**CHAPTER 1: WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATIONS?**

**OBJECTIVES**

After reading this chapter students should:

1. Be familiar with the global scope of the public relations industry.
2. Have a good definition of public relations.
3. Understand that public relations is a process, not an event.
4. Know the difference between public relations, journalism, advertising, and marketing.
5. Assess the skills needed for a public relations career and what salary to expect.

### SUGGESTED PROJECTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter introduces students to the general concept of public relations and firmly plants the idea that it is a multifaceted field much more complex than the average person perceives it to be. In addition, Chapter 1 touches on a number of topics, which are explored in much greater detail in subsequent chapters. It is assumed that this course is the student's first formal introduction to the field of public relations, so class discussion and projects could include the following:

1. Ask students to conduct a job search for entry-level jobs in public relations. Have the students share their jobs with the class and then lead a discussion on the themes observed with qualifications, salaries, and job responsibilities. Ask the students if they are surprised with any of the themes that emerged.
2. Lead a discussion about the importance of writing skills in regard to career success. Ask students what they can do to improve their writing skills, outside of the classroom, in preparation for a career in public relations. You may want to offer possibilities if students are having difficulty thinking of things; visiting the school writing lab, writing for the school newspaper, offering to edit friend’s papers, keeping a blog, or offering to contribute to an organizational newsletter or a monthly town paper are a few ways that students can get more writing experience and as a result, improve their writing skills.
3. Ask class members to clip newspaper articles that mention public relations. In what context was the term "public relations" used in the article? Did class members come across any reference to such terms as "corporate communications," "public affairs," or "strategic communications"?
4. Have students conduct several “man on the street” interviews by asking interview participants what public relations is and what public relations professionals do.