the time, as the time-frame was limited. Furthermore, it was convenient for the researcher to interview the identified participants.

The population in this study was divided into three sub groups namely: the chairperson, the non-members and the members of PRISA Namibia. The researcher knew some of the participants and people in the industry referred the other participants. The researcher intentionally chose the participants because they are information-rich cases, due to their extensive involvement in PRISA Namibia. Moreover, the majority of the participants are respected PR professionals in Namibia and have been in the industry for a long time.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

#### **3.4.1 Data collection instrument**

In accordance with the naturalist paradigm, the data in this study was collected through in-depth interviews (see Appendix D,E,F). Ten participants were interviewed. According to Boyce and Neale, (2006:3) in-depth interviewing involves “conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of Participants, to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, programme, or situation”. Guion *et al.* (2011:1) agree with Boyce and Neale that in-depth interviews are effective when a researcher needs to get thorough information from a few people, making it the most appropriate method for this study. Berry (1999) further states that in-depth interviewing draws out information to get a holistic understanding of the research problem and research question. Moreover, this method is used to assist the researcher to explore more issues for further investigation.

The advantage of in-depth interviewing is the fact that it provides comprehensive information and gives a holistic view of the problem, unlike other data collection methods, such as observations (Boyce & Neale, 2006:3). One of the disadvantages of in-depth interviewing is the fact that it is time-consuming. It takes time to transcribe, interpret and analyse results (Boyce & Neale, 2006:3; Seidman, 2005:12). Secondly, the results can be biased since the researcher might attempt to manipulate the views of the Participants (Boyce & Neale, 2006:3).

In this study, *interview questions sheets* were drawn up. The sheet consisted of semi-structured interview questions, which had open-ended promptings. These questions allowed participants to raise other relevant issues about PRISA Namibia. The questionnaires were divided into five sub sections, namely: demographics, background of PR experience, about PRISA, PR ethics, and PR education. In addition the semi-structured questions encouraged discussion and reflection.

The questions did not allow participants to select “yes” or “no”. Some questions were posed differently between the non-members, members and the two Chairmen. The following categories were used in the interview sheets: demographics, background in PR, background in PRISA Namibia, PR education in relation to PRISA courses, PR ethics and recommendations. Demographic information about the participants was collected on an interview guide fact sheet. The demographic information included gender, position, sectors the participants have worked in, membership status and years of experience in the industry.

Most of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, except for one. Since the current PRISA Namibia chairperson resides in South Africa, an email with the questions was sent to her. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and the researcher took some notes during the interviews to serve as backup documentation in case the recording failed. The questions were sent to all the participants beforehand so they could prepare adequately for the interview.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

Qualitative content analysis was used in this study. This type of content analysis begins with transcribing the data from interviews. Although transcribing is time consuming, it helps the researcher to become familiar with the data, making it easier for themes to emerge at an early stage (Anon, 2010). After transcribing, the information is analysed by taking words, sentences and paragraphs apart and translating them into codes (Henning, Rensburg & Smit, 2004:127; Anon, 2010).

These codes assist the researcher in interpreting and theorising the data (Henning *et al.*, 2004:127; Williams, 2007). Once the data is classified into codes, regularities, variations and peculiarities are examined, patterns are identified and categorised into themes. Relations between different categories are studied and a picture of the data is built up to bring more clarity to the collected data (Henning *et al.*, 2004:129).

Open coding was used in this study. Open coding “names and categorises phenomena through close examination of the data” (Henning *et al.*, 2004:131). This type of coding fractures data into concepts and categories. Strauss and Corbin (in Henning *et al.*, 2004:131; Williams, 2007) assert that open coding can be done line by line, which can be time consuming, but effective at the same time. Open coding can also be done by sentence and paragraph, or simply by perusing the whole document.

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability of data collected**

Validity is the ability of the researcher to determine the truthfulness of the data collected (Kashiimbi, 2012; Golafshani, 2003:599). Joppe (in Golafshani, 2003:599) defines reliability “as the extent to which results are consistent over time and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology”. Miller (2012:1) concurs with Joppe when he posits that reliability is the extent to which a data collection instrument yields the same results repeatedly.

However, reliability and validity are perceived differently in qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003:600). In fact, Kashiimbi (2012:31) noted that these concepts are not viewed separately in a qualitative paradigm as they are in a quantitative paradigm.

In a qualitative study, the researcher focuses on accuracy, credibility and transferability (Hoepf in Golafshani, 2003:600). Guba (in Shenton, 2004: 63, 64) concurs with Hoepf by comparing validity and reliability with credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. According to Guba (in Shenton, 2004: 63, 64), validity in a quantitative study would be credible and transferable in a qualitative study. Reliability would be viewed as dependability and conformability. In the end, the validity and reliability of research boils down to whether the researcher used research methods that ensured that the data recorded accurately and the interpretations of the data are empirical and logical.

The researcher ensured validity by standardising the methods used to gather the data. Moreover, the researcher ensured that the in-depth interviews were no longer than one hour, to avoid lack of concentration by the participants. To ensure that accurate data was collected, the researcher conducted the interviews in quiet places, except for one interview that was done at a restaurant because the participant wanted to have lunch.

The transcripts were given back to the participants to read through and comment on their accuracy and make any corrections or additions. This gave the participants the opportunity to verify whether the transcripts truly represented their views or whether they wanted corrections to be made.

Some transcripts were returned with minimal changes, while others came back unchanged. Some of them wanted the grammar changed, but the researcher indicated that the grammar cannot be changed as the transcripts were quoted verbatim.

### **3.7 Ethical Consideration**

According to Resnik (2011) ethics is a “method, procedure, or perspective for deciding how to act and for analysing complex problems and issues”. Bowen (2007) further defines ethics as “a systematic, defending and recommending concept of right and wrong behaviour”. Essentially, ethics in research prescribes the way researchers should conduct themselves. Aspects such as the avoidance of error, prohibitions against fabricating, falsifying, or misrepresenting of research data are included in ethical considerations, to ensure that the data collected is truthful and void of error (Resnik, 2011). Trochim (2006) further recommends that ethical consideration should consist of the assurances outlined in the following four sections.

#### **3.7.1 Ensuring participants have given informed consent**

An informed consent letter is required to fully inform the participants about the procedures and risks involved in the research. However, Guillemin and Gillam (2004:272) postulate that a signed consent form only provides evidence that consent has been given, but it is vital that consent not only be given, but also documented. The documenting can be verbally taped, in order to get verbal consent, because informed consent is really dependent on the interaction “where a prospective participant comes to an understanding of what the research project is about and makes his or her own decision about whether or not to participate”. In this study, all the participants gave verbal consent. Most of the participants received emails to ask for their permission to be interviewed. The researcher also gave details of what the study is about. The email was followed up by a phone call to verify if the recipient received the email and if they would be willing to be interviewed. During the telephonic conversation, the participant would indicate their interest in being interviewed and would give a date and time when they would be ready to be interviewed.

#### **3.7.2 Ensuring no harm comes to participants**

Ethical considerations also ensure that the researcher does not place participants in a situation where they might be at risk of harm as a result of their participation in the research. This harm can be physical, emotional or psychological (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004:272; Trochim, 2006). In this study none of the participants were exposed to any harm. The interviews took place where they were most comfortable. One participant’s interview was at her house, one at a restaurant and the rest in their offices.

### **3.7.3 Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity**

The researcher needs to assure the participants that confidentiality and anonymity will be observed, although it can be difficult when conducting qualitative research, as the researcher will know who said what. The researcher did guarantee the participants' anonymity as well as confidentiality.

Furthermore, ethical standards in research are very important, as they ensure that the researcher does not exploit the participant and the researcher's work is protected. According to Resnik (2011) aspects such as authorship, copyright and patenting policies, data sharing policies and the protection of intellectual property are essential to ethics in research. He further adds that ethical standards ensure that researchers are held accountable to the public, especially researchers who use public funds to do their research. Ethical standards also help to build public support for research that is perceived to be of quality and integrity (Resnik, 2011). Lastly, ethical standards promote moral and social values, such as social responsibility, human rights, animal rights and health and safety measures (Resnik, 2011). In addition, they also seek to promote values such as trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness (Resnik, 2011).

### **3.7.4 Ensuring that permission is obtained**

Apart from the informed consent confirmations that participants gave, the researcher also obtained the necessary ethical documents from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The researcher in the execution of the study also noted the issues of objectivity, falsification and plagiarism.

### **3.7.5 Limitations of the study**

The study does not make comparative study with other PRISA chapters, which makes it eligible for further research to be conducted. Lastly, the time frame was limited.

## **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter defined the paradigm in which this study was framed. Moreover, it described the research methods and designs used and the reason for their usage. Additionally, this chapter described the instrument used to collect the data and how the data was analysed. It also described how research ethics principles such as ensuring informed consent and anonymity were employed. The limitations of this study were also discussed in this chapter. The next chapter will outline the findings and analysis of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSES

### 4. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the findings of the three subgroups, namely the non-members, the members and the chairpersons of PRISA Namibia. The information was placed into various codes, which were based on the interview questions. Then they were placed into themes. These themes were used to categorize the findings in a way that could make it easier to conceptualise the information gathered. Moreover, this chapter highlights the similarities, opinions, and differences that the three sub-groups have towards PRISA Namibia. The findings were organised according to the reflective paradigm. The findings therefore, will analyse, reflect and integrate the perceptions of PR practitioners towards PRISA Namibia.

### 4.1 Codes and Descriptions

**Table 4.1 Codes and Descriptions**

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>
Years of PR experience	The number of years the participants have in PR
Qualifications in PR	The qualifications that the participants have in PR
PR versus Journalism	The difference between PR and journalism
Sector/industry worked in	The sectors in which the participants have worked in
Membership association	The associations that the participants are members of
Definition of PR	A description of what PR is
Responsibilities of PR practitioner	A description of the roles, functions and duties of a PR practitioner
Knowledge of PRISA	A description of what the participants know about PRISA
Expectations from non-members	A description of what non-members want from PRISA Namibia
Accreditation	A description of the importance of accreditation and why PR needs to be
Continuous development	A description of how PRISA Namibia adds value to practitioners
PR training	A description of PR courses
Skills Required	A description of the skills needed by PR graduates



PR ethics	A description of the code of ethics participants use as well as the ethics that
Recommendation	Solutions/proposals for PRISA Namibia

## 4.2 Themes

The findings were transcribed and categorised under the themes listed below. This was done to ensure that the perceptions of the three sub groups of people interviewed would be easy to analyse and /or be used as a basis from which to draw conclusions or make recommendations.

### 4.2.1 Demographics

The years of experience, qualifications in PR, PR versus journalism, sector/industry worked in as well as membership association.

### 4.2.2 Aspects of public relations

Aspects of public relations include: the definition of PR, responsibilities of a PR practitioner, skills required in PR and PR training .

### 4.2.3 About PRISA

Knowledge of PRISA, PRISA communication methods, conferences/workshops attended, Quality of the conferences/workshops attended, expectations from members, accreditation, importance of accreditation, challenges with PRISA, continuous development, how PRISA services can be enhanced, PRISA courses to prepare PRs for the future, PRISA courses to be included to prepare PR practitioners for the future, how PRISA Namibia can help young graduates to understand the importance of ethics; adherence to PRISA codes of ethics, how PRISA Namibia can ensure that PR practitioners adhere to ethics.

### 4.2.4 Recommendations

This section will highlight the recommendations given by the participants.

## FINDINGS FROM NON-MEMBERS

### 4.3 DEMOGRAPHICS FOR NON-MEMBERS

This section will focus on the years of experience each participant has in the PR profession, the qualifications they have in PR, what they view as differences between PR and journalism, the sector in which they have worked, as well as information about the association they are part of.

**Table 4.2 Demographics for Non-Members**

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Participant one</b>	<b>Participant two</b>	<b>Participant three</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Female	Female	Female
<b>Years of experience</b>	4 years	12 years	5 years
<b>Membership status</b>	Non-member	Non-member	Non-member
<b>Age</b>	30-49 years	40-49 years	30-49 years
<b>Other Association</b>	None	PR Daily, an American association, and the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) in Britain	None
<b>Qualifications</b>	Masters in Journalism	Post Graduate in Communication (majoring in journalism)	B-tech Media Technology (majoring in journalism)
<b>Industry worked</b>	Newspaper, state-owned enterprise, parastatal, private sector	State-owned enterprise, parastatal, private sector, owns communication agency.	State-owned enterprise, parastatal, private sector

All the participants came from a journalistic background and have qualifications in journalism. The reason for that is; PR was only offered as a subject and not as a degree, as noted in the literature review. In addition, many practitioners, including the ones interviewed, only moved to the PR profession, as the salary packages for PR professionals were better than journalist. Only participant two has done PRISA courses and accreditation. All three participants worked for state-owned enterprises, government and the private sector. However, participant two also worked for an advertising agency, affording her the opportunity to specialise in strategic PR, advertising and marketing.

Only participant two has done PRISA courses and accreditation. All three participants worked for state-owned enterprises, government and the private sector. However, participant two also worked for an advertising agency, affording her the opportunity to specialise in strategic PR, advertising and marketing. In terms of gender, all the participants are females. Participant two is a consultant and owns her own communications consultancy. The other two participants are junior managers.

In terms of membership status to other associations, only participant two noted that she is affiliated to other PR associations. The associations are: PR Daily, an American association, and CIPR in the United Kingdom.

**The participants gave the following reasons as to why they are not members of PRISA Namibia.**

**Participant two said:** *“I am not a member of PRISA yet, but I think they are confused, because they send me everything, but I am not paid up. I get all the information, the bulletins, but I am not a paid-up member at the moment”.*

**Participant one said:** *“I wish I could get involved more. The paper work that comes into play when registering is just too long and too tedious, that you just kinda just give up.”*

**Participant three said:** *“No, I wanted to be a member, there was time I was trying to be a member, I think Maria Dax was still there. I wanted to give them a cheque, they never bothered to give me their banking details; don’t even know if the thing is alive”.*

#### **4.3.1 Public Relations versus Journalism**

Since all the participants come from a journalism background, it was relevant to ask what the difference is between PR and journalism. Only two participants answered this question.

The two participants acknowledged that there is a difference between PR and journalism and highlighted those differences. Aspects such as PR being a strict, disciplined and regulated industry were noted. The participants also noted that in PR, they have to protect the truth in order to protect the organisation.

In journalism, journalists are trained to tell the truth, as they have a duty to inform the public about what is really happening. Moreover, journalists, as noted by participant one, are free-flowing, not really time bound, unlike PR practitioners who “*can’t just travel anywhere they want*”. They further said:

**Participant one:** *“PR is the same as journalism, but there are different aspects to it. You are now reporting for a company. You are not reporting for the public. That kind of changed my mind-set. They move mostly because of money. I think your salary perks are higher, your benefits perks are higher. If you have a family as a journalist, you are really struggling. But if you are working for a private company or you are working in PR, you are much more comfortable to cater for your family and your own needs.*

*I think for anyone who wants to start in this career or wants to be in PR should actually go through journalism first, cause it teaches you how to research, how to interview people, how to have the interpersonal skills, meeting different people. PR is very strict, it is very regulated. It is not my cup of tea, but I have adapted myself to it. You have to have a sense of discipline. You can’t just travel anywhere you want.*

*You can’t go to talk to anybody that you want in terms of sourcing information, or telling about the company’s confidential information, that would really put your work at jeopardy. Even though I have not studied it, that you have to be a composed person, a disciplined person. A person people know and can trust you at the same time especially internally, and in that way you build your credibility and also your rapport as a PR person. Journalists are very free flow, and I love that”.*

**Participant three:** *“When you are a journalist you are on the other side of the coin, you are the watchdog making sure the annual report, audit figures that will be fishy or you want to find out what went wrong, but if I am on the other side I must filter information, and there is no way I can reveal I had a bad annual report knowing that I played around with the figures in there; I have to protect the truth. On the other side I need to tell the truth. As a PR you filter- on the other side you tell everything”. PRs are coming from a journalistic background, where there is really a big difference between being a*

*journalist and PRO, and this is where 90% of the PRO are coming from Namibia. They still need to be groomed. They still need to be reminded over and over. There is a big difference, although most of the time people would say, I want that girl to be PRO cause I have heard speak on radio, she has a nice smile.”*

#### **4.4 ASPECTS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS**

This section will focus on aspects related to the PR profession. These aspects include: definition of PR, responsibilities of a PR practitioner, skills required in PR, and PR training.

##### **4.4.1 Definition of PR**

In terms of the definition of PR, most of the participants defined PR as prescribed in the literature, but participant one defined the characteristics of a PR person, rather than defining PR as a discipline. However, the characteristics used by participant one are in line with the definition of PR in the literature Review. Responses from the participants follow:

**Participant one:** *“You are there as a spokesperson for the company. You are the eyes and ears of the company. You represent the company’s reputation. You have to initiate or install a culture in the public that gives them a positive image. It is very simple things, be on time, be punctual, promise what you would deliver and deliver it on time. Have a pre-programmed schedule. As a PR person you need to stay focused, stay disciplined and deliver on the good you are supposed to deliver at the end of the day”.*

**Participant two:** *“PR is about establishing mutually beneficial relationships that are sustainable and enduring. PR is serious and strategic for business: It is the serious side of business communication”.*

**Participant three:** *“It is about relationship management, it is about judging or knowing the community you work in, how you are perceived or what they think of you. Other than that, it is just to market and make sure people know about you. Knowing that the people know about you and you are managing relationships, but in Namibia, sometimes PR is about sponsorships”.*

##### **4.4.2 Responsibilities of a PR practitioner**

Due to the fact that all participants come from a journalistic background, none of them gave a comprehensive description of a PR practitioner’s responsibilities.

Only participant three distinguished that there are different roles and responsibilities within PR. However, she did not state what each of the roles is responsible for, instead she said: *“From a Namibian perspective, maybe Bank Windhoek is the first institution that I heard of where they defined the roles of strategist, technician and manager. In our context in Namibia one person does all that there is no such thing as a technician. In Namibia there is no such thing, it is still coming. You make sure you do everything. You are the one taking pictures, the media say give me speech. When you get to the office you are responsible for engaging the public and at the same time you need to update the website: at the same time the annual report is on you, at the same time management meetings and then obviously the regular thing that comes in every day the media enquires although you have a strategy”*. Other participants said the following:

**Participant one:** *“You are given community events to run, internally or externally with the staff or with the public. You are driving the business strategy of the company in the eyes of the company and in the eyes of the staff. You also have to boost the staff morale, work with the business units to find out what their business interests are, and what they would like that you as a PR person needs to bring out or deliver out there in terms of your newsletters or in your public statements or notices that you give out. You have to have a good relationship with your business heads. So you can know what their interests are, so you can help them to market themselves or promote themselves”*.

**Participant two:** *“Ethics, first and foremost. Ethics are so high. I think it is an area that people can so quickly lose their ethics and just quickly want to do something for the glamour of it. It is obviously a glamorous position, but you need to keep your feet on the ground and your head in the sky”*.

#### **4.4.3 PR courses to prepare practitioners for the future**

Participant one noted that courses related to technology, PR and social media, and environmental PR should be included in the PR syllabus. Participant two is still adamant that ProVox courses are essential for students studying PR. Hence, PRISA Namibia should enter into bilateral agreements with tertiary institutions such as the Polytechnic of Namibia, in order to ensure that the syllabus includes courses offered by ProVox. Participant three on the other hand noted that PR courses should have a course on strategic communication, advance writing, and crisis management. Since she worked for government, she felt it is important that PR curricula look at how they

can assist practitioners to communicate strategically with government officials such as ministers.

#### **4.4.4 Skills Required**

Participant two and three both cited writing as a problem amongst PR graduates. Participant one went on to further add poor grammar and editing as a problem as well. Participant one and two concur that PR graduates do not take initiative, are not proactive, and innovative. Instead, they want to be “babysat” and “spoon fed”. Participant two also noted that budgeting is another skill that PR graduates are lacking. She further added that graduates need to have knowledge and understand the business by adhering to its guidelines and deadlines and knowing its objectives. Participant one indicated that graduates know the theory of PR, but cannot execute PR activities. She further added that they cannot even structure something as basic as a media release.

#### **The participants further said the following:**

**Participant one:** *“They were good at understanding the concept of PR, but executing the work is always difficult cause you kinda have to spoon feed them and tell them to look at this angle or go cover this story at this angle. It would be good as a PR person to be able to MC/ be a facilitator. You need to be out there. You have to be at the forefront of things. Show your enthusiasm and that kind of thing. They should be proactive. They must be forward minded, take initiative. Look at what the company does not have and bring in the aspect”.*

**Participant two:** *“PR need to know they don’t exist on an island with themselves, and that there is a business reality and you must meet that reality, guidelines and deadlines and objectives. You are not just there to throw pretty parties for the media, if that engagement doesn’t return results for the organisation you work, you then you have wasted money and you have thrown it down the drain. So it would be nice for them to understand the realities of business”.*

#### **4.5 ABOUT PRISA NAMIBIA**

This section will focus on information related to PRISA Namibia, the expectations that non-members have towards the association, how the accreditation process works, the way PRISA Namibia administers continuous development, and how it deals with PR ethics.

#### **4.5.1 Knowledge about PRISA**

Participants one and three knew relatively little about PRISA Namibia. However, participant one had some exposure to PRISA Namibia through two PRISA Namibia workshops which she attended. Participant three is aware that there is an organisation called PRISA Namibia. However, she just does not know the activities that PRISA Namibia is involved with. Participant two has more knowledge of PRISA South Africa activities compared to the PRISA Namibia chapter.

#### **The other participants made the following comments:**

***Participant two:** “I know they are a new chapter that exists in Namibia. I know that they have conferences, workshops and courses from time to time, and it is just about all that I know. I get more work and more information from PRISA SA; I am in probably better contact with PRISA SA than I am with PRISA Namibia. I get almost no support, no information, no invitation to PRISA Namibia. PR has to be accountable to a specific audience at the very least to the client. But I think we work in an environment where there is very little accountability and that is the same thing I get from PRISA Namibia: there is no accountability in my opinion”.*

***Participant three:** “It is an institution for PRPs, whether they are really advertising or whether they are trying to revive or make sure they get utilized that I really don’t know. I have seen a bunch of white ladies who are maybe PA’s to their bosses and maybe they are establishing a media event or an event management company. Those are people I have seen last time I was there. Most of the people you find there are not even in PR or maybe those in PR are coming from a journalism background”.*

#### **4.5.2 Expectations of non-members from PRISA Namibia**

Participants one and two want to get training from PRISA Namibia. Participant two would especially like to have the courses which were offered by ProVox under PRO Image to be offered again, as she indicated that it is expensive to travel to South Africa to do them. She further said: “I am a business person and entrepreneur, so I am not in a parastatal where I have huge amount of money to fly people to SA to do courses”. Participant one, on the other hand, wants to travel to South Africa and other countries to do the courses, as she believes that training abroad is “more richer” than what you get locally. Participant three wants PRISA Namibia to engage her and keep her abreast with things happening in the industry.



**Participant three further said:** “I want them to engage us, I want them to look for me as much as I look for them. They need to tell us what is happening in the industry what are the latest challenges, what we still need to learn. Some of us the last time we studied was way back and a lot of things have changed in the industry. They need to keep us posted and they need to hear from us also, the challenges that we are going through, bring bosses to advise us.”

#### **4.5.3 Accreditation**

Participant two is the only one who expressed the importance and reasons to be accredited, as she herself is an accredited Chartered PR practitioner. Participant one had no idea what accreditation was nor did she understand the importance for a PR practitioner to be accredited. Participant three also does not have any understanding of what accreditation is all about.

**Participant two further said:** “I am accredited: I am a chartered PRP. It keeps you up to date; it is the latest research which we constantly need to read up on. I have joined every possible reputable organization in terms of PR- how to handle crisis. I think what PR does for you, especially accredited; it keeps you in thrust and middle of those issues. What they are you can anticipate challenges that may come to your area before it actually happens here, because we are a policy driven industry.

*We can craft those industries for the organizations that we work for or our clients that we work for, before it becomes a crisis. It really helps me to be very proactive. It keeps me in touch with breaking trends, what is going on internationally, obviously movements of who is where and that type of thing. What are the new things to study, curriculum, syllabus and new books available on the market, cause I read a lot, intensely. So accreditation really keeps me in a network of professionals and it helps me to keep on my toes”.*

#### **4.5.4 Continuous Development**

This section looks at the training and development programmes that participants lacked and what PRISA offers.

Participants one and two want training from PRISA Namibia. Participant one wants training focused on soft skills that can boost her confidence and her assertiveness. She

also wants PRISA Namibia to assist her with presentation skills, especially in presenting to the board, which she finds essential.

Participant two wants the PR courses by ProVox to be offered in Namibia again. Participant three wants a mentor from PRISA Namibia.

***Participant three further said:***“PRISA Namibia change, but right now I don’t see any value they are adding. I don’t even know if their website here in Namibia is even alive. I know there was a time I was struggling looking for a mentor, they can maybe serve on the board- I am not sure how come they are little known and less active”.

#### **4.6 PR Ethics**

This section will look at how PRISA Namibia tackles ethical issues within the industry and how they prepare PR practitioners for the future.

##### **4.6.1 How PRISA Namibia can assist with PR ethics**

Only two participants answered this question. Participant one cited that having a booklet about ethics distributed to all the members or to those in the industry is one of the ways that PRISA Namibia can propagate the importance of PR ethics amongst PR professionals in Namibia. She further noted that it is important for PRISA Namibia to create a platform where PR practitioners can have more engagements, meetings and get-togethers. Participant two said that PRISA Namibia needs to ensure quality and control in the profession to give it more credibility.

##### **4.6.2 Adherence to PR code of ethics**

In terms of adherence, participant three uses the ethics she learned from her journalism qualifications. Participant one does not adhere to any code of ethics and participant two uses ethical guidelines stipulated in the King III report, as her code of ethics.

#### **4.7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section will record the recommendations that were suggested by the three non-members

All three participants noted that PRISA Namibia needs to be visible. Participant one indicated that PRISA Namibia should expose themselves more to media practitioners. She further added that PRISA Namibia should get involved in abroad exchange programmes, as they provide a lot of learning opportunities. Participant two concurs

with participant one with the fact that PRISA Namibia needs to go out and engage practitioners more, as some of these practitioners do not even know there is an association for PR practitioners. Participant three would like PRISA Namibia to collaborate with tertiary institutions, to see whether they can offer their ProVox courses to compliment the curriculum. Participant three felt PR students are not being taught things in line with reality.

**Participant two further said:** *“Visibility is important because there is no visibility at all. Tips of the day, PRISA tip of the day-something like that, because while we are saving money, many will eventually get to do the courses. Help the kid, be on the cutting edge. If somebody tomorrow is appointed to a PR position, obviously the appointments are made known, go and see that person, try to get an appointment with that person, write a person a congratulatory note and in that note position PRISA and let the person know these are things you could do with PRISA or at least a database of sorts. Create a database of sorts that you know who the practitioners are and when I say practitioner it is in inverted commas, because not everyone is a professional and not everybody is qualified.*

*Go out there and engage these people, because they won’t probably engage you because they don’t even know PRISA exists and don’t understand the critical reason why they should be part of this organization, how this organization can add a benefit to their life”.*

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

The next section will discuss the data collected, analyse it and compare it amongst the three participants interviewed.

#### **4.9 DISCUSSION**

##### **4.9.1 DEMOGRAPHICS**

As reflected in the findings, all the participants came from a journalism background and have qualifications in journalism. Therefore, their worldview towards PR is largely affected by their journalism background. Only participant two has done PRISA courses and has gone through the accreditation process.

All three participants previously worked for state-owned enterprises, government and the private sector. However, participant two also worked for an advertising agency, affording her the opportunity to specialise in strategic PR, advertising and marketing. All the Participants were females, as they were the only ones available at the time.

In terms of membership with other associations, only participant two was affiliated to other PR related associations. The other two expressed interest in PRISA Namibia, since they are currently practicing as PR professionals, and wanted to be mentored by some of the members in PRISA. However, they indicated that there were a couple of challenges, which prevented them from joining. One of those challenges was the long membership application form, which needed to be filled in. The other challenge was a lack of proper follow-up initiatives from PRISA Namibia.

In terms of the difference between journalism and PR, participant one clearly marked the various differences, namely, PR practitioners “*report for a company and not the public*”; the salary and benefits of a PR practitioner are higher and better than journalists, especially those working in the private sector and journalism teaches one how to research, interview people, have interpersonal skills and meet different people”. She further said that PR is very strict and regulated; a PR practitioner has to have a sense of discipline; can not talk to anybody in terms of sourcing information, or talk about the company’s confidential information. However, If participant one had studied PR, she would have also known that PR literature teaches research, interviewing and interpersonal skills, as well as how to interact with people.

Journalism, according to participant two, acts as the watchdog in society and aims to tell the truth. PR on the other hand, requires one to filter information and protect the truth on behalf of the company. Journalism is perceived to be more free-flowing than PR. Participant one seems to still have a big passion for journalism compared to PR. This is reflected in her statement when she said: “*PR is very strict, it is very regulated. It is not my cup of tea, but I have adapted myself to it. Journalists are very free flow, and I love that*”.

## **4.10 ASPECTS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS**

### **4.10.1 Definition of PR**

In terms of the definition of PR, most of the participants defined PR according to what they do as PR practitioners. Participant one for example, noted day-to-day activities that a PR practitioner is required to fulfil, such as being on “time, promising to deliver on time and having a pre-programmed schedule”.

### **4.10.2 Responsibilities of a PR practitioner**

Since all the participants came from a journalistic background, none of them gave a comprehensive description of a PR practitioner’s responsibilities. Only participant three distinguished that there are different roles and responsibilities within PR. However, she did not indicate what each role is responsible for.

The PR practitioners’ responsibilities, according to the three participants, can be summed up in what technicians and to some extent what PR managers do, as prescribed in the literature. None of the participants mentioned the strategic side of PR. Aspects such as assisting the organisation to adapt to its environment by “feeding intelligence” to top management on strategic stakeholders issues, concerns and expectations; gathering, identifying, analysing, interpreting and informing top management on reputation risks and other strategic issues identified in the environment were not mentioned.

This could mean that the participants do not know the strategic side of PR, because they did not receive formal training in PR. On the other hand, as indicated by participant one, there is no clear distinction with regards to the different roles or responsibilities that PR practitioners play in Namibia. Hence, it might have been difficult for them to distinctly give the responsibilities of each role.

### **4.10.3 PR courses to prepare practitioners for the future**

The participants felt that courses related to technology, PR and social media, and environment PR, should be included in the PR syllabus. ProVox courses were also deemed essential for students studying PR in Namibia, as they are seen to be more practical than the current PR syllabus in tertiary institutions.

Courses on strategic communication, advance writing, community development and crisis management were also identified as important to prepare PR practitioners for the future.

A course on how to communicate strategically with government officials such as ministers was also deemed necessary, as participant three experienced difficulties in communicating with politicians, when she was working as a PR practitioner at a government ministry.

Participant one felt that the courses should be more practical. However, other participants (members of PRISA) interviewed and the previous chairperson noted that PRISA courses are practical.

Participant one made the above statement, because she never enrolled in ProVox or any other PR related courses. In terms of PRISA entering into bilateral relationships with tertiary institutions in Namibia, it is clear that PRISA Namibia still has not finalised their agreement with tertiary institutions, as the current chairperson as well as a member of the PRISA Namibia chapter noted in her interview.

#### **4.10.4 Skills Required for PR Graduates**

Writing was cited as a problem amongst most of the participants. Participant two went further to add grammar and editing as problems as well. One participant concluded that PR graduates do not take initiative, are not proactive, forward-minded or innovative. Instead, they want to be “baby-sat” and “spoon-fed”.

Furthermore, it was reported that graduates lack budgeting skills. They do not have knowledge nor understand business guidelines, deadlines and objectives. Most graduates were reported to know the theory of PR, but were unable to execute PR activities such as writing a media release.

## **4.11 ABOUT PRISA NAMIBIA**

### **4.11.1 Knowledge about PRISA**

All the participants knew relatively little about PRISA Namibia. Participant two noted that she received more information from the South African chapter, as she had better contact with that chapter than with the Namibian Chapter.

She further stated that PRISA SA thinks she is a member, because they send her materials, but she admitted that she is not a paid up member of either the Namibian or South African chapter.

This does not reflect well on PRISA SA, because it seems as if they do not have proper membership management structures in place to check who is a member and who is not. This might be the case with PRISA Namibia. When asked about their membership number, prominent committee members and the current chairperson gave different numbers.

Although participants one and three knew relatively little about PRISA Namibia, they expressed their interest in wanting to get involved with the association, but they were met with a few challenges. Participant one described some of the challenges when she said: *"I get almost no support, no information, no invitation to PRISA Namibia"*. Participant three felt that the PRISA Namibia committee not consisting of members who were qualified PR practitioners was a shortcoming.

They were either, as she describes them, *"a bunch of white ladies who are maybe PA's to their bosses"* or PR practitioners who came from a journalism background. Both participant one and participant three also felt that PRISA Namibia is not well publicised.

### **4.11.2 Expectations of non-members from PRISA Namibia**

In terms of expectations, the participants cited training, being engaged and kept abreast of new developments in the industry by PRISA Namibia as important. Participant three wants to be engaged, a need also expressed by the PRISA Namibia members interviewed.

### **4.11.3 Accreditation**

Participant two noted the importance and reasons for PR practitioner to be accredited, as she herself is an accredited PR practitioner. Participant one had no idea what accreditation was nor did she understand the importance for a PR practitioner to be accredited. Participant three also does not have any understanding of what accreditation is all about. Most of the participants interviewed did not understand the importance of accreditation for PR practitioners.

Participant two is the only one who gave a comprehensive list of the benefits that accreditation gives. She noted that accreditation:

- Keeps one up to date;
- Exposes one to the latest research;
- Keeps one in the thrust and middle of issues;
- Helps one anticipate challenges that may come to an area before they actually happen;
- Helps one to be proactive;
- Keeps one in touch with breaking trends and what is going on internationally;
- Helps with what new things one can study;
- Exposes one to the curriculum, syllabus and new books available on the market;
- Keeps one in a network of professionals; and
- Helps to keep one on their toes.

### **4.11.4 Continuous Development**

The participants highlighted that training and mentorship were highlighted as continuous development initiatives. They want training that is more focused on soft skills that can boost one's confidence and assertiveness. Presentation skills training, especially presenting to the board was also needed. The mentorship aspect seems to be a need, not only amongst the non-members, but also among the members. Some members cited that they want to get mentored by APRs who are members of PRISA Namibia.

## **4.12 PR Ethics**

### **4.12.1 How PRISA Namibia can assist with PR ethics**

One participant noted that having a booklet about ethics distributed to all the members or those in the industry is one of the ways that PRISA Namibia can instil the importance of PR ethics amongst PR professionals in Namibia. Participant one further cited that it is important for PRISA Namibia to create a platform where PR practitioners can have more engagements, meetings or get-togethers to discuss issues related to PR ethics.



Participant two posited that PRISA Namibia needs to ensure quality and control in the profession to give it more credibility. Participant two's statement was also echoed by the previous PRISA Namibia chairperson, who cited that PRISA Namibia should put in place *“mechanism to ensure compliance to ethics, high visibility and credibility in the work place”*.

#### **4.12.2 Adherence to the PR code of ethics**

None of the participants adhere to the PR code of ethics. Instead, they either use governance principles laid out in the King III report and principles they have received from the journalism discipline. One participant reported that she adheres to the King III Report and another participant used her journalism code of conduct to guide her.

#### **4.13 Recommendations**

The following recommendations were prescribed by the participants and will also be recorded in the recommendation chapter:

- All three participants noted that PRISA Namibia needs to be visible, a problem also noted by the other participants.
- PRISA Namibia needs to expose themselves more to media practitioners, since most members of the PR practitioner workforce come from a journalistic background.
- PRISA Namibia should get involved in exchange programmes, as they provide a lot of learning opportunities.
- PRISA Namibia needs to collaborate with tertiary institutions, to see whether they can offer their ProVox courses to complement the curriculum.
- PRISA Namibia needs to give 'tips of the day' to keep practitioners abreast with what is happening in the industry.
- PRISA Namibia needs to make concerted effort to engage newly appointed PR practitioners and use that opportunity to tell the practitioners about the association's activities, benefits and fees.
- PRISA Namibia is also admonished to create a database with updated information about its members.

Although the database is essential, it will prove futile if PRISA Namibia does not have someone to manage and ensure that membership information is kept up-to-date.

## FINDINGS FROM PRISA NAMIBIA MEMBERS

This section will focus on the findings and recommendations from PRISA Namibia members.

### 4.14 DEMOGRAPHICS OF MEMBERS

**Table 4.3 Demographics for Members**

Criteria	Participant one	Participant two	Participant three	Participant four	Participant five
Gender	Female	Female	Male	Female	Female
Age	30-39	30-39	30-39	30-39	40-59
Industry worked	Private sector Government	Government private sector parastatal	Government private sector parastatal	Private sector parastatal	Government private sector parastatal
Highest qualifications	3 Year National Diploma in Public Relations	MBA	National Diploma in Public Administration; Bachelor of Technology in Public Management; Postgraduate Diploma in Business Studies; Postgraduate Diploma in Corporate Communications.	M-Tech in Public Relations	LLB degree PRISA Management Certificate
Years of experience	18 years	18 years	9 years	9 years	22 years
Accreditation level	APR	APR	PRP	CPRP	APR
Position	Senior manager	Acting CEO	Manager	Own consultancy	Director

Participant five has 22 years' of experience in the PR profession compared to the other participants. However, she did not do a formal qualification in PR. Nevertheless, she has undergone international accredited courses offered by PRISA. The other four participants have a formal qualification in PR and not just journalism as with the previous participants. All participants have extensive experience in the industry, especially participant one, two and five.

#### **4.15 Aspects of Public Relations**

##### **4.15.1 Definition of PR**

Various aspects such as building, managing, establishing or nurturing relationships were used to define PR. Most of the participants defined PR according to the literature.

**Participant one:** *"It is the relationship that your company has with its stakeholders being its clients, staff, suppliers, any of the stakeholders, and how you build that relationship through various means and through PR at your disposal such as communication, events, stakeholder engagement etc."*

**Participant two:** *"To think on behalf of the organisation through communication. To bring about mutual relationships within the organisation and its target publics."*

**Participant three:** *"I have read through all different definitions and studied this in my M.Tech. I think the best definition is PRISA's; using communication as a tool to build relationships and to manage perceptions of stakeholders"*

**Participant four:** *"It is the establishment and nurturing of relationships between organizations and their various publics. In essence, it is you cultivating relationships with people that you deal with on a daily basis"*

**Participant five:** *"Managing the environment of the organisation, the internal and external environment, and whatever is in that environment. Whether it is issues you need to manage, whether it is people, whether it is stakeholders, clients, whether it is the regulators, government, it doesn't matter. Harmonising your internal and external environment so that your relationships are focused towards your company. That is my layman's definition, having worked in PR for more than 10 years"*

#### 4.15.2 Responsibilities of a PR practitioner

Participant one highlighted three responsibilities, which include: “building and strengthening relationships with stakeholders; effectively communicating with them and engaging with the organisation’s stakeholders”. Participant two noted that PR practitioners have a responsibility to communicate on behalf of the organisation. She felt that communication should be about the following: “the organisation philosophy which consists of its vision, mission and values, what the organisation does, how it looks, behaves and how it does business”. Participant three was the only one who managed to break down the roles and their responsibilities as noted in the literature.

Participant four cited that PR practitioners are responsible for issues and reputation management. Participant five also broke down the roles of practitioners and what they were responsible for. Below is a table illustrating the roles and responsibilities as outlined by participant three in her response.

**Table 4.4 Roles and Responsibilities of PR Practitioners**

<b>Strategist</b>	<b>Manager</b>	<b>Technician</b>
<i>“See what is happening in the future and how that will impact the company”.</i>	<i>“Important to do the basic managerial duties, which include managing the people who are reporting to you”.</i>	<i>“Is really the person on the ground that needs to execute the strategic plan”.</i>
<i>“Use corporate communication to manage those impacts or effects on the company”.</i>	<i>“Managing their performance, making sure they are motivated and encouraged to do their best, and do all the administration that is involved with human resources- you know salary increase, leave”.</i>	<i>“Will take the strategic plans, and would in accordance to that, draft their own executable plans and implement that would be like organizing events”.</i>
<i>“Need to have a sort of futuristic type of view/ mindset, but more than that, in order/an ability for</i>	<i>“Making sure that the right people are available when tasks are due”.</i>	<i>“That person will be responsible for executing that project as a whole. So it is not just organizing”.</i>

<i>you to understand what will happen in the future”.</i>		
<i>“Need to do research. Research is a big part/ responsibility of a strategist”.</i>	<i>“Manage the budget. You must be able to formulate the budget, which is in line with strategy, which is in line with the company strategy and do some kind of financial management by tracking what you have achieved versus how much you spend and how much is available to spend”.</i>	
<i>“Need to advise management”.</i>	<i>“You need to be the trainer, guiding staff, advising them, making</i>	
<i>“Play a counselling role/</i>	<i>“Sort of doing the strategic planning”.</i>	
<i>“Would be an internal consultant</i>	<i>“Take the information from the strategist or take the strategy and make sure it</i>	
<i>“Need to scan the environment”</i>	<i>“The finance management and the people management are two key</i>	
	<i>“In Namibia, the strategist will be the manager, so it will be an overlapping role</i>	

The other participants said the following:

**Participant four:** *“It is issues and reputation management mainly, broken down into a number of things that you do through engagement, through production of newsletters, internal communications and external communications, through media relationships, updating the public about what is happening. To advise and counsel management on the key issues going on in the country or world that has a bearing on Namfisa”.*

**Participant five:** *“You must be a counsellor for your organisation. You must be someone relied on for advice beyond the field of PR.*

*Be a good strategist in terms of deciding how the organisation can deal with issues, how it can deal with relationships within itself, and the environment within the environment it operates and how it deals with internal stakeholders and how it promotes itself, in terms of building its reputation, so you must be a good strategist. Then you can be functional manager; that means you should have good structure within your enterprise that enables you to activate strategy that will support your strategy and make you a good counsellor with a difference. But I think the days of being a specialist people and just dealing with the group side to PR have gone. I think it is clear from Barclays and StanCharted, their traditional PR people would never have been able to deal with those kinds of crisis. You must be a good crisis manager as well and you should be a good listener all around you. Be someone who picks up issues when they arise and be able to anticipate, that is where the counsel comes in”.*

#### **Skills lacking amongst PR graduates**

Participant one cited that writing skills, especially writing something as basic as a media release, was undeveloped amongst graduates. Participant two noted that graduates lack the ability to formulate effective strategies, objectives, measurement, targets and evaluation. She further added that they need to learn how to “read financial statements”. Participant three suggested that graduates need to acquire practical experience and soft skills training, as often they graduate with “a lot of book knowledge”.

Participant four indicated that graduates lack analytical, research and management skills. He said, *“We don’t spend too much time analysing trends or issues and whatever situations. That’s why people complain a lot saying this launch was not well done, this statement was not well written, because it doesn’t speak to a particular type of audience”.*

**Participant two:** *“The other thing, professionals need to learn the business of the organisation in order to be able to speak on its behalf. You cannot brand an organisation, which you don’t know, or in which you are not interested. I remember people saying PR people are not interested in the company offering. They leave that to marketing, which I think is a mistake. We need first to know what we are offering, what we are, what we do, how we do things and to be able to communicate that properly. And if professionals don’t have that they will always be excluded from the boardroom,*

*because they are not adding value. They know what to do, but they cannot convert their expertise to the organisation. I think that maybe sometimes it's not given as training. And probably professional development, that you should learn and learn fast and learn even things that PR people might not sort of want to".*

**Participant three:** *"I have the book knowledge, but time management, how to handle conflict in the workplace, you know those types of soft skills, I think is lacking. I would say if you are starting in a formal environment, you would really benefit from getting skills and experience in terms of the soft skills".*

**Participant four:** *"The field of PR is a research and analytic based field. You want to launch a product, you just do it, without looking at what that has meant for whoever has done it before, what it will mean for the recipients of the product or service. Just a form of analysis in a culturally sensitive environment, they do more analysis especially the east where a word in Europe does not mean the same as in Japan, but here maybe because we are typical happy-go-lucky people. There has been no research so let me study my audience. How will they receive my message and therefore, I tailor make my speech or presentation to their needs. Those things don't come through and you will see them through the speeches of our politicians and our CEOs, and also the CEOs tend to be better prepared than us".*

**Participant five:** *"I think that they lack probably general business understanding. Although they teach them how to do research and how to interpret and report the results, I don't think they teach them how to do on the spot organisational analysis which is very important because once you get that right it gives you an idea on what to start. So your internships should be more about coming into the organisation and doing interviews and analysis what you get from them".*

## **4.16 ABOUT PRISA NAMIBIA**

### **4.16.1 Opinions about PRISA Namibia**

Participants one and five felt that PRISA Namibia is principally focused on training and developing younger practitioners. Participant five noted that PRISA Namibia is a bit stagnant due to the fact that senior practitioners are no longer involved in the association. She added that the stagnation was brought by the fact that senior practitioners *"no longer bring new learning and new knowledge"*.

Participant two cited that it would have been better if PRISA Namibia had someone permanent to run the association. She further explained that she expects more activities, updates and training for members.

Participant three stated that PRISA Namibia is “quiet” and the committee, although they start out with new ideas, find it hard to execute them, because they get overwhelmed by their jobs. Participant four blatantly said that PRISA Namibia is a “useless body”. He noted that he only hears about the association when it has its annual general meeting, when new members are elected and when workshops/conferences are being hosted.

**The participants further said:**

***Participant three:** “Their reputation is a bit more negative. I feel always that they in terms of my career, they have not really contributed that much. I think the most positive about the chapter, is the opportunity to network, especially for me who is a consultant. It is the only place you can really network and sort of promote yourself. But the opportunity there, has been one event per year. So then I sort of wish there were more opportunities for networking cause that would have helped my business a lot, because now I have to go see these people individual where networking opportunity like that you can see a whole bunch of people at once and promote yourself”.*

***Participant five:** “I kind of think it has become very events orientated. The courses I see people attend and the workshops are all about events and small things. They are not going into big issues around PR. They are not embracing issues around social responsibility, sustainability; the King III reporting and how it is impacting our work. They are not looking at reputation management. I don’t see this kind of big issue in PR being addressed by PRISA Namibia and I think it is not that they can’t do that, maybe it is the ability to source the resources they need to address. It has become a junior practitioner organisation, as soon as they graduate they move up and join other entities like Practitioners Institute for South Africa or the IMM, which is the Institute of Marketing Management or they go into corporate communication, which is IABC, which is a different entity all together”.*

**4.16.2 Knowledge about PRISA Namibia**

Participant one was introduced to the organisation by the founder of PRISA Namibia. Participant two was introduced to PRISA through the training courses offered by ProVox. Participant three was introduced by her manager, who at the time was part of the association’s committee.



Participant four was introduced to the Namibian PRISA chapter through the South African chapter. Participant five was one of the founding members in the 90s.

#### **4.16.3 PRISA communication methods**

Most of the participants noted that PRISA Namibia communicates with them through emails. Participants four and five were the only ones that said they received communication from PRISA SA, not PRISA Namibia. Participant four cited that he received updates through the PRISA website. Participant one stated that from time to time she received *Communika*, PRISA's magazine.

#### **4.16.4 Conference/Workshops attended**

The workshops/conferences mentioned were: internal communication in social media, stakeholder engagement and press relationships. Most of the participants noted that they were no longer attending PRISA Namibia conferences and workshops as they did not feel they were worth their time. Participant four posited that the workshops currently conducted by PRISA were not at her level. She felt that she does not learn anything from them.

**Participants one further said:** *"I used my PRISA membership to attend PRISA Namibia workshops to up skill myself in the profession of Public Relations. But, later on in my career, especially when I was not on the committee any longer, I got less and less involved in PRISA events. I attended a few conferences in South Africa, few years back, but the past four/five years, I have not really been involved".*

**Participant two:** *"I don't miss the annual conferences organised by head office at various sort of regions. I usually don't miss those. I have gone last year about one on communication strategy. Now in my position I don't get time to attend these things anymore but I used to go to training and maybe internal communication in social media etc."*

**Participant three:** *"I can't remember the exact name, but I think it was maybe two years ago. I attend something last year, but it was the AGM. Before that, I think 2010, where they got some expert in economy; I think Robin Sherbourne had a talk there that was the last thing I attended there. In terms of the local chapter, they have organized some local events whether it is training or workshops, but when I look at it, I feel like*

*maybe for someone that starting out in the industry it would be helpful to give them insight, but for me where I am now with almost ten years' experience with having done an M.Tech degree, you know at that level they can't really provide anything. When I attend their workshops I have to learn from them. But the experience level of the people forming the committee is not at that level. I feel like at committee level , there must be at least two APR so that they can teach me something as well that I don't know yet, but for me the experience is not there. They can't really provide insight”.*

*At one event, there was a communication practitioner doing a presentation and what she is sharing is really at her level, and I mean I have been there, done that. I can't; learn something from that person. I am a type of person that wants to learn new things and the networking is also important, but I haven't been able to learn much. I must say, they did refer one or two perhaps clients to me, which is helpful”.*

**Participant five:** *“I haven't really attended much. I feel so embarrassed. I just don't have the time to attend. But I think should show some interest. I think it is unfair for all the senior people to stand away from it. I think with all these institutions, it started off with senior practitioners and then it fizzle down to really basic people who are in PR or HR, but they are not practitioners, they are not professionals, they are not graduates from the discipline. So the level of discussion becomes another event, and the language changes and they call it PR, PRO and stuff like that”.*

#### **4.16.5 Quality of the conferences/workshops attended**

Participants one and three cited that the conferences were a good platform to network. Participant one further noted that the workshops/conferences provided a platform to discuss issues of concern and the case studies presented at the workshops proved to be valuable. Participant two was not very clear on the quality of the workshops presented. Participant three and one felt that there was nothing new they could learn from PRISA Namibia workshops. Participant four cited that the Stakeholder Engagement workshop he attended was “excellent”. Participant five stated that the venue of one of the workshops she attended “was not appropriate”. However, she indicated that PRISA Namibia events were “well organised, but the content” was not appropriate. She cited that the content was “too junior” for her.

### **The participants further said:**

**Participant one:** *“I stopped attending their conferences a few years ago because at some point I felt there was nothing really new for me to learn there. And because there are many other institutions and professions that host conferences and because of social media like LinkedIn, where you get material that other professionals generated”.*

**Participant two:** *“Depends on what is being offered. Usually they authorise somebody, I think so. They usually also use lectures from UNAM or Polytechnic to present”.*

**Participant four:** *“My gripe with PRISA Namibia- they are people at APR level who are supposed to transfer knowledge, they are not doing it, and it is a national problem where doctors don't write, don't transfer in knowledge. People who are supposed to be the leaders in knowledge creation and management are not doing anything. They get their qualifications and keep quiet: and unfortunately, PRISA is in the same boat, where people with the highest qualifications sit quietly and don't transfer that knowledge to the rest of us. So now us with new intermediate PRISA qualifications are now the people helping others to understand what PRISA is and I am sure my information is only 50% of what the person is supposed to know”.*

**Participant five:** *“I think the venue was not appropriate. I think I went to this place at the market place. It was done around cocktail tables, we were standing, someone was doing a presentation of media relationships, then we had some drinks. It was a Friday, lots of journalists were there as well, then it becomes a party. I really think that when you really want to do workshops that are thought-provoking, you either have them at a breakfast session or either you should do it as a per dinner talk and then you can have supper. I think the events are well organised that is what I hear, but it is the content. The content is a bit too junior for me to be honest, but if it is what the market needs then I can't really question it. We are not stretching our people to think. PR is not just an event, but a whole lot about systems that need to come together”.*

#### **4.16.6 The accreditation process**

Most of the participants agreed with the literature in terms of how the accreditation process works. They noted that one needs to undergo the Management Practice course, do assignments, write an exam and be interviewed by a panel of senior members from PRISA SA to get the APR accreditation. All the participants cited that their accreditation was done through PRISA SA and not the Namibian chapter.

Only participant two cited that the accreditation process was a “nightmare”. Participant five just indicated that the senior members who conducted the interviews, asked South African based case studies, which were not relevant to the Namibian PR industry.

**The participants further said:**

**Participant one:** *“I got my accreditation when it was in another format in 2000. I had to do a number of assignments. First I had to do the management programme. In that I had assignments to do, and exams I needed to write. And then for the APR before it changed, there was an interview panel, with senior members from PRISA South Africa that interviewed me.*

*Based on that and my experience. They had different criteria in terms of my qualifications up to that point, my experience in the field and that interview. Based on that I got my accreditation, but I know two or three years after that the process changed, and I am not sure how it is done. I had to have 8 years’ experience to get the accreditation. I also had three years diploma in PR, which added points to be accredited”.*

**Participant two:** *“It was a nightmare, a nightmare. No, what one is supposed to do, is: you do your management course in PR, that was a nightmare. It was an exam, five hour exam with questions are too long to be able to be done in 5 hours, but at least we immersed that. After you have done that, I think there were assignments to be done. You get a topic to prepare, then they mark the paper and after marking the paper, you go through a panel of an interview then you get your accreditation. I am actually in the accreditation committee now. Those who want to do it in Namibia must have done the management course or post graduate qualification. You apply and they look at your level whether you are ready for accreditation or not. I think if you have your masters you can go for your accreditation or that management course. The accreditation committee decides and looks at your work experience, your maturity, then you get that paper to write, a thesis or whatever it is called, then they interview you”.*

**Participant three:** *“I am busy with my APR now. You are basically in contact with the South African office. You do everything via them with PRISA, they also have requirements that you have to have 10 years’ experience before you can get your APR accreditation through them; you get points for certain qualifications”.*

**Participant four:** *“I emailed PRISA on the website. They say who to contact and I emailed them. I sent them the forms and my qualifications, they said I must pay “x” amount which I paid, then they mailed me through the normal slow mail my certificate: a Public Relations Practitioner”.*

**Participant five:** *“The accreditation is given through an interview. After you have done your professional studies, you appear before a panel who interview, they also take in account your assignments you would have done. I booked for an accreditation exam, but they expect you to work for at least a year and then you go for an interview and they just ask you questions. They ask you questions about the work that you do, they make you do an assignment, then you have to write an APR exam which is a case study, which you need to do. Where previously they will give you the case study and you have to go present it, they might ask you to host a media conference or talk about corporate social responsibility or look at issues management issue, you would get senior practitioners in South Africa and they would ask you questions about SA things, which was a bit difficult at that time, but that is all we had. You needed to know what the newspapers were or who does what, understand the SA environment. Now in Namibia, I don't know how they are doing it, cause I haven't seen the accreditation programme, but that is what I had to do”.*

#### **4.16.7 Importance of accreditation**

Most of the participants said accreditation is important to make PR practitioners more professional. Participant two said that accreditation is needed so that one can practice in countries around the world that accept APR status and gives practitioners “confidence”. Participant three and four both noted that accreditation “gives credibility to the profession and to the individuals practicing PR”. Participant three further noted that it “provides opportunities for ongoing learning”. Participant five noted that accreditation is important to “protect the industry”. Moreover, she said that accreditation gives a person the “stamp of approval that he/she has undergone through relevant studies, and this person can be trusted to understand the discipline”.

#### **The participants further said:**

**Participant one:** *“I think it is important for every profession/ for someone to be part of a professional body. Whether they use to pull in terms of training and development etc. that is up to the individual.*

*But I think if you want to be seen work in a professional career, especially in your organisation to be recognised as a professional in your area, you need to be a member of the professional body whoever it is that represents the profession”.*

**Participant two:** *“PRISA is part of Global Alliance and if you are accredited here, you are a member of global alliance automatically. You will be able to practice in countries where that accreditation is applicable. I think Australia, Britain, Canada, and United States. If you know you are an accredited person, you need to look out or protect your professionalism and the professionalism of the organisation itself”.*

**Participant three:** *“It helps the profession itself and to a certain extent helps the employers to differentiate between, if someone applies and they are accredited with PRISA, at least the employer knows they operating at a certain level versus if the person doesn’t belong to PRISA and they have done just an INTEC/ long distance type of course, that is not accredited through PRISA. Then obviously that person will not operate on the same level. If that person is accredited, you need to continue doing certain stuff to stay accredited so at least it will give the employer a peace of mind that this person is not a once off thing. This person needs to continue on that level to maintain that accreditation”.*

**Participant four:** *“The perception that people have about PRs is that they are liars, just like lawyers, and therefore, you need an industry mechanism to ensure there is creditability in the profession. You have people who are PR practitioners without having a single qualification or training, but if they can get some form of registration or recognition, it will give them that creditability that it is not a fly-by night profession, it is mainly for respect”.*

**Participant five:** *“An admission of a professional person or accreditation of any professional person, whether lawyer, internal auditors, accountant is a stamp of approval, that this person can be trusted to abide by the code of conduct of that particular profession and you can expect that they will deliver a certain quality of work. So APR people should be able to understand what an APR means in PR. So they will rely on my advice and practice to do the right thing and to abide by the code of ethics of PR practitioners”*

#### 4.16.8 Continuous development

Participant one noted that she wants a social network platform similar to LinkedIn, where “professionals at a senior level (APR, CPRP), could all link up with each other and share articles or post questions on strategic things like reputation risk”. Participant two cited that seminars, workshops and ‘get-togethers’ also give “them a chance to network and talk to each other”. Participant three stated that she wants networking and learning opportunity for her business. Participant four wants PRISA Namibia to add credibility and respect to the PR profession in Namibia through initiatives like accreditation.

**Participant five wants PRISA:** *“to provide opinion pieces or thought leadership pieces on topics that are current, like the issue about triple bottom-line reporting, sustainability; establish a library of resources to hold PR education programmes that are more current, and less about events management, cause everybody can organise an event”.*

#### **The participants further said:**

**Participant one:** *“Maybe there can be a network of public relations practitioners in the financial sector that can then share ideas how they would have dealt with it. Maybe a case study that we could share. Because that would add value for me. Or for example when I need to do a presentation at a workshop, to get some information from colleagues from other companies”.*

**Participant three:** *“For me to learn about new stuff like social media or having a local conference with different Namibian specialties, to learn what they are doing in their current positions. They should also give credibility to my professionals”.*

**Participant four:** *“If you are at that level or chartered whether you apply for a job, or whether you engage anybody, even if I give you my business card and put there “APR”, without listening to me, you would start respecting me. And that is the type of thing I would want PRISA to do for us as practitioners, it is the level we need to get at”.*

**Participant five:** *“They should be able to take a view as PRISA Namibia on what is their view on that. Maybe have a forum within PRISA Namibia where you say it is an interest forum almost like the forums you get online. It is defined by people interested in a particular topic. If for example you are interested in environmental PR, you get together with people interested in environmental PR.*

#### **4.16.9 Challenges with PRISA**

Participant one noted that PRISA Namibia is not “visible in the media and does not communicate with its members”. Moreover she added that although she is a member, she does not know who is on the committee and has not been in touch with the association for three years. Participant two felt that the “committee needs to be a little more active”. Participant three cites that PRISA Namibia’s biggest challenge is that they are supported via the South Africa office. She further said: *“to a certain extent their orientation is very South African and I think it is up to the Namibian chapter to Namibianise things”*.

Participant four feels that the association was not accessible, nor did they make themselves known to aspiring PR practitioners. Participant five did not note any challenges.

#### **4.16.10 How PRISA services can be enhanced**

Participant one did not indicate how she wanted PRISA to enhance their services. Participant two wanted the association “to be more active” and to communicate more with members, share information about the profession as well as trends in the organisation. Participant three felt that Namibians should “stand together” and start their own association. Participant four wanted PRISA Namibia to “have more workshops, conferences, symposia, discussions”.

### **PR Education**

#### **4.16.11 PRISA courses to prepare PRs for the future**

Participant one noted that many practitioners came to her, stating that the training they received through Pro-Image, the authorised trainer for ProVox courses in Namibia, “helped them”. Participant two said: *“They made us. I went through all these courses. It was all that was there. I think they took people from nothing, from no knowledge base to professional”*. Participant three said ProVox prepares their courses well. She further added that the PRISA management course is equivalent to the M.Tech degree that she completed. However, the management course is more condensed.



Participant four concurs with her. He noted that the courses are practical, unlike the courses offered at UNAM or Polytechnic, which are more theoretical. Participant five stated that budgeting, financial reporting, investments, investor relations, projects management for PR practitioners and facilitation skills would be essential in preparing practitioners for the future. Participant five did not indicate how PRISA courses prepare PR practitioners for the future; instead she proposed what PRISA Namibia should include in their courses. Her comments are reflected in the next question.

**The participants further said:**

**Participant one:** *How to exactly write a media release, the basic. The students don't know. And that is the value that PRISA added through this training, is that really practical basic elements of Public Relations, which you can't do without, the 7 steps of PR".*

**Participant two:** *"And I have also seen the employers here, if they are employing somebody, they say preferably a member of PRISA".*

**Participant three:** *"The courses I think are in line with what is expected in the industry. I sometimes think it is more the industry that is not up to par with what PR can do for their companies".*

**Participant four:** *"Here it is practical: your assignment and lectures are very practical. You are made to do something. "Pretend you are the director of communication, you are confronted by a challenge. How would you solve it?" Whereas in school, you would be told the 10 what of what, the 7 principles of communication, which are not very applicable. So for me the training has been very practical and has prepared me for a life in the PR office".*

**4.16.12 PRISA courses to be included to prepare PR practitioners for the future**

Participants one and three noted that PRISA Namibia needs to include courses on social media. Participant one further indicated that PRISA Namibia should include events management, how to deal with the media and effective writing, to prepare practitioners for the future. Participant two suggested that it is important for PR practitioners to measure their performance, hence a course on communication measurement would be essential. Participant three said: "financial management, managing people and media analysis" should be included.

Participant four suggested management courses on PR, such as how to manage a PR division. Participant five cited that “project management skills and influencing skills” should be included. With regard to influencing skills,

Participant five felt that at times people do not see the value in what PR practitioners do, therefore, they need to ‘influence’ and validate why they do specific things. She noted that budgeting, financial reporting, investments, investor relations, projects management for PR practitioners and facilitation skills would be essential in preparing practitioners for the future.

**Participant three:** *“I think the focus must be more on the social media industry, and how to use all these technologies to reach your target publics/ stakeholder; how to use these technical tools to build relationships. I would really say that is the future, and I would really use the technologies to scan the future and obtain enough information for my strategy”.*

## **PR Ethics**

### **4.16.13 How PRISA Namibia can ensure that PR practitioners adhere to ethics**

Participant two indicated that PRISA Namibia should create awareness on ethics. However, she did not say to whom that awareness should be directed. Participant three noted that PRISA Namibia needs to create awareness amongst “the employers and businesses in general about ethics in PR and corporate communication”. She further cited that PRISA should “host at least an annual workshop about ethics in PR, which all practitioners should attend if they wish to continue with their PR careers”. Participant four felt that PRISA Namibia first needs to build “itself to a level where every PR practitioner becomes a PRISA Namibia member”, cause then each PRISA Namibia member would be required to adhere to the code of ethics stipulated by PRISA. Participant five suggested that PRISA Namibia should do the following: they “*set up a code of conduct; sanction practitioners for not adhering to PR Ethics; negotiate with all companies that employ Public Relations people that they would build those PR Ethics into the Code of Conduct for their particular area*”.

**The participants further said:**

**Participant one:** *“Not sure about this – do not know if they have anything in place to monitor/track this or if they have a reporting system where we as PRISA members can log an ethics-related issue of another member with PRISA”.*

**Participant two:** *“Through creation of awareness probably that it is one. Maybe getting them interested in what is happening. I remember some PR people who were involved in fraud, fired from the organisation, probably be followed up, if they could still be members. I think they can do that. I think”.*

**Participant three:** *“Society should hold PR practitioners accountable and report any unethical behaviour to PRISA. The key is education and awareness creation amongst practitioners”.*

**Participant four:** *“PRISA must first and foremost build itself to a level where every PR Practitioner becomes a PRISA member. Once that is achieved, each PRISA member must sign the PRISA code of conduct. PRISA must also build closer relationships with industry and sell to them the value of being a PRISA member and what a code of conduct means to the integrity of the organisation and of the individual employed as a PR practitioner. Until PRISA is fully recognized by industry it will be difficult for it to enforce compliance with PR ethics”.*

**Participant five:** *“And that’s what I’ve been saying to people in PR services, you are first and foremost a professional. You can’t call yourself a professional if you don’t have professional’s qualifications and you don’t abide by professional stuff”.*

#### **4.16.14 How PRISA Namibia can help young graduates to understand the importance of ethics**

Participant one suggested that “ethics should be included in PRISA Namibia training courses and PRISA Namibia should continually communicate to its members about ethics related issues”. Participant two noted that PRISA Namibia needs to “give more classes or organise get-togethers and get speakers to talk about ethics” at tertiary institutions. Participant three cited that continual “awareness creation and on-going education initiatives are important”.

She further added that new “PRISA members should attend an orientation programme, which includes ethics”. Participant four, stated that PRISA “needs to be more aggressive with self-promotion campaigns and reach out to media and PR students at Namibian tertiary institutions”.

He further added that PRISA Namibia is perceived to be an exclusive club for “highest achievers” and students do not feel they fit. **He said:** *“That perception can only be done away with if PRISA gets to the level of the ordinary PR student and make them understand the value of PR and what it means for society. Through those interventions, PR ethics can seep through to the young graduates”*. Participant five suggested that PRISA Namibia should run ethics programmes throughout a particular year.

**Participant four:** *“If PR people become more honest, open and transparent in their dealings with their stakeholders, they would have made young graduates understand the importance of being honest, just and fair which are all embodiments of PR ethics”*.

**Participant five:** *“They can dedicate a year to ethics and get different people to come and talk to them. They can get lawyers and corporate governance practitioners. They could do events training to demonstrate what ethics is and what it’s not. In their education programme, ethics should actually be a portion of everything they do. Whenever they are doing media relations or media writing, ethics should be covered as a subject”*.

#### **4.16.15 Adherence to PRISA codes of ethics**

Two of the participants adhere to PRISA code of ethics. Participant two adopted the PRISA code of ethics to her organisation. Participant three cited that she does not sign the code of conduct every year, however, she considers herself a person with integrity. Therefore, she believes she adheres to PRISA’s code of ethics. Participant one uses the organisation’s code of ethics and said, “I always try to be “truthful, honest and transparent as far as possible”. Participant five noted that due to her training as a lawyer, she tries to stay above board, and adhering to ethics is a natural instinct for her.

**Participant four did not indicate whether he adheres to any code of ethics, instead he said the following:**

**Participant four:** *“It is difficult; some of these things are very stagnant. Well, I come from a journalistic background and most of my friends are in journalism, I can pick up a phone and say there is this issue, and our position is that and out of sympathy or compassion for me, he would go with my version rather than going with the truth. I think it is difficult from a moral point of view. You can comply but one or two times in your life you will probably be forced to pick up a phone and ask your guy to do you a favour, which is breaking the ethics code, but it is not encouraged.*

*I know many people do it, but it is not something you would encourage, it is not encouraged, but it is difficult to adhere to”.*

#### **4.17 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Participant one cited that PRISA needs to send a “delegation from South Africa to meet with all the senior public relations practitioners on their database in Namibia”. She further suggested that “the delegation needs to understand what the needs of Namibians are”, as she feels “they are a bit out of touch”. Participant five did not give recommendations.

**Participant two** suggested PRISA Namibia to do the following:

- *“Get more involved in the membership;*
- *Give a little more attention to the members;*
- *Keep contact and communicate;*
- *Send things of interest;*
- *Bring professionals together to share and talk; and*
- *Help PRISA head office to liaise between members and head office.”*

##### **4.17.1 Participant three recommended the following:**

- *“PRISA needs an administrative person to deal with certain daily tasks on a permanent basis, as an administrative type of person would be more affordable for the members;*
- *PRISA Namibia “should conduct their own internal research, as it will help to establish needs and provide courses or workshops or activities;*
- *PRISA Namibia needs “to formulate a strategy, a local strategy, a five year plan or whatever would already put them in some kind of direction;*
- *committee members must stay on the committee for at least two years. The Chairperson or whoever is in charge needs to be there also for a longer type of period, like three years maybe;*  
*Tthere must be more networking events; and*
- *There must always be some kind of training for the committee members. People must be trained as well and have the experience to take over”.*

**Participant four noted the following recommendations:** PRISA Namibia

- *“To use annual career fairs as a promotional tool to inform students about PR; to strike partnerships with UNAM and the Polytechnic,*
- *To give the practical side of the training to the students;*
- *ToeEngage industry to see how they can help the industry; and*
- *To conduct research on what are the industry’s shortcomings, such as writing.”*

## **Discussion**

### **4.18 Aspects of Public Relations**

#### **4.18.1 Definition of PR**

Most of the participants’ definition was similar to that of Cutlip *et al.* (in Broom *et al.*, 2000:4) who defines PR as a management function that “establishes and maintains mutually beneficially relationships between an organisation and the publics on whom its success or failure depends”.

#### **4.18.2 Responsibilities of a PR practitioner**

The members’ response proved to be based on theory and practice, unlike the responses from the non-members. Unlike the non-members, the members had more knowledge on the responsibilities and roles that PR practitioners entail, due to the fact that most of them came from a PR background and had studied PR. Participant three and five however, gave clearer descriptions than the other participants.

#### **4.18.3 Skills lacking amongst PR graduates**

Writing seems to be a major problem amongst PR graduates, a problem also highlighted both by the non-members and the chairperson. Other skills that were lacking are listed below:

- the ability to formulate strategies and evaluate those strategies;
- the ability to analyse, research and manage;
- a lack of soft skills such as time- and conflict-management ;
- the ability to understand the business and its products;
- the ability to read financial statements;
- the ability to learn things that are not in the scope of PR; and

- the ability to conduct environmental scanning on behalf of the organisation to find out things like communication gaps or issues that can potentially harm the organisation.

#### **4.19 About PRISA Namibia**

##### **4.19.1 Opinion about PRISA Namibia**

Members felt that PRISA Namibia is out of reach when it comes to addressing the needs of senior practitioners. Members felt that PRISA Namibia only caters for the training and development of young practitioners. One participant felt they are quiet and another felt that they are a useless association.

Some members have a negative perception of PRISA Namibia. Some members seemed frustrated with the fact that PRISA Namibia does not communicate with them. They noted that PRISA only communicates through their annual general meeting, when new members are elected and when workshops/conferences are being hosted.

##### **4.19.2 Knowledge about PRISA Namibia**

Most of the participants heard about PRISA Namibia from their engagements with PRISA SA, their workplaces, workshops, training courses and the media. In fact some participants felt they are members of PRISA SA and not the Namibian chapter, as they have to send their documents to South Africa if they need to be accredited.

##### **4.19.3 PRISA's communication method**

PRISA Namibia mainly uses email to communicate to the members. However, members noted that most of their communication comes from the South African chapter. Moreover, only one member stated that she receives the PRISA magazine, *Communika*. The rest did not mention it.

##### **4.19.4 Conference/Workshops attended**

The three APRs admitted that they were less involved in PRISA Namibia conferences and workshops. Participant three, as well as one non-member, felt that the workshops and conferences were not of a high quality. In fact participant three stated they were "not at her level", rather she felt they were more targeted for junior level practitioners. Participant five also concurred with participant three when she said "*The courses I see people attend and the workshops are all about events and small things. They are not going into big issues around PR*".

The previous chairperson was also of the opinion that they did not always get quality facilitators to run the workshops. The only person that seemed to think the workshops were quality standard was the current chairperson.

Senior practitioners who are not APRs feel that APR practitioners are not involved in transferring their skills to upcoming practitioners. Participants three and four can be perceived to seem unhappy with the fact that senior practitioners left the association to be run by junior/technical level practitioners.

#### **4.19.5 Quality of the conferences/workshops attended**

Participant one, who is an APR, felt the same way as participant three. They both remarked that they had not learnt anything from PRISA conferences and workshops recently. On the other hand, participants four and five felt that it was a lack of APR involvement that led to their non-attendances at workshops and conferences.

Participant five also did not attend the conferences as she felt that they were not on her level. She did admit that senior practitioners need to go back to PRISA Namibia and get involved again, as currently there is no new knowledge being transferred to upcoming PR practitioners.

#### **4.19.6 Accreditation process**

Most of the participants concurred with the information reflected in the literature with regard to PRISA accreditation process. Only participant three was right about the years of experience one needs to have in order to be accredited. However, participant two, who currently sits on the accreditation committee, did not indicate what was stipulated on PRISA's website. She just noted that one needs to be mature and have completed a post graduate qualification. Participant four, who received a PRP accreditation, was the only one who noted that he paid a fee to get his accreditation. With regards to the APR accreditation, none of the participants who went through the process noted any payments that needed to be made. The PRISA website confirmed that APR accreditation costs N\$9120-00 (PRISA, 2012).



#### **4.19.7 Accreditation Importance**

Credibility, respect, continuous learning, training and development, protection of the PR industry, professionalism, and the ability to work in other countries were aspects highlighted to explain why accreditation is important. However, participant one from the non-members is the only one thus far who gave comprehensive reasons as to why accreditation is important.

#### **4.19.8 Continuous development**

Sharing case studies, providing opinion pieces or thought leadership pieces on topics that are current; creating a webpage where members can share ideas, having forums for example, PR practitioners in environmental PR; giving credibility and respect to the PR profession through accreditation; and providing an opportunity for networking are some of the aspects participants felt PRISA Namibia can do to add more value to the profession.

#### **4.19.9 Challenges with PRISA**

Lack of visibility, accessibility and communication were highlighted as challenges that members were facing with PRISA Namibia. Interestingly enough, the same reasons were given by the non-members. To confirm the above-mentioned statement, some non-members said, *“I know relatively little about PRISA Namibia”*. Another one said *“I want them to engage us. I want them to look for me as much as I look for them. They need to tell us what is happening in the industry, what are the latest challenges”*. Another one said, *“I get almost no support, no information, no invitation to PRISA Namibia”*.

The fact that PRISA Namibia is supported via the South African office, has also posed a few challenges for both members and non-members. The biggest challenge is the fact that practitioners in Namibia need to go to Johannesburg in order to attend conferences and workshops. Moreover, the training and continuous development initiatives are only in South Africa. Participant five mentioned earlier that the accreditation case studies were based on South African cases, making it difficult for PR practitioners who are based in Namibia to relate to some of the cases.

#### **4.19.10 How PRISA services can be enhanced**

Based on the participants' statements, they would like PRISA Namibia to have more workshops, conferences, symposia, and discussions. Moreover, they want the association to become more active and to communicate more with the members and other practitioners in the country. Participant three on the other hand, seems to have given up on the association. She agrees with the previous chairperson, who also believes that it is better for Namibians to have their own association, which will look after the interests of Namibian practitioners. To substantiate the above statement, the previous chairperson said: *"If a Namibian institute is established and they concentrate on one thing—good quality training—the Namibians can look after themselves. We don't need a PRISA, because it will be more beneficial for us"*

#### **4.19.11 PRISA courses to prepare PRs for the future**

All the participants had positive feedback with regard to how PRISA courses have prepared practitioners for the future. Most of the participants noted with approval that ProVox courses are practical. Participant two further noted that ProVox courses "made her and took people from nothing to being professionals".

#### **4.19.12 PRISA courses to be included to prepare PR practitioners for the future**

Participants noted that the following courses should be included in ProVox courses: social media; events management, how to deal with the media; effective writing, performance measurement, financial management, managing people and media analysis; project management skills; influencing skills; budgeting, financial reporting, investor relations, project management for PR practitioners and facilitation skills.

#### **4.19.13 How PRISA Namibia can ensure that PR practitioners adhere to ethics**

All the participants had great ideas with regards to how PRISA Namibia can ensure practitioners adhere to ethics. However, participant four's responses were more to the point. He explained that when PRISA Namibia positions itself with the government of Namibia to an extent where the government establishes a law to make it compulsory for PR practitioners to join the association, then PRISA Namibia can make it mandatory for all PR practitioners to adhere to PRISA's code of ethics. Then it would be easier for practitioners to be sanctioned for not adhering to PR ethics, as suggested by participant five.

#### **4.19.14 How PRISA Namibia can help young graduates to understand the importance of ethics**

Although participant three noted that she adheres to PRISA's code of ethics, she does not sign it every year as required. PRISA, on the other hand, does not have measures in place to ensure that all its members sign the code of conduct on an annual basis. Although participant one is no longer active in PRISA Namibia, she indicated that she still follows some of the aspects highlighted in the PRISA code of ethics, and compliments those guidelines with her organisation's code of ethics. Participant four was honest to admit that it can be difficult to adhere to ethics; however, he agreed that it is not advisable for practitioners to break the code of ethics.

#### **4.20 Recommendations**

All the participants gave valid recommendations, which will be included in chapter five. One participant noted that PRISA should conduct local research on industry issues and shortcomings. The issue of partnership with tertiary institutions came out often, as several members and non-members spoke about PRISA Namibia forming partnerships with tertiary institutions in Namibia. PRISA Namibia really needs to propose solutions on how to improve writing skills amongst PR graduates and practitioners, as it was seen as a major issue amongst all three groups interviewed.

## FINDING FOR THE CHAIRPERSON'S FROM PRISA NAMIBIA

This section will focus on the findings of the current and previous PRISA Namibia chapter chairpersons.

### 4.21 DEMOGRAPHICS FOR CHAIRPERSON

Table 4.5 Demographics for the Chairperson

Demographics	Previous Chairperson	Current Chairperson
Gender	Male	Female
Years of experience	30 years	18 years
Membership status	Member	Member
Age	40-49 years	30-39 years
Highest Qualification	Degree in Communications	Not indicated
Years with PRISA	16 years	3 years
Sector Worked	Government, private; owned own consultancy	Private, government; owns own business

It is clear from this that the previous demopgraphics information above that the previous chairperson has more experience in PR than the current chairperson.

### 4.22 Aspects of Public Relations

#### 4.22.1 Definition of PR

Only the previous chairperson answered this question. He said PR "is the management of strategic relationships through communication".

#### 4.22.2 PR responsibilities

Only the previous chairperson answered this question, saying: *"Depending on the company, where you get one person and very often you get one who is the manager, technician and everybody. What a public relations practitioner concerns himself/ herself with is the reputation of organisation, to create his company image as the preferred company."*

#### **4.22.3 Courses to prepare PR practitioners for the future**

The previous chairperson was not specific with regard to the courses he thought should be included in the curriculum to prepare PR practitioners for the future, . However, he differentiated between someone who does a formal four-year degree, and the one who goes through the informal route of only doing certificates in PR.

He said the courses in a four-year degree are “multi-dimensional”. For instance, someone doing a communications degree will have other courses such as psychology. These other courses expose the degree holder to other fields related to communication. The current chairperson noted that courses dealing with “*communicating in the digital environment as well as strategic approaches to communication*” should be included in ProVox courses.

#### **4.22.4 Skills PR graduates are lacking**

The previous chairperson noted that writing skills, interview skills and problem-solving skills are lacking amongst PR graduates. The current chairperson noted that PR graduates need work experience before they enter the market.

***The participant current chairperson further said:***

***The current chairperson:*** “Companies and tertiary institutions should work together to provide substantive internship programmes to allow future PR graduates to fully prepare for the working environment”.

### **4.23 About PRISA**

#### **4.23.1 Number of members currently with PRISA Namibia**

Only the current chairperson answered this question. She said that there are 35 PRISA Namibia members currently.

#### **4.23.2 Opinion about PRISA Namibia**

The previous chairperson felt that PRISA Namibia is no longer visible, as it was when he was on the committee. The current chairperson did not think it was “reasonable” for her to answer this question.

**The chairpersons further said:**

**The previous chairperson:** *“It is a difficult question, because I sat on the committee for 11 years, so it would be difficult to tell you how our opinion will be through those 11 years. I can tell you what we wanted to achieve, but since leaving the committee, I didn’t have contact with PRISA Namibia. It seems they are not visible, as they use to be, but I cannot say it is definitely so”.*

**The current chairperson:** *“I do not think it is reasonable for me to answer this as I am currently Chairperson. In addition, PRISA Namibia is a collection of PRISA members resident in Namibia—it is not a business or organization. PRISA Namibia is coordinated by a very small team of volunteers with full-time jobs who are involved because they are passionate about their industry”.*

#### **4.23.3 Main functions and responsibilities as the PRISA Namibia Chairperson**

The previous chairperson stated that his responsibilities were to establish the PR function to be recognised on a senior level, ensure that PRISA qualifications are recognised in the workplace. The current chairperson said her responsibilities are: *“Coordinating the team of volunteers comprising the committee. Networking and garnering support for the institute”.*

#### **4.23.4 What PRISA Namibia offers practitioners**

The previous chairperson said he does not get anything from PRISA Namibia, since he left the committee. However, he noted that while he was on the committee, PRISA Namibia contributed to his growth in the industry. He said: *“Growth is not just on the academic side, but also opening your eyes to another world”.*

**The current chairperson:** *“Access to learning and new developments in the industry both locally and globally and networking”.*

#### **4.23.5 Knowledge about PRISA Namibia**

The previous chairperson was one of the founding members of PRISA Namibia; He was introduced by a member of OCSA (no full name was provided), which was the previous PRISA. The current chairperson indicated that she heard about PRISA Namibia through newspapers and other practitioners.

**The chairpersons further said:**

*The previous chairperson: “I was one of the establishing members in 1996. I was invited by people who already had come into contact with that. I was actually member of PRISA in 1985 then it was called OCSA they died down. In 1996 PRISA Namibia established”.*

*The current chairperson: “Well, I first learnt of PRISA way back in 1994 when I first became interested in the communication profession. I cannot really recall how I heard of it. I think I read an article in the newspaper. I also learnt about PRISA by talking to other practitioners who were members—in particular PRISA's oldest standing member Mrs Solarge. She must be in her 90's now”.*

#### **4.23.6 How PRISA Namibia communicates with its members**

The current chairperson said that PRISA Namibia mostly communicated via email with its members. The previous chairperson stated that they used to communicate via the media by placing advertisements, calling practitioners and direct marketing.

#### **4.23.7 PRISA Namibia website**

The current chairperson highlighted a few reasons why PRISA Namibia does not have a website. The first one is due to the fact that the *“committee consists of a small number of volunteers, secondly these volunteers have full-time jobs. Moreover, she admitted that the overall reason is that there are “resourcing issues”.* The previous chairperson responded: *“Lack of funds mostly, but also lack of skills to update the website”.*

#### **4.23.8 Why Namibian PR practitioners should join PRISA Namibia**

Growth in the PR profession, access to wider information and industry developments were noted by the current chairperson. The previous chairperson did not answer this question.

#### **4.23.9 Conferences or workshops PRISA Namibia offers**

The conferences and workshops mentioned were events management, dealing with the media, what it means to be a PR practitioner, stakeholder engagement and risk identification.

**The chairpersons further said:**

**The previous chairperson:** *“When I was on the committee, we tried to offer workshops for all levels. We would have levels pitched at the technical staff and we would have levels pitched at the higher staff, we would take our senior qualified people, our APR then they will offer the courses for other people. So both sides will win. As part of the CPD programme, the senior people will get their points, cause they need to read up, present and impart their knowledge to junior practitioners, at the same time the junior practitioners get Namibian experience and Namibian case studies, not South African, which I think worked very well.*

*We for instance offered one workshop where we chose two NGOs and formulated communication strategies through the workshop. The end result is that each of the NGOs walked away with a communication strategy and that was the corporate responsibility of PRISA. Senior members would facilitate on such a workshop, they did not get compensated, and they got their CPD points. The junior practitioners learned how to write a strategy and it was a win-win situation all along. Then we had one where in all the APR and each APR had to choose one topic and we had to present it as a mini Namibian conference, but you had your normal workshops like events planning, risks identification”.*

**The current chairperson:** *“No conferences during my tenure. We try to run three workshops per annum on a range of topics. Most recently: events management, dealing with the media, what it means to be a PR practitioner, stakeholder engagement”.*

#### **4.23.10 Quality of the workshops and conferences that PRISA Namibia offers**

The previous chairperson did not clearly indicate whether the workshops he ran were of good quality. The current chairperson believed the workshops were of very good quality.

Some of the participants, especially the senior executives, felt that PRISA Namibia workshops did not target them, but that they focused more on junior level practitioners. The previous chairperson answered this concern, saying: *“No, they didn’t target strategists. We were only seven APRs, today we are eight.*



*Which means, I can't offer my fellow APRs with a conference, which means I have to bring somebody, which makes it expensive. So that was the main stumbling block in PRISA, you get to a ceiling so quickly".*

Moreover, some participants felt that the facilitators conducting the workshops were not of quality. In response to those comments, the previous chairperson said: *"You needed to look at two things: the one thing, the workshops was supposed to make money for PRISA Namibia that is something I fought for very hard. PRISA Namibia is seen as a region, so all the money paid here by the members all go to JHB and nothing is ploughed back in Namibia, so we had to generate our own income. So you sit with this thing, will you get twenty or eight participants. If you get eight participants for a workshop, there might be a high need for it for those eight people, but they can't carry the costs of someone from SA.*

*So you have to see who in Namibia you can get to facilitate such a workshop for you. Sometimes, we did take the punch, and would for instance get Derrick Watts here that costs about N\$40 000, and sell a session with Derrick Watts for N\$250 breakfast and you get twenty people. It is maybe both sides of the coin: the one is yes, the facilitators maybe were not always up to standard, but on the other side of the coin, when you get someone expensive and up there, you don't get the support from your local practitioners, so you are always between a rock and a hard place".*

#### **4.23.11 Criteria used by PRISA Namibia to select committee members**

The previous chairperson said that committee members are selected in a democratic manner. PRISA Namibia also had a succession plan, which clearly outlines how many years each member should serve in a designated position. The current chairperson noted that committee members join PRISA Namibia voluntarily, but they get elected at the annual general meeting.

#### **The chairpersons further said:**

***The previous chairperson:*** *"The PRISA committee is established in a democratic way through election. So if you don't get somebody nominated and vote and you just let it go by and other people get nominated and voted on, then whose fault was it? That is the one thing. The other thing: there is a succession plan in the committee: you can't be a chairperson if you have not been the vice chairperson for one term, and one term is two years. So you have to be the vice-chairperson for two years before you could be*

*the chairperson for two years. I am speaking under correction, but I think you can stand for two years, but after two terms you have to get off in the sense that if you want to stay in the committee, you would get another portfolio and you would start building up again. First, I was a vice-chairperson, then chairperson, then vice-chairperson and the chairperson again, so I don't understand people who say they think the people on the committee are not of the right quality, then they didn't do their jobs".*

#### **4.23.12 The process of accreditation**

Both chairpersons confirmed that one has to write an exam and successfully complete an interview with a panel, before becoming accredited as a PR practitioner.

##### **The chairpersons further said:**

***The previous chairperson:** "In 1996, I did the management course; first I did my degree, but then APR was not even on the cards. So in 1996, I did the management course, passed that then we had to sit for another interview panel. After that, the results came out to tell you if you are an APR or not."*

***The current chairperson:** "You do not get accredited through PRISA Namibia. Namibia is a region of PRISA (The Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa). You need to earn CPD points and then when you have a certain amount of points you are asked if you want to become an APR which is a lengthy process including writing exams, presenting a portfolio of evidence as well as having a panel interview".*

#### **4.23.13 Why PR professionals need to be accredited**

The previous chairperson noted a few reasons why PR practitioners should be accredited:

- *"It gives credibility to your name as a practitioner;*
- *It allows you to get recognition from credible institutions; and*
- *PR associations around the world know what level you as a PR practitioner operate at due to the Accredited Public Relations (APR) accreditation."*

The current chairperson believes that it is not necessary for a PR practitioner to have Accredited Public Relations (APR) status. She stated that it is the practitioner's personal decision to be accredited or not.

**The chairpersons further said:**

**The previous chairperson:** *“Well, you need some credibility behind your name, and because we are not regulated by law, like the medical board or attorneys, it is a self-regulatory industry and for that reason I think it is important that you get some recognition from creditable institutions, and also then what is thought as a benefit, is if you are an APR in Namibia, it tells other people in other countries who are also affiliated at which level you should be able to operate”.*

**The current chairperson:** *“A practitioner does not need to have an APR, it is a personal decision related to the status you personally want to attain in your profession. The value it adds is that it is the highest PR designation one can get and it is internationally recognized. The designation is accredited in Public Relations—it is not an accreditation”*

The previous chairperson further went on to explain the different levels of accreditation in PRISA as explained in the literature:

*“If you through your level you start with affiliate, followed by associate, Public Relations Practitioners (PRP), Chartered Public Relations Practitioners (CPRP) then APR. When you do your CPRP, then one requirement is a degree or if you take the informal route which is not less valid, you would have done your principals of PR course, then you do your practice course.*

*Once you have done your practice and again, I speak under correction, then you can apply to be APR and I think you have to have 5 years or 7 years’ experience”.*

#### **4.23.14 The value PRISA Namibia adds to the personal growth of PR professionals**

The previous chairperson feels that PRISA Namibia needs to “relook their business model”, because he feels the association is not currently adding any value. However, he did admit that in 1996/1997, PRISA Namibia added a lot of value to the profession and to his growth. The current chairperson feels it is up to the PR practitioners to “commit to their own Continuous Professional Development”.

#### **4.23.15 Challenges faced as Chairperson of PRISA Namibia**

The previous chairperson noted that the biggest challenge with PRISA Namibia is that the membership fee or the fees paid towards conferences/workshops do not benefit Namibian PR practitioners. All the money goes to South Africa. His unhappiness is clearly reflected in the comment below. The current chairperson noted that a “lack of commitment to the industry” is one the challenges she faces. She further stated that another challenge is people’s “propensity to complain”, but they do not commit to being volunteers or offer solutions to the problems they raise.

***The previous chairperson said:** “We did not get back in Namibia. Should we have been an institute on our own we could have said that amount of money gets back to Namibia. We would only get N\$50 for every new member, which 90% of our members came through the student system. In other words: if they do a principals’ course, then they would be registered as students. Once it is that route, it is seen as the Namibian committee did not recruit them. If I go back to 2000 where we had a huge successful PRISA conference in Swakopmund, we did not get anything out of it.*

*The whole profit went back to Johannesburg. There was no way to re-inforce it for Namibia. But the people in Johannesburg don’t understand, they just don’t understand until today. If you have to do a course in Namibia, let’s say a practice course they work on, they must be ten people, but they don’t understand that we are small, that six people can make a lot of difference in Namibia. So they won’t do the course for six people, so those six people if they want to do it, have to travel to SA twice, accommodation twice and we don’t see anything out of it. You can sit and talk about it and say remember you have grown to APR.*

*Sorry in any institute or business, there is money and money says we are not benefiting in Namibia, because it is costing us, and we don’t get the same as what the Gauteng people get, but here we pay the same as the Gauteng people, so we are subsidizing them”.*

#### **4.23.16 Ways in which PRISA Namibia has enhanced the services it offers to its members**

Both chairpersons stated that the workshops they offered to members and non-members proved to be beneficial. The previous chairperson said their workshops catered for both junior and senior practitioners, ensuring that no one was left out. The APR practitioners were also more involved. They *“imparted their knowledge to junior practitioners, and at the same time, the junior practitioner got Namibian experience and Namibian case studies, not South African”*, said the previous chairperson.

**The current chairperson further said:** *“We have held a number of very successful interfaces with both members and non-members, which has contributed to raising the profile of the Institute in the country”*.

#### **4.23.17 How ProVox courses, offered on behalf of PRISA Namibia, prepared practitioners for the industry**

**The chairpersons said the following:**

**The current chairperson:** *“The courses are tailored to provide practitioners with the skills and knowledge to operate effectively in the industry sector. ... These courses are not offered on behalf of PRISA Namibia. ProVox is PRISA’s endorsed training provider and is a separate business entity”*.

**The previous chairperson** did not indicate how the ProVox courses have prepared practitioners for the future, but he concurred with the current chairperson with the following:

*“PRISA Namibia was not allowed to offer any courses. We could offer our own design workshops, but we could never offer courses. Pro-image, which is my company, had the license from PRISA to do elementary PR, basic of business communication, and basic principles in PR. Those three courses, I could offer here. Very often there was confusion between what is Pro-image and what is PRISA Namibia, because I was also on the PRISA Namibia committee. PRISA Namibia could market it, then ProVox will come and offer it with their own lecturers and the profit would go back to JHB”*.

#### **4.23.18 PRISA collaboration with education institutions**

The current chairperson was not sure if there was a definite collaboration between the institutions. She said: *“I know that the PRISA executive has met with members of various education entities in Namibia, but I am not privy to the outcomes of those discussions. However, many delegates who attend our programmes attend UNAM and Poly”.*

#### **4.23.19 How PRISA Namibia ensures that PR practitioners adhere to ethics**

The previous chairperson suggested that accredited practitioners who are found to be unethical should “drop down a level or two” on their accreditation status. He further noted that all who want to be PR practitioners need to go through certain training before they are registered. The current chairperson noted that PRISA has a code of conduct, so if PR practitioners are members of PRISA, they should adhere to those rules. She did not make suggestions as to how PRISA can deal with non-members on ethical issues.

***The previous chairperson added:*** *“One way of doing it is to be strict when it comes to the level of registration. However, since the industry is not regulated, it will be ineffective. The other way is to ensure that Communication Practitioners are tested and registered in a body with legal powers. Before being able to practise, a prospective communication practitioner will have to undergo certain training and then they MUST be registered. Much like the chartered accountants, legal practitioners or medical practitioners. So, in its current form trying to ensure adherence to ethics is totally ineffective”.*

***The current chairperson said:*** *“We rely on members to behave according to principles of good business ethics. If a breach is reported, the Board of PRISA takes necessary action”.*

#### **4.23.20 How PRISA helps young graduates to understand the importance of ethics to the profession**

***The previous chairperson:*** *“Ethics should be an integral part of the studies and great emphasis should be placed on ethics. However, if the mechanism to ensure compliance is not in place, students and practitioners alike will not give any importance to ethics.”*

*If PRISA Namibia would position themselves in such a way that the organization becomes a reference for when practitioners apply for a vacancy, then they could use a system of “black listing”. This will entail putting unethical practitioners on a list whereby they will not be recommended for employment should a company want to do background checks. But for this to happen, PRISA needs a high visibility and credibility in the work place. In order to achieve that, numerous steps need to be put in place”.*

**The current chairperson said:** *“Ideally I would love to work with the tertiary institutions to put together a short series of lectures on ethics in the profession for upcoming graduates. Further to that we could consider running workshops for graduates and professionals alike”.*

#### **4.23.21 How unethical members have been dealt with**

The previous chairperson indicated that PRISA Namibia has taken some action against a member who was unethical, but they never went through a disciplinary hearing. The current chairperson said that there has not been a member who has behaved unethically during her term.

Below are some of the examples of circumstances that PRISA acted on during the previous Chairperson’s tenure:

*“This specific person claims to have done certain courses and I think it was under my watch as Chairperson. We wrote him a letter saying, he must please rectify his statement in the newspaper: he has not been successful in that certificate course.*

*He attended classes but he was not successful, and he tried to make a big story out of it and in the end he had to retract the statement that he holds a certificate in PR practices. So that is one area we took on a member. We did not ask him to leave PRISA Namibia.*

*He did so on his own will afterwards. And then there were two business people who advertised the courses as being PRISA endorsed and we also followed it up with them. We said please rectify your advertisement as not endorsed by PRISA Namibia, or PRISA as such, cause they realized that we were successful in putting forward PRISA, the PRISA name, PRISA qualifications and PRISA endorsement. So they just started using it and immediately we stopped that. But we never had to get to a point where we had disciplinary hearings.”*

#### **4.24 Recommendations**

Only the previous chairperson gave suggestions and recommendations for PRISA Namibia. The current chairperson said she does not have any. She said: *“It is a hard task to add a great deal of value when the region is “run” by volunteers—the nature of PRISA. It is about being committed to your Institute and volunteering for the good of the profession.*

**The following are the previous chairperson’s recommendations:**

*“They must become very visible again. They must speak up for their members. PRISA Namibia was a place where even recruitment agencies would contact us and say who do you have on your books, would you send us a list of members, which is an added value. They can only do that when they establish themselves as credible in the market and these are all things they can add value to their members and I think it is important for PRISA Namibia to stand up and say look at x amount of money. It sounds now as if I am just concerned about the money, but if you don’t have money, it would be very difficult to drive out the vision and objectives of this country’s PRP’s, without having some resources in terms of money. It is important that PRISA stands up and keeps fighting this fight that we in Namibia are different than in Gauteng or KZN. Once there, then they can start adding value through all workshops, topical, relevant, actual case studies. If they can work on that then there is a lot they can do”.*

## **DISCUSSION**

#### **4.25 Demographics**

In terms of years of experience, the previous chairperson has more years of experience in the field of PR compared to the current chairperson. Both own/owned their own business and also worked for the private sector. However, the previous chairperson also worked for the government. In terms of the number of members, PRISA Namibia currently has 35 members, according to the current chairperson. However, this number is not the same as the number that Blohm, one of the committee members, gave. Blohm said there are 65 members. Therefore, the exact number of PRISA Namibia members is unknown.



## **4.26. ASPECTS OF PR**

### **4.26.1 Responsibilities and definition of PR**

The current chairperson did not mention the definition nor the responsibilities of a PR practitioner. The previous chairperson's definition was similar to some literature review definitions. In terms of responsibilities, he did not elaborate as much as some of the members. He did not differentiate between the three PR roles and what they are responsible for as other participants did.

### **4.26.2 Courses/ subjects to be included in the PRISA courses**

The previous chairperson was not specific with regard to the courses that should be included to prepare practitioners for the future. However, he differentiated between someone who does a formal four-year degree, and one who goes through the informal route—only doing certificates in PR. He said the courses in a four-year degree are “multi-dimensional”, as someone doing a communication degree will have other courses such as psychology. These other courses expose the degree holder to other fields within communication unlike a certificate course in PR, where a person is not exposed to other disciplines as a communication degree student.

The current chairperson noted that courses which deal “with communicating in the digital environment as well as strategic approaches to communication” should be included in PRISA Courses.

### **4.26.3 Skills PR graduates are lacking**

Writing skills seem to be a general problem, as most of the participants, including members and non-members, mentioned this aspect. The current chairperson felt that if tertiary institutions and companies work together to offer internship programmes to graduates before they enter the market they will be better prepared for the future. However, even if those opportunities are presented, some participants who worked with interns felt that these PR graduates/interns (usually in their last year) should be able to know how to perform the basic duties, for example, writing grammatically, editing, and producing documents such as media releases.

#### 4.27 ABOUT PRISA

Both chairperson felt that they were not in a position to say what they thought of PRISA Namibia. Nonetheless, the previous chairperson felt that PRISA Namibia needs to be more visible, a statement that other participants concur with. The current chairperson emphasised that PRISA Namibia is not an organisation.

Therefore, it cannot be expected to be run as an organisation. Rather, PRISA Namibia is *“coordinated by a very small team of volunteers with full time jobs who are involved because they are passionate about their industry”*. The above-mentioned statement from the current chairperson might imply that Namibian practitioners cannot expect too much from the committee, as members of the committee are merely volunteering their time due to the love and passion they have for the industry.

In terms of the functions and responsibilities that both chairpersons had/have, the previous chairperson seemed to have had more defined functions and responsibilities compared to the current chairperson. The previous chairperson noted that he worked hard to bring the PR profession to a position where it can be recognised as a management function. He also got PRISA qualifications recognised in Namibia. This can be proven by comments of the PRISA Namibia members who were interviewed. Most of them attest to the work PRISA Namibia did during the previous chairperson’s tenure.

The current chairperson, on the other hand, focused on *“co-ordinating a team of volunteers, networking and garnering support for the institute”*. However, many of her efforts have not been felt by the members interviewed as well as the non-members. This is evident in the opinions that participants expressed about PRISA Namibia currently.

In terms of what PRISA Namibia offers to PR practitioners, the current chairperson noted that PRISA Namibia offers practitioners networking opportunities, access to learning and access to new developments within the industry both locally and globally. However, many members who were interviewed felt that PRISA Namibia currently does not offer them anything. The same statements were echoed by the previous chairperson.

Both chairpersons cited that they had heard about PRISA from other members. The current chairperson saw PRISA Namibia advertised in a newspaper.

#### **4.27.1 Mode of communication**

PRISA Namibia currently only uses email to communicate to its members. However, during the previous chairperson's tenure, PRISA Namibia used advertisements, telephone calls and direct marketing to communicate with its members.

The current chairperson is not planning to have a PRISA Namibia website any time soon, as she felt that no one would be able to maintain the website. She further added that PRISA Namibia could not run a website due to lack of resources.

#### **4.27.2 Conferences/ workshops**

The conferences/workshops that were mentioned by the current chairperson were confirmed by the participants who were interviewed. The only workshop which was not mentioned by the participants was the risk identification workshop. It was interesting to note that the previous chairperson said that PRISA workshops were pitched at different levels. However, many members and non-members who were interviewed did not agree.

One member, a CPRP-accredited practitioner who holds an M.Tech in PR and has been in the industry for 10 years, felt that the facilitators and the quality of the workshops were not at her level. However, the previous chairperson confirmed that PRISA Namibia did not always have facilitators who were of a high calibre, but he indicated that when they do get someone of good standard, PRISA Namibia did not get the support from the local practitioners. The current chairperson on the other hand believes the workshops that PRISA Namibia runs are "very good".

One of the members also commented on how ineffective or unqualified the PRISA Namibia committee was. One member specifically noted that on the occasions that she was present at meetings, the committee was made up of members with little PR experience. Another member said it looked like the committee was made up of secretaries. The two chairperson did not comment much on the qualifications or experiences that committee members are supposed to have, except that these committee members volunteer their services and time to PRISA Namibia.

#### **4.27.3 Accreditation Process**

In terms of accreditation, practitioners go through a vigorous process to ensure that when they receive their accreditation, they can be trusted to be effective PR professionals both locally and internationally.

Fortunately, all the members interviewed are accredited with PRISA. Three were APRs, two were CRPR and the other one is a PRP. Only one non-member was accredited. The other two did not really understand the significance of accreditation nor did they find it necessary to be accredited.

#### **4.27.4 Continuous Development Programme**

The current chairperson left it to the PR practitioners to commit themselves to continuous professional development (CPD) programmes, and did not think it was PRISA Namibia's responsibility to do that. During the previous chairperson's tenure, it seemed as if more was done to strengthen and grow practitioners in Namibia. Unlike the current chairperson's approach, the previous chairperson ran CPD programmes that aimed to develop both senior and junior PR practitioners. He encouraged senior practitioners to impart their knowledge and skills by giving them points towards their CPD programme. Some members and non-members interviewed wanted more senior participation and involvement in PRISA Namibia. Based on the statements made by the members and non-members, it is clear that senior APRs are no longer involved in PRISA Namibia as they were a few years ago. However it is not entirely the current chairperson's fault that APRs are no longer as involved in PRISA Namibia as before. Two APRs admitted that they need to make more time to offer their skills and expertise to members of PRISA Namibia. Moreover, they admitted that they have neglected PRISA Namibia.

#### **4.27.5 Challenges with PRISA**

The fact that membership fees and fees paid towards conferences/workshops are sent to PRISA South Africa was a challenge for the previous chairperson.

He felt it was not fair that Namibian PR practitioners are made to pay membership fees, but they do not receive any benefits from that membership.

To substantiate his statement, he noted that since he left the PRISA Committee a few years ago, he does not receive *Communica*, the PRISA magazine, although he pays his membership fee every month. Another challenge he experienced was the fact that PR practitioners have to fly to Johannesburg to do a course. This challenge was faced not only by the previous chairperson, but most of the members and non-members, echoed the same sentiments.

The current chairperson experienced other challenges. Her two big challenges were not related to PRISA South Africa; rather they focused on the local chapter and the PR industry in Namibia. She said that there “is a lack of commitment to the industry”, but she did not mention whether it was the PR practitioners or the business/organisations who lacked the commitment. The second challenge seemed to have been directed to PR practitioners, although not stated directly. She felt that *“people have a propensity to complain and then not volunteer to do something for the committee of volunteers”*.

Both chairpersons noted that a lack of resources was a challenge they faced. The current chairperson cited that the reason why PRISA Namibia did not have a website was due to “resources issues”. The previous chairperson concurred with her. He felt that if PRISA South Africa allowed the Namibian chapter to use the money from memberships and conferences, then they would be able to do more, as *“it would be very difficult to drive out the vision and objectives of this country’s PRP’s, without having some resources in terms of money”*.

#### **4.27.6 Services offered by PRISA Namibia**

Based on the comments made by both chairperson, one can deduce that the services that PRISA Namibia offered to members were workshops, conferences, ProVox courses, and networking platforms. PRISA Namibia also referred its members to recruitment agencies in Namibia.

#### **4.27.7 ProVox courses**

The current chairperson noted that ProVox courses were *“tailored to provide practitioners with the skills and knowledge to operate effectively in the industry sector”*. The previous chairperson did not indicate exactly how ProVox courses prepared practitioners for the future, but he concurred that these courses were very good and practical.

#### **4.27.8 PRISA collaboration with education institutions**

The current chairperson and one of the members stated that there had been talks about collaborating with tertiary institutions; however, no definite decision has been made so far. The previous chairperson made an effort to guest-lecture at both Polytech and UNAM and give public lectures on the latest developments in PR. He also offered a special price structure for students to attend PRISA Namibia-related events.

#### **4.27.9 How PRISA Namibia ensures that PR practitioners adhere to ethics**

The previous chairperson gave practical steps as to how PR practitioners can adhere to ethics. He stressed that the PRISA Namibia committee needs to be strict with its members, especially those who are accredited. He recommended that if accredited practitioners are found to be unethical, they should be demoted a level on their accreditation status. He further noted that practitioners need to go through certain training before they are registered as PRs just like chartered accountants, lawyers and doctors. The current chairperson noted that PRISA has a code of conduct, so if PR practitioners are members of PRISA they “should adhere to those rules”. She did not make reference to how PRISA can deal with non-members on ethical issues. Moreover, she did not give practical solutions for practitioners to adhere to like the previous chairperson.

During the previous chairperson’s tenure, the committee was more active in identifying members who were unethical and dealing with them accordingly. The current chairperson said she had not experienced any unethical behaviour amongst the members during her tenure.

#### **4.27.10 Sensitising young graduates to the importance of ethics to the profession**

The current chairperson proposed to write a short series of lectures on ethics in PR for graduates and also run ethics workshops for graduates and professionals. The previous chairperson also noted that ethics needs to be “an integral part” of PR studies and it needs to be part of the PR curriculum. However, he felt that including them in education is not enough. He stated that if there is a mechanism to ensure that students and practitioners comply with the ethics code, or that unethical practitioners are blacklisted from the PR industry, then ethics lessons will prove to be effective.

#### **4.28 Recommendations**

The previous chairperson wants PRISA Namibia to be more visible, to speak up for its members and establish a relationship with recruitment agencies again. Furthermore, the previous chairperson felt that having a relationship with recruitment agencies is one way of adding value to PRISA Namibia members. Moreover, he strongly felt that PRISA Namibia should keep fighting for its members and try to have events and case studies that have a Namibian focus.

The current chairperson did not have any recommendations for PRISA Namibia. She felt that it would be hard for PRISA Namibia to add value if the organisation is run by volunteers. Albeit, it seems that she uses volunteerism as an excuse for PRISA Namibia's ineffectiveness. However, the previous chairperson, who also led the committee with volunteers, was able to add more value to PRISA Namibia members than the current chairperson based on the responses that both participants gave.

#### **4.29 Conclusion**

The next chapter will conclude the study and give a summary of recommendations made by the participants as well as the researcher of the study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The study did identify the perceptions that selected practitioners had with regard to PRISA Namibia. Moreover, the study revealed that both members and non-members were aware of PRISA Namibia's existence, but knew relatively little about their activities. The study also clearly identified opinions, benefits and issues that PR professionals face with PRISA Namibia and what PR practitioners expect from the association. Finally, the study provided solutions to PRISA Namibia to improve its operations, to attract more membership and to gain the support and recognition of PR practitioners nationwide.

#### **About PRISA**

These issues include PRISA Namibia's lack of visibility, communication and accessibility. Moreover, both members and non-members felt that PRISA Namibia is currently not adding value to PR practitioners and the PR profession in Namibia. Members who were not APRs were frustrated with the fact that APRs are not availing themselves to share their experience and expertise with "junior" PR practitioners. Both non-members and members were frustrated with the fact that PRISA Namibia does not engage them, nor do they create enough platforms where they can network and engage with other practitioners. Moreover, most participants felt that PRISA Namibia is more focused on younger practitioners and their workshops are focused on events management.

Strategic communication, use of social media, digital communication, crisis management and advanced writing skills were some of the courses recommended by the non-members for PRISA Namibia to include in the ProVox courses. The members further added media analysis skills, project management skills, influencing skills, people management skills and other soft skills courses. However, all the participants failed to mention the importance for PR practitioners to learn on how to deal with industrial labour issues. 2012 was characterized as the year of strikes in Namibia. There were at least two strikes occurring in major enterprises every month. Although traditionally this function was left in the hands of Human Resource practitioners, perhaps PR practitioners could combine their communication skills with industrial relations skills to help resolve issues effectively and quickly.



The literature reviewed also highlighted courses and skills, which were not noted by either non-members or members, but are essential to PR practitioners. These courses include: handling legal issues, research and forecasting, financial skills, applying cross-cultural and cross-gender sensitivity, organisational changes and development, issues management, audience segmentation, design and layout using new media, fluency in a second language and problem-solving (Kim, 2012:6). Unfortunately most of the above-mentioned skills were not identified by any of the PR practitioners interviewed.

With regards to ethics, the participants gave useful suggestions on how PRISA Namibia can enact and propagate PR ethics amongst practitioners and students. Ideas such as having an ethical booklet, giving practical case study lectures on PR ethics and having workshops around ethics were noted. Most of the recommendations on how PRISA Namibia can install PR ethics amongst PR practitioners are reflected in the recommendation section. In terms of the literature reviewed, Bowen (2007) and Lee and Cheng (2011:319) cited that most codes of ethics do not provide enforcement monitoring or recourse, when they are violated. PRISA Namibia (2011) code of ethics is no different. They need to review their code of ethics first, before implementing the participants' wonderful suggestions. It is paramount that they do this first, as a comprehensive code of ethics will guide PR practitioners effectively on the way they should behave as PRISA Namibia's members.

With regard to workshops, most of the participants from all three interviewed groups cited that the quality of the facilitators and some of the workshops was not good. Many participants, especially those who are APRs, felt that the workshops were not at their level.

### **Aspects of PR**

In terms of the PR industry in Namibia, many PR practitioners interviewed, especially the non-members came from a journalism background. However, members with APRs and CPRP accreditation held PR qualifications, not journalism qualifications as in the case with non-members. It was interesting to find that most journalists in Namibia migrate to the PR profession due to better salaries and job benefits, rather than a passion for the PR industry. From the findings, the researcher could deduce that PR practitioners from a journalistic background did not understand the value of accreditation. Furthermore, they did not have comprehensive knowledge about PR responsibilities, especially on a managerial level, unlike members who have PR qualifications.

When they were asked to name the responsibilities of a PR person, most of the non-members described the responsibilities of a technician. On the other hand, members were able to categorize the responsibilities according to three different roles, which include a strategist, a manager and a technician, as prescribed in the literature review.

The respondents also did not mention the importance of being exposed to international PR education or the need therefore. The literature reviewed noted that the Commission on Public Relations Education's Professional bond: Public Relations Education for the 21st Century (2006) recommends "current curricula must be updated to reflect the international and intercultural reality that is modern to public relations today" (in Molleda, 2009). Moreover, the literature found that International PR education can also equip PR practitioners to be effective counselors for top management, as they will be able to give advice on societal issues that face international stakeholders (Hatzios 2006:63). A vice president of global communication for an international financial company also cited that international courses are very important to a public relations curriculum, because it builds their cultural sensitivities to the values and customs of those particular countries and gives them some historical perspective about where the country comes from and where it is going (Hatzios, 2006:64).

In terms of skills that graduates lacked, most of the participants noted that writing and grammar were a big problem. These challenges were also cited in the literature reviewed. Moreover, the participants reiterated that most of these graduates have book knowledge, but cannot practically apply what they have learned. The previous chairperson and the other participants all noted that these practitioners could not write something as simple and basic as a media release. Furthermore, some participants, both non-members and members, felt that graduates lacked financial management skills, business management skills, research and analytical skills, and the ability to be proactive.

The two chairpersons had different priorities. Based on the findings, the previous chairperson did more work to improve the PR profession and the PR practitioners in Namibia compared to the current chairperson. Even though both chairpersons faced the same challenges (i.e., South African chapter taking all the membership money and the committee being run by volunteers), the previous chairperson made less excuses as to why certain things were not in place compared to the current chairperson,

The current chairperson identified the lack of volunteerism as the reason why certain things are not in place, however, just a few years before her, the previous chairperson mobilised other practitioners and ensured that they were involved in the chapter. The PRISA Namibia chapter closed down in February 2012. However, some old members are in the process of getting the association back on its feet.

Lastly, the objectives for the thesis have been achieved. The findings did identify the opinions and outlined the expectations that selected PR professionals have about PRISA Namibia. Furthermore, the study makes recommendations on how PRISA Namibia can attract members, gain support and recognition from PR practitioners in Namibia.

Below are what participants recommended to PRISA Namibia so that they can attract membership, gain support and recognition from PR practitioners.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The research questionnaire clearly asked whether the participants had any recommendations they would like to make by virtue of their experience in the industry. Below is a list of recommendations by the participants. The researcher also made a number of recommendations, which she drew from the findings of the study.

### **Recommendations from participants:**

- PRISA Namibia to become more visible by utilising social media networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Printing newspaper adverts like they did in the past, write media releases, write advertorials and profile themselves in trade directories like the WHO's WHO Trade Directory.
- PRISA together with ProVox to design a curriculum and present it to tertiary institutions, so that PRISA students can have the practical experience.
- PRISA to publish an ethics booklet which can be used by students studying PR and professionals who from time to time encounter challenging ethical dilemmas.
- PRISA Namibia to "strike partnerships with UNAM and Polytechnic, to give practical training to the students" as one of the participants cited.
- PRISA Namibia to forge partnerships with recruitment agencies again to establish themselves as a credible institution which recruitment agencies can use to get qualified PR practitioners.

### **Recommendations from the Researcher:**

- APR PR practitioners to avail themselves to offer their knowledge, skills and expertise at PRISA Namibia workshops or conferences like they did in the past. Due to the fact that members and non-members all noted that workshops are conducted by unqualified people.
- PRISA South Africa needs to stop treating Namibia as a region and give them full rights to conduct workshops or conferences. Moreover, they should allow the Namibian chapter to keep their members fees, in order to provide sufficient service to Namibian members.
- The accreditation panel to consist of more APR PR practitioners from Namibia, so that they can give case studies that are Namibian based.
- PRISA Namibia committee to establish strategic relationships with organisations/businesses again, and enter into a partnership whereby, the students who are members can receive practical work experience from those respective organisations.
- PRISA Namibia committee to follow up and conclude discussions with the tertiary institutions, so that the association and the institutions can enter into partnerships. The partnerships should also allow APR practitioners to come as guest lecturers at some classes, adapt some of ProVox courses in the institution's curriculum, and get a chance to participate at career fairs organised by the institutions.
- PRISA Namibia to organise conferences or workshops on PR ethics. To illustrate how practitioners can practically adhere to PRISA code of ethics, and explain why it is important for practitioners to be accredited and how it benefits their profession. The literature reviewed also suggested that ethical training can assist PR practitioners in dealing with legal issues such as privacy, defamation, copyright, product liability and financial disclosure, regulations and compliance (Professional Bond report, 2006).
- PRISA Namibia and ProVox to work together to formulate courses on: strategic communication, research, business management, formulating strategies, writing, budgeting, investor relations, investment, media analysis, projects management, influencing skills, managing people, digital communication including social media, soft skills training, such as presenting before the board, and facilitating a group of people.
- PRISA Namibia to create network opportunities in the year, where practitioners can meet and discuss issues that are of concern to the industry.
- PRISA Namibia to organise conferences/workshops that look at the following topics: triple bottom line, sustainability, the importance of accreditation and ethics, as PR practitioners are tired of events management and how to deal with media workshops.

They should put together worthwhile workshops that address pertinent, serious and more current issues that PR practitioners are facing.

- PRISA Namibia to use the skills that were identified as lacking amongst graduates as guidelines for their workshops and conferences.
- PRISA Namibia to establish a Facebook page where they post links to thought-opinion pieces or case studies, which PR practitioners in Namibia can learn from.
- PRISA Namibia to create a blog which can serve as a library source for practitioners where they get articles on current PR programmes and post on topics that are of interest to them. The blog should also serve as a platform where practitioners can advise each other and encourage each other. PRISA Namibia can also use the blog to communicate latest things happening in the association. This will keep the members and non-members updated with what is happening in the organisation.
- PRISA Namibia to keep an update list of all the members and ensure they sign the code of ethics every year when they renew their membership.
- PRISA Namibia to develop an ethics manual that can guide practitioners on a day to day basis.
- PRISA Namibia to put measures in place to ensure that unethical practitioners are dealt with. For example they can be blacklisted in the industry.
- PRISA Namibia to do research on what are the industry's shortcomings, such as writing as suggested by many participants.
- PRISA Namibia to ask APR's who are members to embark on a mentorship programme where they mentor a PR graduate or a PR manager.
- When a PR practitioner is appointed, PRISA Namibia to delegate someone senior from the committee to meet with the practitioner. They should use this platform to tell the practitioner about PRISA's activities and benefits for joining the association.
- PRISA Namibia to engage with PR practitioners who come from a journalism background to make an effort to encourage them to attend PR related courses, so that they can have broader and a more comprehensive understanding of PR.
- PRISA Namibia through ProVox to create a bridge course that can assist PR practitioners from a journalism background to understand the PR profession better.
- Due to the escalating number of strikes in Namibia, PRISA Namibia to get an expert to train PR practitioners to deal with labour unrest, negotiate and communicate labour issues.
- PRISA Namibia to have a strategic planning session, similar to the recently held strategic planning indaba by the South African chapter.
- The current PRISA SA Chairperson, Tshepo Matseba APR, invited all PRISA members to be part of a panel, which seeks to enrich members and improve the association. The

senior practitioners in Namibia can take heed to this invitation and ensure that PR members are not left out in any developments happening within other chapters in the Southern African Region. More of information on the panel and how PRISA aims to add value can be found (in Annexure B).

### **5.3 Suggestions for further research**

Below are suggestions for further studies:

1. Compare selected PR practitioners perceptions of the different PRISA chapters
2. Compare the challenges faced by PRISA chapters outside South Africa
3. Compare the challenges, benefits and activities that PRISA avails to PR students in major universities where PRISA has a chapter.

The researcher can use the three categories (members, non-members and both the current and previous Chairperson) as used in this study to see if these sub groups face similar issues and challenges as reflected in this study.

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# Your opportunity to learn and grow

## Why CPD?

PUBLIC RELATIONS is a full-time profession; there is never a chance to "switch off", and with that in mind it is becoming increasingly important to develop a holistic understanding of not only our jobs, but of ourselves. This is one of the reasons a professional body offers continuing professional development (CPD).

What does CPD stand for? CPD quite simply means any learning you need to be able to do, to do your job.

- C for Continuing – represents a commitment to lifelong learning and growth
- P for Professional – reflects a link to maintaining professionalism at all times
- D for Development – shows it is more than formal training.

The next logical question to ask is: "Why should I attend these workshops?" There are myriad benefits for both the employee and the employer. Not only does it increase professional competencies vital to survive in the ever-changing business environment; it also equips attendees with personal tools that will improve productivity and motivation, and give clearer insights into their profession. This is advantageous to employers as a skilled and motivated workforce is the prerequisite for gaining a competitive advantage. To thrive in a profession as dynamic and fast-moving as public relations, it is paramount to absorb as many benefits as possible:

- Increase your personal effectiveness through the development of broader skills
- Have enhanced career prospects and increased job satisfaction
- Have greater flexibility at work and find it easier to adapt to change
- Have a detailed portfolio to help with the updating of your CV, preparing appraisals and conduct during interviews.
- To maintain your professional practice level
- Gain a competitive advantage in the eyes of clients and employers
- Have a structured way of addressing your training/skills needs and how they relate to your profession

- Be introduced to new, creative and analytical ways of thinking
- Have a degree of control on your career progression
- Be able to demonstrate your commitment to exploring the latest ideas and methodologies
- Have a road to internationally recognised accreditation
- Become an ambassador for the profession and promote its value
- Be an active contributor to the profession's body of knowledge
- CPD benefits are not limited to the participant. Organisational benefits include professional and motivated employees
- Your increased motivation to learn and improve performance, thus contributing to greater effectiveness in achieving your company's business objectives
- Having a multi-skilled, efficient and flexible workforce
- Increased consumer satisfaction and an enhanced reputation of the organisation
- Assistance in the achievement of quality standards such as ISO
- A training/skills and development record to link to the workplace skills plan and performance reviews
- Participation creates a workforce which is serious about its profession and thus its organisation and clients
- Improved client service
- Visibility as an exemplary employer
- It promotes a culture of mentoring and coaching.

These benefits can go a long way toward ensuring the success of an organisation. CPD helps reach a balance between an organisation's goals and an employee's own interests and ambitions.

Plan now; see page 24 for the 2013 CPD programme and see PROgressions on [www.prisa.co.za](http://www.prisa.co.za) to assess your skills and fill the gaps with these programmes.

Education is a lifelong process and development only ceases once we decide to stop learning. To be provided with the opportunity to not only increase your schema for public relations but also grow as a professional and as a person is an opportunity not to be missed at all.

– Sandile Xaso

# Helping government communicators

PRISA and the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) hosted an academic symposium during September with the sole purpose of obtaining input from industry and academia on the contents of qualifications to improve the efficiency of government communicators. Many expert practitioners and academics responded to this call for assistance and created a framework for the way forward – short and long term.

## Short term

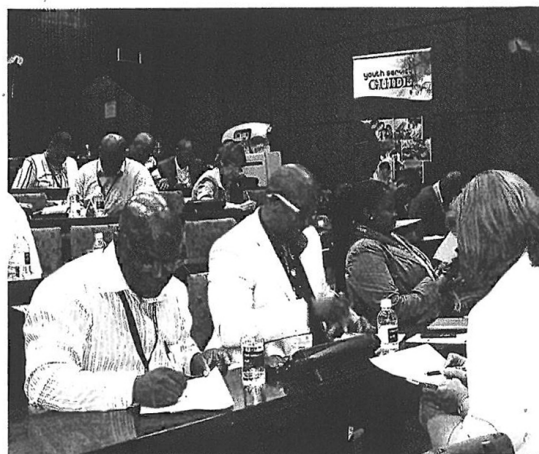
Assess current programmes, prioritize gaps and needs – skills audit. Communicators need short courses, e.g. 6 to 12-month certificate – looking at competencies identified – this should give a platform to go into post-grad studies. There should be networking and exchanges between government communicators and media practitioners. Capacity-building planning should be included in all budgets – so it becomes a core competency. New entrants and principals require induction training for spokespersons, advisors, ministers.

## Long term

Develop a module to add on to BA, BCom or post-grad qualifications as there is a need for a formal qualification. A basic requirement – three-year degree plus specialisation in government communication. Core focus areas of content were debated, as well as the core competencies required for efficient communication.

## Workshops

Principals (ministers) need four-hour intensive workshops.



Diverse groups of delegates participating in "brain writing" exercises to come up with solutions and strategies for the 'way forward'.

## Review current structures

Structure of communication in a department should be reviewed – appoint a mentor/champion so there is no waiting for the minister etc. i.e. departmental re-structuring?

Annexure 2

# Creating real value for members

**“For changes to be of any true value, they’ve got to be lasting and consistent.” – Anthony Robbins**      **By Tshepo Matseba APR**

TODAY, ORGANISATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD are grappling with a range of socio-economic challenges which they constantly address through various initiatives including reengineering, restructuring, and innovation. Similarly, PRISA is currently facing similar challenges, but most importantly the key question for PRISA today is: how do we create true value for our members.

There are a variety of definitions of true value. According to BusinessDictionary.com, true value is defined as the “Amount that a buyer is willing to pay for an item. It changes from time to time and from place to place.” There are two fundamental factors about true value according to this definition – ‘willingness to pay’ by customers and the fact that true value is subject to change.

The key question for PRISA to address becomes: how do we create sustainable value for our members – value which they are willing to pay for over a period of time.

To help answer this question, the PRISA Board, executive management and regional chapters, recently convened a strategic planning indaba, to help craft PRISA’s roadmap and vision towards the year 2020. At this session, PRISA’s current value offering for members was critically analysed with the purpose of keeping what works effectively today, enhancing what doesn’t work, and coming up with initiatives in order to stay relevant in this ever-changing world of public relations and strategic communication management.

The following key strategic issues were identified, based on a comprehensive internal and external analysis:

- Rebranding and repositioning the PRISA brand
- Redesigning the various member value propositions
- Increasing PRISA membership and revenue streams
- Best practice and benchmarking in line with global standards
- Maximising PRISA member engagement touch-points
- Registration of PRISA designations with SAQA
- Leveraging local and global partnerships

On the basis of the above key issues, it became very clear that PRISA members are increasingly seeking true value for their investment in PRISA and as a result, we have to create more opportunities to engage with our members on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis. To achieve this, we have to redesign our member benefits across all segments and leverage technology to communicate these benefits effectively in the digital space. Stay in touch with us via our website to see more details about the enhanced member benefits. One of the significant initiatives is the formation of the PRISA Strategic Advisory Council, whose mandate is to serve as a strategic guide for PRISA in order to conduct research, share case studies and best practices, and position PRISA as a thought leader in strategic communication and public relations. Comprehensive details including the criteria for the PRISA Strategic Advisory Council will be distributed in due course.

As part of our effort to enhance member benefits and contribute to knowledge sharing and continuous professional development, we would like to invite all PRISA members to join our panel of experts. The panel members will act as anchors, analysts, opinion makers, and experts in the following communication disciplines in mainstream media (TV, radio, newspapers, business magazines, conferences):

- Reputation management
- Strategic corporate communication
- Media relations
- Stakeholder management



- Corporate social investment
- Employee engagement (internal communication)
- Investor relations
- Social media

Please send your brief biography indicating your experience and area of specialisation to [adele@prisa.co.za](mailto:adele@prisa.co.za).

From the PRISA Board and all our colleagues in the various PRISA chapters, we would like to urge you to actively participate in PRISA activities and send us regular feedback as we strive to create true value for you as a member.

I would like to invite you to “LIKE” us on Facebook; follow @1PRISA on Twitter, and participate in a dialogue on our blog: <http://blog.prisa.co.za/>

The future of public relations in southern Africa is in your hands.

## Owning a catchphrase might involve a rumble

THIS THING actually made it on to Sky News: a company has registered the phrase ‘Man of the Match’ in a number of jurisdictions including the EU, and these registrations cover a range of goods and services including sporting, entertainment and broadcast services.

The news channel was astonished by the fact that any person or company could own a catchphrase. A catchphrase or slogan can, of course, be registered, but what does it actually mean in this case, does it mean that no-one else can use the phrase to acknowledge the best player in a sporting contest without having to get a licence? Strictly speaking yes, but there might be a case for arguing that the registration should never have been granted as the phrase is non-distinctive.

The story was also reported in the IP Kat blog, which mentioned that another catchphrase with particular significance in the UK, ‘Keep Calm and Carry On’ – used in the Second World War to motivate the Brits who were tiring of bombings and rations – has been registered for many goods and services, and that these applications are being opposed.

A very famous catchphrase is the one used by the boxing ring announcer, Michael Buffer – ‘Let’s Get Ready To Rumble.’ By all accounts, Buffer has registered this term for sporting, entertainment and broadcast services in a number of countries, and it is believed to be a very valuable asset.

Buffer’s registrations would be more difficult to attack as the term is far more distinctive. The descriptive term here, of course, is the unwieldy ‘Let’s Get Ready To Watch Two Horribly-Exploited Individuals Try To Pummel Each Other To Death In Order To Enrich A Few Promoters and TV Companies, And Satisfy The Curious Bloodlust That Compels People To Watch This Rubbish.’

- Hans Muhlberg

## Book review

**Title:** The Upturn: your part in its rise  
**Author:** Andy Green  
**Publisher:** Upturn Books – an imprint of Tangent Books  
**Website:** www.tangentbooks.co.uk

CREATIVE THINKING expert Andy Green provides an entertaining and inspirational yet practical book. It aims to boost your opportunity-spotting skills. It equips you to think flexibly, and think flexibly faster, so you can overcome negatives and harness potential positives, including what he calls 'Golden Swans'.

If *Slumdog Millionaire* is a 'feelgood' movie – with its story of renewal and creating a better future – then this is a 'feelgood' book.

Its easy-to-read chapters deal with 'the age of disruption' and thinking flexibly. The book includes lists of five things, ranging from five role models, five books to read, five beautiful questions, five values, and five things to do at various times.

Check out your flexibility quotient on [www.flexiblethinking.com](http://www.flexiblethinking.com). Other useful websites include:  
[creativityatwork.co.uk](http://creativityatwork.co.uk)  
[greencomms.com](http://greencomms.com)  
[twixtmas.co.uk](http://twixtmas.co.uk)  
[beatbluemonday.org.uk](http://beatbluemonday.org.uk)

### The Upturn: your part in its rise



What you can do *now* to make the most of the age of disruption

By Andy Green

## Advantages of PRISA membership

By Sandile Xaso

*SANDILE XASO is a final-year public relations and communication student at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and student intern at PRISA. He is also an Executive Committee member of the UJ Students Public Relations Association (SPRA), where he heads up the portfolio: Training and Education. He has a passion for writing, media and creative communication. Born in Mthatha and raised in Ekurhuleni, he is an avid reader and lists politics, communication science and sports as interests. He is determined to pursue his studies even further and become an advocate for change to improve standards in the public relations and communication field.*



of standards within public relations, PRISA plays a leading role in uniting professionals and driving transformation. As the recognised leader in the public relations and communication management profession, PRISA provides direction, purpose and guidance.

PRISA is a founder member of the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management (GA). Through this membership, PRISA's 'Accredited in Public Relations (APR)' category is recognised internationally by members of the GA. Moreover, the Institute is also a part of the 'Proudly South African' initiative. This demonstrates PRISA's commitment to contributing positively to South Africa's socio-economic growth. Along with these strategic associations, PRISA is also a member of The Council for Communication Management (CCM). This is an alliance of professional organisations representing the interests of the communication profession in South Africa.

PRISA also endorses a range of educational skills programmes and formal training institutions.

PRISA members are registered according to their academic qualifications and professional work experience. The levels start from Affiliates, Associates and Public Relations Practitioners (PRP). One level above that is Chartered Public Relations Practitioner (CPRP) and finally Accredited in Public Relations practitioner (APR).

Besides the registration and professional development opportunities, the benefits available to PRISA members are:

- Networking – PRISA offers a platform for public relations practitioners and communication managers to interact.
- Library containing public relations and communication titles.
- Member discounts at PRISA events.
- Communication channels – Communika quarterly magazine; a monthly electronic newsletter and ad hoc newswatches.
- The annual national conference.
- Regional activities: A total of nine Southern African regions, each of which arranges events, debates and workshops of relevance in the public relations and communication management sector.
- The prestigious PRISA PRISM awards: now in its 16th year.
- Separate chapters for specialisation areas, e.g. the PRCC = Public Relations Consultants Chapter.
- The Continuous Development Programme (CPD) to enhance the profession by growing its professionals and the body of knowledge.

"SOME ARE BORN GREAT, some achieve greatness and some hire good public relations officers." Daniel J Boorstin said this with his tongue firmly lodged in his cheek, yet it has become the stereotype of public relations practitioners in some quarters. Whether this is a fair or unfair assessment is a moot point, because, as any practitioner will point out, public relations is more than just silver-tongued spin doctors. According to the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA): "Public relations is the management, through communication, of perceptions and strategic relationships between an organisation and its internal and external stakeholders."

To know the true definition of public relations is a testament to the importance of having a professional body. From the Boorstin quote, we can infer that public relations practitioners are in the business of looking after the interests of their clients, organisations and relevant stakeholders. This however, raises the question, who is looking after the interests of the practitioners?

That is the role that PRISA looks to play, whilst also providing leadership within the profession. As it states in its mission statement "Providing dynamic, value-added services to members of the Institute", the true benefits can only be fully felt by members. These services are designed to maximise the opportunities for PRISA members within the field of public relations and communication in southern Africa and beyond. To truly understand the importance of being a PRISA member, it is essential to understand the significance of PRISA.

Established in 1957, PRISA has risen both in stature and profile. The Institute is now regarded as the reference point for public relations in the region. The Institute is committed to the continued improvement

## APPENDIX D

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR MEMBERS OF PRISA NAMIBIA

Thank you once again for agreeing to be interviewed. Kindly note that this interview is anonymous and confidential and it will not take longer than an hour.

#### Demographics

- **Gender: Male.....**  
**Female.....**
- **Position- Senior manager.....**  
**Middle management.....**
- **Sector- Parastatal.....**  
**Public.....**  
**Private.....**  
**NGO.....**  
**Consultant.....**
  
- **Working Experience.....**

#### Background on Public Relations

- What is your definition of PR?
- What are the responsibilities of a PR practitioner?

#### About PRISA

- What is your opinion about PRISA Namibia?
- What does PRISA Namibia offer you?
- How did you get to know about PRISA Namibia?
- How does PRISA Namibia communicate with you?
- Which conferences or workshops of PRISA Namibia have you attended?
- What is the quality of the workshops and conferences that PRISA Namibia offers?  
Describe the process you went through to receive your accreditation through PRISA Namibia accreditation programme?
- Why do PR professionals need to be accredited?
- What value can PRISA Namibia add to your personal growth within the profession?
- What challenges are you facing with PRISA?
- In what way would you like PRISA Namibia to enhance their services?
- What recommendations would you give to PRISA Namibia in adding more value to the PR profession in Namibia?

**PR Education**

- How have PR courses offered by PRISA Namibia prepared practitioners for the industry?
- What courses do you think should be included in the PRISA courses in order to prepare PR practitioners for the future?
- What skills do you think PR graduates entering the workforce are lacking?

**PR Ethics**

- How can PRISA Namibia ensure that PR practitioners adhere to ethics?
- In what way do you adhere to the PRISA code of ethics?

## APPENDIX E

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR NON-MEMBERS OF PRISA NAMIBIA

Thank you once again for agreeing to be interviewed. Kindly note that this interview is anonymous and confidential and it will not take longer than an hour.

#### Demographics

- **Gender:** Male.....  
Female.....
- **Position-** Senior manager.....  
Middle management.....
- **Sector-** Parastatal.....  
Public.....  
Private.....  
NGO.....  
Consultant.....
  
- **Working Experience**.....

#### Background on Public Relations

- What is your definition of PR?
- What are the responsibilities of a PR practitioner?

#### About PRISA

- What do you know about PRISA Namibia?
- What would you want PRISA Namibia to do for you as a PR practitioner?
- Why do PR professionals need to be accredited?
- What value can PRISA Namibia add to your personal growth within the profession?
- What recommendations would you give to PRISA Namibia in adding more value to the PR profession in Namibia?

#### PR Education

- What courses do you think should be included in the PRISA Namibia courses to prepare PR practitioners for the future?
- What skills do you think PR graduates entering the workforce are lacking?

#### PR Ethics

- How can PRISA Namibia ensure that PR practitioners adhere to ethics?
- Which PR code of ethics do you adhere to?

## APPENDIX F

### RESEARCH QUESTION FOR PRISA NAMIBIA CHAIRPERSON

#### Demographics

Thank you once again for agreeing to be interviewed. Kindly note that this interview is anonymous and confidential and it will not take longer than an hour.

- **Gender:**
  
- **Current work position:**
  
- **Industries you have worked in:**
  - Parastatal
  - Private
  - NGO
  - Consultant
  
- **Brief background of your working experience in the Public Relations industry?**

#### About PRISA

- What is your opinion about PRISA Namibia?
- How long have you been with PRISA Namibia?
- What were your main functions and responsibility as the PRISA Namibia Chairperson?
- What does PRISA Namibia offer practitioners?
- How did you get to know about PRISA Namibia?
- How does PRISA Namibia communicate with its members?
- Why does PRISA Namibia not have a website yet?
- Why should Namibian PR practitioners join PRISA Namibia?
- Which conferences or workshops has PRISA Namibia offered so far?
- What is the quality of the workshops and conferences that PRISA Namibia offers?
- Describe the process a member needs to go through to receive accreditation through PRISA Namibia?
- What are the criteria's used by PRISA Namibia to select committee members?
- How many members are currently with PRISA Namibia?
- Why do PR professionals need to be accredited?
- What value can PRISA Namibia add to the personal growth of PR professionals?
- What challenges or achievements did you face when you were the Chairperson of PRISA Namibia?
- In what way has PRISA Namibia enhanced the services it offers to its members, since you were Chairperson?
- What recommendations would you give to PRISA Namibia in adding more value to the PR profession in Namibia?



**PR Education**

- How has Pro-vox courses offered on behalf of PRISA Namibia, prepared practitioners for the industry?
- What courses/ subjects do you think should be included in the PRISA courses in order to prepare PR practitioners for the future?
- Has PRISA collaborated with any of the education institutions such as UNAM, Polytechnic Namibia, and IUM, in training the members on PR related issues/topics?

**PR Ethics**

- In what way has PRISA Namibia prepared members to deal with ethical issues?
- In what way do you make the members adhere to PRISA code of ethics?

## APPENDIX G

### CONFIRMATION OF VALIDITY OF INFORMATION

# Interview notes

Inbox x



Morna Ikosa <amor.b4@gmail.com> 9/25/12

to isack

Good day Isack,

Could you please send me your interview notes back by 29 September



isack hamata <isack.hamata@gmail.com> 9/26/12

to me

Hi Amor,

I have gone through the notes. They accurately reflect my views. You may proceed.

Regards



Morna Ikosa <amor.b4@gmail.com> 9/26/12

to isack

Thank you Isack, will do