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Crisis - Strategic Management in Public Relation

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Abstract

This is a concept paper to explore the strategic management approaches in public relations during crisis. The main objective of this article is to identify the most effective action plan for Public relation. The review of the strategic management in public relations literature reveals that the relationship between strategic management and public relations is still vague. Four stages were identified in the process of establishing the action plan for public relations and eleven strategic actions were captured based on the review of literature as well as past working experience of the author. The four stages are environmental assessment, strategic assessment, implementing the action plan lastly evaluation and corrective actions. In addition eleven strategic actions were identified for effective public relations.

Keywords: Strategic Management in Public Relations, Strategic Action Plan

Introduction

Crisis management is a critical organizational function. Failure to address the problems that arise will result in serious problem to stakeholders, losses for an organization. Public relations practitioners are part of crisis management teams. The best practices and lessons gleaned from our knowledge of crisis management would be a very useful resource for those in public relations. Many articles had been written about crisis management by both practitioners and researchers from many different disciplines. Coombs, 1999, contended that "it is a mistake to believe an organization can avoid or prevent all possible crises" (Coombs, 1999, p. 125). Crisis management and response research has been recently criticized for failing to empirically back its claims. Coombs (1999) argues past research in communication and businesses have offered "advice about what crisis managers should do, but rarely provide verifiable support for the recommendations" (p. 125).

The process by which an organization confronts the threat to harm the organization, its stakeholders, or the general public is known as crisis management. Shrivastava et al. contended that the study of crisis management originated with the large scale industrial and environmental disasters in the 1980s (Shrivastava et al., 1988). Three elements are common to most definitions of crisis: (a) a threat to the organization, (b) the element of surprise, and (c) a short decision time. Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer (1998). On the other hand Venette (2003). Argues that "crisis is a process of transformation where the old system can no longer be maintained."

A crisis mindset requires the ability to think of the worst-case scenario while simultaneously suggesting numerous solutions. Trial and error is an accepted discipline, as the first line of defense might not work. It is necessary to maintain a list of contingency plans and to be always on alert. Organizations and individuals should always be prepared with a rapid response plan to emergencies which would require analysis, drills and exercises (Bernstein and Rakowitz, 2012).

Crisis management involves dealing with threats before, during, and after they have occurred. It is a discipline within the broader context of management consisting of skills and techniques required to identify, assess, understand, and cope with a serious situation, especially from the moment it first occurs to the point that recovery procedures start.

Public relations has passed through several iterations, starting with a publicity or press agent function (Seitel, 2011) at the start of the 20th century, to later functions of corporate communication, relationship management, reputation management, and strategic management. Each of these later functions has been suggested as a paradigm for public relations.

Literature Review

Several studies have produced strong arguments in an effort to define the ideal crisis management approach. Kauffman (2000) claimed “organizations facing a crisis should at least do the following: 1) respond quickly; 2) tell the truth; and 3) provide a constant flow of information, especially to key publics” (p. 422). Research done by Fines (1985) added the element of advanced planning and training: “1) set a broad strategy in advance; 2) respond quickly; 3) train spokespersons in advance; 4) seek third party support; and 5) centralize the spokesperson’s function” (p. 53). Coombs (1999) generalized effective crisis response strategy into two key elements: compassion and information. He further claimed crisis managers must provide crisis-related information to stakeholders and demonstrate compassion for victims. Reporting this information, however, is a complex undertaking.

Quick, prompt responses to crisis situations are crucial. By responding quickly, public relations practitioners, not media, fill “the information void created by a crisis with facts.

Speculation and misinformation will fill the information void if an organization is silent or slow to respond” (Coombs, 1999, p. 126). After a quick response, information must continue to flow out of the organization in an open and constant manner. “Openness means organizational members are available and willing to disclose information to the media and other stakeholders” (Coombs, 1999, p. 127).

Crisis management consists of:

- a) Methods used to respond to both the reality and perception of crises.
- b) Establishing metrics to define what scenarios constitute a crisis and should consequently trigger the necessary response mechanisms.
- c) Communication that occurs within the response phase of emergency management scenarios.

Crisis management methods for a business or an organization are called Crisis Management Plan.

Crisis management is occasionally referred to as incident management; although several industry specialists such as Peter Power argue that the term crisis management is more accurate.

The credibility and reputation of organizations depend on their ability to control and influenced their stakeholder during crisis situations. This is where efficient public relations are required to deliver the truth to the target audience or customer. There must be open and consistent communication approach throughout the hierarchy to contribute to a successful crisis communication process.

During the crisis management process, it is important to identify types of crises in that different crises necessitate the use of different crisis management strategies. Coombs, W. T. (1999). Potential crises are enormous, but crises can be clustered Coombs (1999).

Lerbinger (Lerbinger, 1997) categorized eight types of crises:

1. Natural disaster
2. Technological crises
3. Confrontation
4. Malevolence
5. Organizational Misdeeds
6. Workplace Violence
7. Rumors
8. Terrorist attacks/man-made disasters

Strategic Management

Strategic Management process is a sequence of activities which comprised of evaluating the external and the internal environment surrounding the organization, formulating the strategies, executing the strategies, evaluating and controlling the performance of the organizations in a specified time frame.

In addition strategic management is an ongoing process that analyzes and monitors the operations of organizations and taking corrective actions where ever and whenever it is required by immediate reactions to the changes in the environment. Members of the organizations will have a better understanding on the directions of the organizations through strategic management. Besides that strategic management provides the employees with broader perspective of an organization. It creates better employee and employer relationship by better understanding on their job functions and their involvement in formulating the action plan.

Strategic management acts as a platform in managing employees by maximizing their capabilities to achieve their organizational objectives. Employees will become more trustworthy, more committed and more satisfied as they could cooperate among themselves independently to perform their job functions. Besides that the employees will have a better understanding of the changes in environmental and reacted accordingly to the changes by aligning their actions in achieving the targeted output and the organizational objectives. Moreover one of the important roles of strategic management is to align different functional areas of the organization and to ensure these functional areas cooperates each other in a strong teamwork. Lastly but not least the organizational objectives is clear to every member of the organizations.

Definitions of Strategy

The word strategy originated from a Greek word "strategia" which means the art of war Strategy can be define as the determination of the basic purposes and managerial objectives of the organization along with the adoption of particular courses of action and the selection of specific resource allocations (Harrison, 2003). Ansoff (1965) contended that the application of strategies resulted from the realization that an organization needs a well-defined scope and direction, which objectives alone cannot provide. Early strategic scholars such as Andrews (1971) contended that strategy is a rational decision-making process by which the organization's resources are matched with opportunities arising from the competitive environment strategic decisions are highly complex and involve a host of dynamic variables. Thorelli (1977) viewed strategy as the primary means of reaching

the focal objective. The focal objective is whatever objective is in mind at the moment. Moreover Porter's (1985) defined strategy as the positioning of a business to maximize the value of the capabilities that distinguish it from its competitor's with the purpose to achieve competitive advantage.

Whereas Johnson, 1993 contended that strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long term and it ideally matches its resources to the changing environment, and in particular its markets, customers or clients so as to meet stakeholder expectations" (Johnson, 1993). According to Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997), strategy is define as "how firms achieve and sustain competitive advantage". Organizations must constantly adapt to fast changing circumstances and, hence, move towards dynamic strategy development (Fearer and Chaharbaghi, 1997).

Strategies are the means by which organization missions are put into action and objectives are accomplish (Hashim, 2008). Strategies that can be viewed in the form of additional decision rules are required for the organization to have orderly and profitable growth. According to Hashim (2008) strategies can help an organization in the following ways; providing a broad concept of the firm's business; set forth specific guidelines by which the firm can conduct its search; and supplement the firm's objective with decision rules which narrow the firm's selection process to the most attractive opportunities.

Generally there are three different levels of strategies. Namely corporate level strategies; Business/Competitive strategies; Functional strategy (Wheelen and Hunger, 2003). The application of business strategy is used not only for large firms but also for small firms. In terms of the application of competitive strategy according to Galbraith and Schendel, 1983; Hashim et al(2004), it was done at the business unit level.

Functions of Strategic Management

a) Environmental assessment

Environmental scanning is defined as the monitoring, evaluating, and disseminating of information to key managers within the organization, Kumar, K.S. and Strandholm, K.R., (2001). The findings of Ngamkroeckjoti & M. Johri, (2000) found that factors such as the increase of environmental awareness of managers, the assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the environment, the aid in problem recognition and thereby the facilitation of organizational adaptation to environmental changes describes the effectiveness of environmental scanning systems in business organization.

b) Strategic Formulation

Strategy is developed from rationalizing the situation with the business environments to improve the performance. The first approach is based on the decision process in which the strategy development emphasized on answering the question of: Where are we going?; how to get there?; what actions to take?; how to know we are on track? (Lorange, 1980).

Harrison, 2003, defined strategic formulation as "the process of planning strategies and it is often divided into the corporate, business and the functional levels" (Harrison, 2003 p.19). Harrison 2003, has divided strategic formulation into three levels which comprises corporate level strategy formulation, business level strategy formulation and functional level strategy formulation. Strategy is developed from rationalizing the situation with the business environments to improve the performance. The first approach is based on the decision process in which the strategy development

emphasized on answering the question of: Where are we going?; how to get there?; what actions to take?; how to know we are on track? (Lorange, 1980).

c) Strategic Implementations

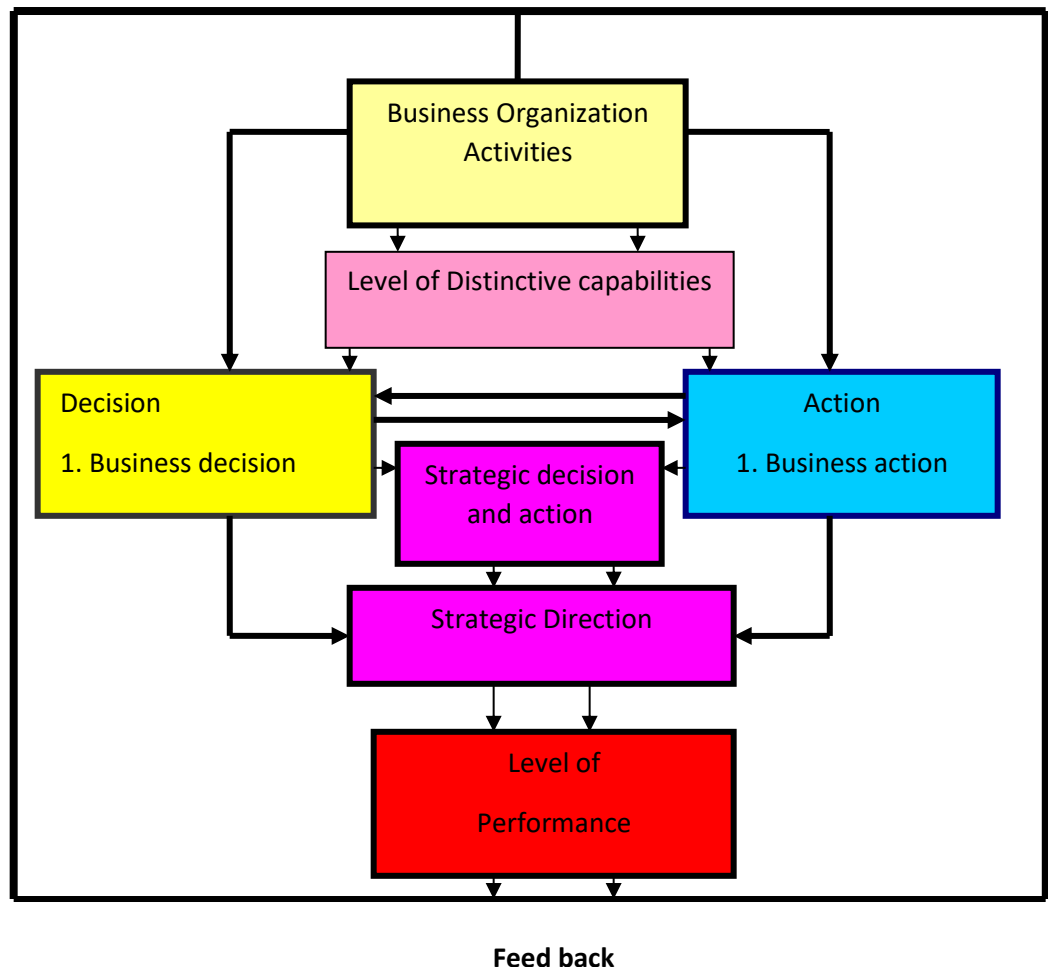
Harrisons, 2003 define strategic implementation as “managing the stakeholder relationships and organizational resources in a manner that moves the organization towards the successful execution of its strategies, consistent with its strategic direction” (Harrison, 2003 p.19). Implementing strategies successfully means matching the planned and the realizing strategies, with the aim to reach the organizational vision (Hashim, 2008). The components of strategy implementation are communication, interpretation, adoption and action.

It is a paradigm where budgets are allocated and procedures are laid down according to the formulated plan. This phase is the most difficult part of strategy process that is how to implementing the strategy. Based on the review of literature of strategic management and public relations, so many strategies that have been formulated and implemented but fail to arrived at the objectives.. How to generate successful strategy in public relations?

However “there has been surprisingly little work that has explicitly examined the link between the processes by which strategic decision are made and their influence on strategy” (Maritan and Schendel, 1997, p. 259). It is very important for every businessman, either owners or managers to know and understand the linkage between strategy process and the outcomes of it to maintain their competitiveness in the market. The famous word of Pettigrew “the what, why and how outcomes” must be systematically addressed. (Pettigrew, 1997, p.340). The absent of linkages to the outcomes will expose the implementation of strategy to be in a highly risky situation. It is accepted that companies often fail to turn strategy into action due to lack of aligned performance measures (Bourne, M., Mills, J., Wilcox, M., Neely, A., Platts, K., 2000). In order to overcome these limitations, we must have the capabilities of doing it. Although there is a lot of research on the application of strategic management in business processes but there are some limitations such as lack of linkages to the outcomes, need to focus on certain discrete decisions as compared to the actual decisions and actions, concentration on single processes level rather than involvement on the whole processes of strategic management (Ahmad, S., 2005). All these limitations need to be addressed. In order to overcome these limitations, we must have the capabilities of doing it. These capabilities must be superior to other competitors and Wheelen and Hunger calls it as distinctive capabilities (2012). Figure 1 illustrate the flow of the decision making process and how the decision and action can generate strategic decisions and actions.

d) Evaluation and Control

Evaluation and control, is the final part of the strategic management process. It provides the necessary feedback on whether the formulated strategies have been successfully implemented (by keeping track of progress towards the objectives); strategies have been formulated correctly in the first place (by measuring business results as well as customer and employee satisfaction). They also provide a basis for rewarding and promoting success. Organizations must measure the performance of individuals, teams, business units and processes against mutually defined objectives. The criteria used must be directly related to the reasons for measurement and represent a careful balance between efficiency (doing things right), effectiveness (doing the right things) and evolution (the ability to adapt to change and sustain a competitive position). This performance measurement framework should focus continuously on efficiency issues.



Source: Ahmad (2005)

Figure 1. Flow of the decision making process

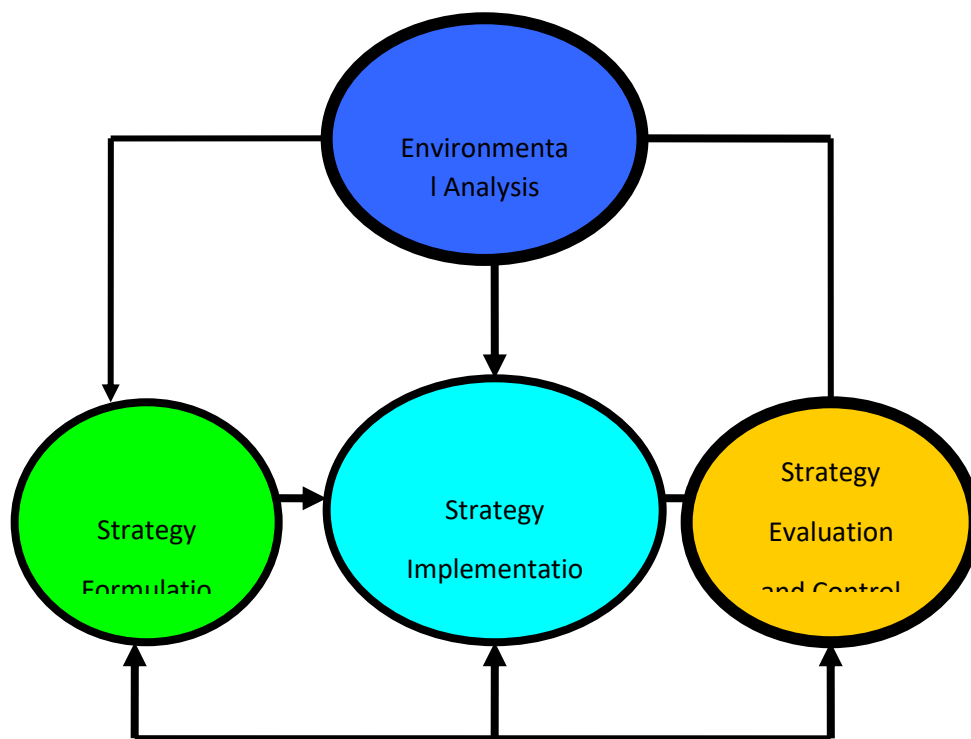
Performance measurement and evaluation must be communicated openly throughout the organization (Hashim, 2004). This is where the role of public relation is required. Proper recordings should be done and comparison of performance achieved among the members of the organization should be done continuously to ensure effectiveness of different business units or geographical regions against the objectives and goals defined.

Performance recording must be consistent so that management focus towards key objectives only, by doing this a high level of motivation is achieved, as no business unit or region wants to be seen to be falling behind target (Hashim and Mahajar, 2001). Measures to improve the co-operation of cross-functional teams must be established. Such a measurement approach relates time to the expected financial return of a project, thus enabling cross-functional teams to consider different product scenarios with respect to features, launch time and resource requirements. (Hashim et al. 2003).

The Importance of Strategy to Organization Performance

Organizations must constantly adapt to fast changing circumstances and, hence, move towards dynamic strategy development (Fearer and Chaharbaghi, 1997). Hence, strategy has become an important agenda not only in the past but also in the future that has dominated the attention of managers, consultants and management theorists as their main priority area in monitoring the overall firm performance. Viewed in this context strategy becomes an integral part of the ends-means hierarchy” (Thorelli 1977).

Every researcher will wonder why firms perform differently. Some economic theory predicted that the differences among rival firms will be eliminated over time by competition, but this is not always true (Zott, 2003). Empirical research has proven that differences among rival companies demonstrate the importance of industry effects on firm performance. Mac Gahan (1999) showed that business effects were approximately twice as important as industry effects. As a result a better refined can be generated “why do firm in the same industry perform differently?”(Zott, 2003).



Source: Adapted from Hashim (2008), “Strategic Management”, Thompson, Malaysia. Figure 2.

a) The Organization

An organization is established with a focus objective. It has its own specific vision, mission, objectives, strategies and policies. An organization provides a mechanism for formulating, implementing strategy and accomplishing specific objectives that cannot be achieved by individual working separately or by a strategic management process that is exactly identical (Hashim 2008).

b) The Management

These are the senior personnel who are responsible to make decision .The management are fully responsible to the overall performance and the survival of the organization. The three levels of management that are involved in the strategic management process are; board of directors, top management and middle management.

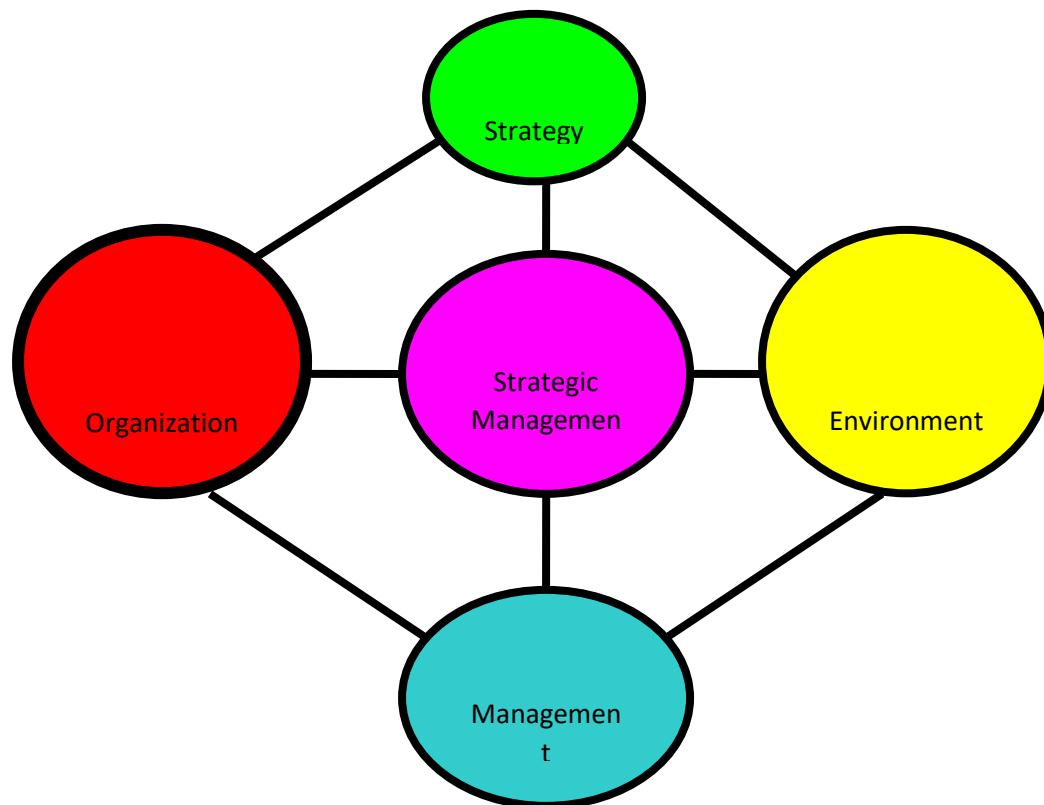
c) The Environment

Strategic management emphasizes on the important relationship between the organization and the environment. An organization gets most of its input from the environment. When the environment changes the organization must react accordingly to the changes in environment. Failing to do so will expose the organization to more critical situation in the future.

Which is important strategic management or public relations? Whether strategic management is a function of public relation? Or public relation is a function in strategic management? Or both strategic management and public relations are equally important to arrive at the objective or objectives of the organizations? Let us explore the meaning of these terminologies.

Crisis

Timothy Coombs (2007) consider crisis management is a critical organizational function. Failure can result in serious harm to stakeholders, losses for an organization, or end its very existence. Public relations practitioners are an integral part of crisis management teams. The best practices and lessons gleaned from knowledge and experience in crisis management would be very useful assets for those who are exposed to risk. Too many have been written about crisis management by both practitioners and researchers from many different disciplines making it a challenge to synthesize what should be done in managing the crisis.



Source: Hashim, M.K(2008) "Strategic Management", Thompson, Malaysia. Figure 3.

Timothy Coombs (2007) "A crisis is defined here as a significant threat to operations that can have negative consequences if not handled properly. In crisis management, the threat is the potential damage a crisis can inflict on an organization, its stakeholders, and an industry. A crisis can create three related threats: (1) public safety, (2) financial loss, and (3) reputation loss. Some crises, such as industrial accidents and product harm, can result in injuries and even loss of lives. Crises can create financial loss by disrupting operations, creating a loss of market share/purchase intentions, or spawning lawsuits related to the crisis. As Dilenschneider (2000) noted in *The Corporate Communications Bible*, all crises threaten to tarnish an organization's reputation. These three threats are interrelated. Injuries or deaths will result in financial and reputation loss while reputations have a financial impact on organizations.

Crisis management is a process designed to prevent or lessen the damage a crisis can inflict on an organization and its stakeholders. From the review of literature crisis management can be divided into three phases: (1) pre-crisis, (2) crisis response, and (3) post-crisis. The pre-crisis phase is concerned with prevention and preparation. The crisis response phase is when management must actually respond to a crisis. The post-crisis phase looks for ways to better prepare for the next crisis and fulfills commitments made during the crisis phase including follow-up information.

Public Relations

Amanda Forman (2001) contended that the history of public relations is mostly confined to the early half of the twentieth century; however there is evidence of the practice scattered through history. One notable practitioner was Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire whose efforts on behalf of Charles James Fox in the 18th century included press relations, lobbying and, with her friends, celebrity campaigning. In addition Campbell (1897) found that a number of American precursors to public relations are found in the form of publicists who specialized in promoting circuses, theatrical performances, and other public spectacles. In the United States, where public relations have its origins, many early public relations practices were developed in support of railroads. In fact, many scholars believe that the first appearance of the term "public relations" appeared in the *1897 Year Book of Railway Literature*. W. Joseph Campbell *1897 American journalism's exceptional year* – "The reference to "public relations" appears in the preface of *The Yearbook of Railway Literature* (Chicago: Railway Age, 1897)."

Public relation is one of the strategic function of management at the strategy implementation stage by which organizations acted and responses to the changes of environment aimed to arrive at their objectives in a specific time frame.

Public relations (PR) are the practice of managing the flow of information between an individual or an organization and the public. Public relations provide an organization or individual exposure to their audiences using topics of public interest and news items that do not require direct payment. The aim of public relations by a company often is to persuade the public, investors, partners, employees, and other stakeholders to maintain a certain point of view about it, its leadership, products, or of political decisions. Common activities include speaking at conferences, winning industry awards, working with the press, and employee communication. (Wikipedia).

Ivy Lee and Edward Louis Bernays established the first definition of public relations in the early 1900s as "a management function, which tabulates public attitudes, defines the policies, procedures, and interests of an organization... followed by executing a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance." In August 1978, the World Assembly of Public Relations Associations defined the field as "the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences,

counseling organizational leaders, and implementing planned programs of action, which will serve both the organization and the public interest.”

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) defined public relations in 1982 as: “Public relations help an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other.”

In 2011 and 2012, the PRSA developed a crowd-sourced definition: “Public relations are a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.”

Public relations can also be defined simply as the practice of managing communication between an organization and its publics (Grunig 1984).

The European view of public relations notes that besides a relational form of interactivity there is also a reflective paradigm that is concerned with publics and the public sphere; not only with relational, which can in principle be private, but also with public consequences of organizational behavior.

Grunig, J. E. (2009) contended that the strategic management paradigm emphasizes two-way communication of many kinds to provide publics a voice in management decisions and to facilitate dialogue between management and publics both before and after decisions are made. He further emphasized that the strategic management paradigm does not exclude traditional public relations activities such as media relations and the dissemination of information. Instead it broadens the number and types of media and communication activities and fits them into a framework of research and listening. As a result, messages reflect the information needs of publics as well as the advocacy needs of organizations.

Cutlip, Center, and Broom (2000, originally 1985) have defined public relations as: “The management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends” (p. 1).

Although acknowledged for their contributions to the success of strategic implementation in an organization the review of previous studies reveals that public relations confront various obstacles and constraints in their activities. Findings of prior research have identified a variety of problems which affected not only their business operations but also their performance. Past studies have found a number of problems associated to the way in which public relations are managed. Some of the findings are the potential of making the profession as more global, strategic myopia, two-way communication and interactive, symmetrical or dialogical, and socially responsible. Besides that, many practitioners are abusing the new approach that is digital media for dumping messages to the public for personal or political interest.

Public relations have long been a professional means in propagating information for the purpose of achieving organizational objective. Of the numerous problems reported in the previous studies, the role of strategic management in public relations has been identified as imperative in achieving their objectives. Grunig, J.E. (2009), *The Forbes Group*, 2012, Routledge/Taylor and Francis, 2011. Ann Marie van den Hurk, (2012)

The literature also indicates that studies were conducted to identify the factors that contributed to the success of public relation through strategic management. The review of the findings of these studies suggests several factors. Some of the factors identified in the studies included; public relation skills and knowledge, effective public relations functions, approach in public relations, and strategic public relation. Grunig, J.E. (2009), *The Forbes Group*, 2012, Routledge/Taylor and Francis, 2011 (Hurk, 2012)

Strategic management is important to public relations in achieving its objectives. As one of the important role in strategic implementation to assist the organizations to arrives at its objective. Besides that strategic public relations will enable the members of the organizations and also the outsider to a better understanding of the strategic direction of the organization regardless profit or non profit organizations. In profit organizations strategic public relations plays a significant role in the marketing campaign which involves not only identifying the needs of customers, but also fulfilling those needs with the right products or services. For business organizations in order to gain the benefits from the marketing process, they need to understand the marketing process and its various activities (Cyr and Gray, 2010; Walsh & Lipinski, 2009; Simpson, Padmore, Taylor & Hughes, 2006; and Kotler, 1999).

Identifying and fulfilling the needs and wants of customers with the right products and services requires owners business organizations to understand and make decisions involving marketing activities such as market research, product and product line, price, place of purchase and promotion. It is also important for the owners and managers to know that each of these marketing activities varies with the nature of the business and the type of industry in which it operates. More importantly, they need to understand that an effective and total public relation effort is required to ensure the stability as well as the profitable growth of the organization.

Past studies have also provided evidence to suggest the relevance and importance of strategic public relations. For instance, strategic management can assist the business organizations to recognize the opportunities in the market. The market opportunities would include; the need to fulfill short supply of certain products, the need to improve existing product or service, and the need to supply new product or service. Having identified the opportunity and the need to fulfill their targeted objective, business organizations would then need to develop and implement their actions plan.

The strategic action for public relations can be divided into four stages such as the followings:

a) Table I illustrate the Stage One: Environmental Assessment

Strategic action 1	Assessing the Issues and Problems before formulating the public relation action plan
Strategic action 2	Assessing the Organizations distinctive competencies and strategic Resources
Strategic action 3	Assessing the needs and wants of the target groups.

b) Table II illustrate the Stage Two: Strategic assessment

Strategic action 4	Identify the organization's objectives (SMART) and align with the strategic decision
Strategic action 5	Formulate public relation action plan and align with the organization's strategic decisions
Strategic action 6	Identify the most effective channel of Communication

c) Table III illustrate the Stage Three: Implementing the Action Plan

Strategic action 7	Implement the strategic public relation plan by choosing the right techniques and tactics with adequate budget
Strategic action 8	Procedures must be aligning with the action plan
Strategic action 9	Strategic orientation in implementation of the public relations actions must be based on structure follow the strategy

d) Table IV illustrate the Stage Four: Evaluation and corrective actions

Strategic action 10	Focus on the performance of the organizations and exercise alternative course of action
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e) Table V The Strategic Action Plan for public Relations

	Environmental Assessment	Strategic Assessment	Implementing The Action Plan	Evaluation And Corrective action
Strategic Action 1	Assessing the Issues and Problems before formulating the public relation action plan	Identify the organization's objectives (SMART) and align with the strategic decision	Implement the strategic public relation plan by choosing the right techniques and tactics with adequate budget	Focus on the performance of the organizations and exercise alternative course of action
Strategic Action 2	Assessing the Organizations distinctive competencies and strategic Resources	Formulate public relation action plan and align with the organization's strategic decisions.	Procedures must be aligning with the action plan	
Strategic Action 3	Assessing the needs and wants of the target groups	Identify the most effective channel of Communication	Strategic orientation in implementation of the public relations actions must be based on structure follow the strategy	

Source: Ahmad, S., (2012)

a) Stage One: Environmental Assessment

The **first strategic action** in the environmental assessment is assessing the issues and problems that arise in the organization. During crisis so many issues arises and needs special attention of the management. This is the time where the unions pressure the management with many demands such as bonuses, salary adjustment and promotions to a better scope of work and the management teams must be firm in their decisions.

The **next strategic action** is assessing the organizations distinctive competencies and strategic resources to be match with the opportunities and threat in the external environment.

Public relations department must be well informed about potential threat to the organizations and also potentials that the company will recover soon. The top management of public relations must be competent enough to address all the issues and problems which are related to their organizations job functions.

The third strategic action is to assess the target groups needs and wants. At this stage all the external factors which are uncontrollable in nature such as political stability, economic issues, socio-cultural issues, technological issues and ecological issues must addressed amicably.

Look on the possibilities of converting the threat into opportunities. Every issues must be given the top priority .Identify the target groups or audiences and get the details of their needs and wants. Besides that their ethnicity, gender, socio-cultural and level of educations must be addressed accordingly. Different location might generate different issues and problems.

b) Stage Two: Strategic Approaches

Strategic action 4: Identify the organization's objectives (SMART) and align with the strategic decision. The actions must be focused on the strategic position of the organization by identifying whether the organization is a leader in the industry, follower or nicher.

The acronym of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Timely) must be addressed professionally and to be widely spread and understood by the members of the organizations.

Strategic action 5: Formulate public relation action plan and align with the organization's strategic decisions. Lists of actions plan to be executed and align it accordingly with the objective of the organization.

Strategic action 6: Identify the most Effective channel of Communication Select the most suitable and effective channel of communication. In deciding on which channel to be chosen the information on the target to be focused is important. This information includes the ethnicity of the group, gender, level of education, age and their locations. This information must be match with the AIDA concept. (Attention, Interest, Desire, Actions). In addition the most effective channel is the channel which contributed to the highest above average return to the organization through increase in sales volume, profit achievement and repurchase of the product and services.

c) Stage Three: Implement the Action Plan

Strategic action 7: Implement the strategic public relation plan by choosing the right techniques and tactics with adequate budget. At this stage sufficient budget will enable the best technology to be utilized. However this technology must be able to generate the above average return to the organizations by reflecting in the strong balance sheet. Tactics will decide on the timing of the public relations actions plan and where the execution will take place.

Strategic action 8: Procedures must be aligning with the action plan. Standard operating procedures and work instructions must be aligned with the public relations action plan and hence must be aligned to the objective of the organizations.

Strategic action 9: Strategic orientation for the public relations actions must be based on structure should follow the strategy. At this stage the organizational structure should follow the action plan that has been formulated. Hence the strategic orientation is structure should follow strategy. The corporate culture, policies and practices need to be aligned to the strategy hence aligning to the strategic direction of the organization.

d) Stage Four: Evaluation and corrective actions

Strategic action 10: Focus on the performance of the organizations and alternative course of action. Monitoring and controlling the performance of the organizations by continuous Observations and taking corrective actions immediately when and where necessary.

Conclusions

The role of strategic management in public relations cannot be denied. The discussions presented in this article clearly indicate that strategic public relation is a function in the strategic implementation process. Although organization cannot predict their future accurately but from the review of literature strategic action for public relation plays an important role during crisis.

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