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## PR Conversations

### Global opinions on public relations and its impact on society, from local perspectives.

#### A collaborative blog.

#### [Bad news friends! Public Relations courses in Universities are unnecessary, writes the Princeton Review...](#)

by Toni Muzi Falconi - August 26, 2007 · Filed under [Crisis Management](#), [Education](#), [Public Relations](#), [Professional Associations](#), [The Profession](#), [Research](#), [Society](#), [Culture](#), [Practitioners](#), [Comment](#), [Debate](#), [Reputation](#)

I read the other day in Jack O'Dwyer's web site a piece on [this](#) recent text from the **Princeton Review**, and I wonder if it should not stimulate the more concerned and aware segment of the American public relations community (and not only the American one...) into asking itself what is wrong with its current approach and how and when it intends to correct it.

If, [according](#) to a 2005 **Harris Interactive poll**, 85% of consumers in the United States agree that *public relations professionals may sometimes take advantage of the media to present misleading information that is favourable to their clients*, and that 79% believe *they are only interested in disseminating information that helps their clients make money*, while the above mentioned **Journal** writes that *a public relations specialist is an image shaper, that their job is to generate positive publicity for their client*, that, besides many other amenities, *though some colleges offer a degree...most industry professionals agree its unnecessary and that*

*any major that teaches you how to read and write intelligently will lay good foundation for a career in public relations.*

Isn't all this something which blatantly contradicts what we say and presumably believe we are all about?

In a brief email Jack adds that *'the Princeton Review, while headed since 1981 by a Princeton grad, has no connection with Princeton. However, it is hugely influential in the U.S. with its guides to colleges, help with tests, advice to students and prospective students, etc. About half of all prospective college students consult it'*.

I dare not imply (but the thought is legitimate...) that a comparative analysis in other countries might possibly lead to significantly different conclusions.... nevertheless there is no doubt that if this represents a fairly reliable spectrum of opinion (ranging from the general public to leading academic thought), in a country which is considered the world leader of the profession....we could be entitled to think that in today's world many tens of thousands of scholars and educators, various hundreds of thousands of students, and at least those 250 thousand professionals (out of the estimated 3 million) who belong to associations which (at least publicly...) portray quite a different identity of the profession, are definitely on the wrong track.

Of course, I agree that one should not take a random poll put it together with a 'quick and dirty' description written by god-knows-who and jump at conclusions.... but I am sure you will agree that, rather than for thought only, for us there is sufficient food for decision and action....instead of shrugging our shoulders and saying, as we often do when we do not like what we hear.. 'oh, had the questions been formulated differently the results would be others' or 'it is clear that the Princeton Journal does not have a clue of what public relations is about'.

Such reaction would not be acceptable because:

a) Harris Interactive prepared those questions on behalf of the US Public Relations Society and they had been presumably double checked;

b) the Princeton Review bears the name of one of the most reputed word academic institutions.

Thoughts anyone??



## Comments

1. [David Reich "my 2 cents"](#)  
August 26th, 2007 | [7:38 pm](#)

Thanks for pointing this out. I had missed it in O'Dwyer's.

I cannot believe what bad and irresponsible advice The **Princeton** Review has given. As I recently said at my blog, better education is essential for the p.r. profession. And not only should future p.r. people be learning about the field, but it's just as important that people going into other business disciplines have at least some familiarity with what p.r. does and how it works. If accountants, economists, and especially marketing majors have some understanding of p.r., they will respect and utilize it as they advance in their careers and become CEOs.

So, while it may not be necessary to major in p.r. in order to enter the field, p.r. should be part of every business student's curriculum.

I plan to post about this and I'll also drop a note to Jack O'Dwyer. I just can't believe this.

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