

informed and supported by public relations. Finally, that the public relations contributes fully and appropriately at all levels of the organisation. As Sir David Nicholson, former Chief Executive of the NHS, stated: 'In future I expect senior leaders and senior professional communicators to make the communication process an integral part of their institution, so that every organisation within the NHS becomes a "communicating organisation".'²⁰

In conclusion, we propose that the strategic public relations leader undertakes four roles within the organisation:

Orienter – societal: The communicator as protector of the organisation, ensuring that the licence to operate and its societal mandate is maintained by keeping the system orientated in the direction that maintains stakeholder support. Articulation and living the brand values is critical and communication has an essential role to play by informing, involving and engaging with societal-level stakeholders to maintain the legitimacy of the brand.

Navigator – corporate: Ensuring that stakeholder perspectives are brought into resource decision-making, ensuring that relational and reputational capital and cultural alignment is factored in as a key resource and integral to the organisation navigating a way through conflicting stakeholder demands is a key role.

Catalyst – value chain: Embedding a value chain, stakeholder perspective in the design, creation and delivery of products and services requires the communication function to provide vision-critical intelligence, engagement capability and evaluation to ensure the delivery of organisational objectives. Here the function is as catalyst for the organisation ensuring values are lived and changing realities rather than changing perceptions.

Implementer – functional: In this technical role the communication function designs and delivers (or commissions) appropriate communication activities and programmes which will deliver societal, corporate, stakeholder and service-user objectives.

These roles represent the essence of strategic public relations and are relevant whether the practitioner is operating in the private, public or not-for-profit sectors; a large, medium or small organisation; or in a local, national or international setting. Although nuances and shades of emphasis will obviously apply depending on the situation, the fundamentals remain the same for all practitioners operating at a senior level. The rest of the book will now focus on how professionals can go about applying this strategic model in their own organisation, a journey that will include discussion of the necessary skills, behaviours and mindset required to put the necessary theory into practice.

Notes

- 1 See the NHS guidance document NHS (2009). *The Communicating Organisation: Using Communication to Support the Development of High-performing Organisations*. London: NHS. Available at www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_110342.pdf.
- 2 Broom, G.M. and Smith, G.D. (1979). Testing the practitioner's impact on clients, *Public Relations Review*, 5(3), 47–59.
- 3 Dozier, D.M. and Broom, G.M. (1995). Evolution of the manager role in public relations practice. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 7(1) 3–26.
- 4 See, for example, the work of Steyn in Steyn, B. (2009). The strategic role of public relations is strategic reflection: a South African research stream. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 53(4), 516–52, and Moss and colleagues, DeSanto, B. and Moss, D.A. (2004). Rediscovering what PR managers do: rethinking the measurement of managerial behavior in the public relations context. *Journal of Communication Management*, 9(2), 179–96; Moss, D.A. and Green, R. (2001). Re-examining the manager's role in public relations: what management and public relations research teaches us. *Journal of Communications Management*, 6(2), 118–32; Moss, D.A., Newman, A. and DeSanto, B. (2005). What do communications managers do? Defining and refining the core elements of management in a public relations/communication context. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 82, 873–90; Moss, D.A., Wurnaby, G. and Newman, A. (2000). Public relations practitioner role enactment at the senior management level within UK companies. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 12(4), 277–307.
- 5 Steyn, B. (2007). Contribution of public relations to organisational strategy formulation. In Toth, E.L. (ed.) *The Future of Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- 6 Starck, K. and Kruckeberg, D. (2001). Public relations and community: a reconstructed theory revisited. In Heath, R.L. (ed.), *The Sage Handbook of Public Relations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- 7 Laurati, F. (2008). Institutionalising Public Relations. Plenary Panel, European Public Relations Education and Research Association, Milan, October.
- 8 NHS (2012). About the NHS: Overview. Retrieved 29 May 2012 from www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/thenhs/about/Pages/overview.aspx.
- 9 Lawson, N. (1992). *The View from No. 11: Memoirs of a Tory Radical*. London: Bantam Press.
- 10 For more information about brand complexity see Brakus, J.J., Schmitt, B.H. and Zarantonello, L. (2009). Brand experience: what is it? How is it measured? Does it affect loyalty? *Journal of Marketing*, 73, 52–68 and de Chernatony, L. (2009). Towards the holy grail of defining 'brand'. *Marketing Theory*, 9, 101–5.
- 11 NHS (2012). About the NHS: Overview (see above).
- 12 The NHS Constitution for England (2012 Edition) can be found at www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/en/documents/digitalasset/dh_132958.pdf.
- 13 Gregory, A. (2007). Involving stakeholders in developing corporate brands. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 23(1–2), 59–73.
- 14 NHS (2009). The communicating organisation: using communication to support the development of high-performing organisations. London: NHS. Available at www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_110342.pdf.
- 15 For more on staff as brand representatives see Maxwell, R. and Knox, S. (2009). Motivating employees to 'live the brand': a comparative case study of employer brand attractiveness within the firm. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 25, 893–907 and Smythe, J. (2007). *The CEO: Chief Engagement Officer*. Aldershot: Gower.