



# Global Body of Knowledge Project (GBOK)

Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management

## Early career or entry-level roles & GBOK elements

Two types of work were identified by the research - technical or managerial - and twelve roles typical of an entry level or early career in public relations:

- Account or client management
- Strategic planning
- Public relations program planning
- Project management
- Media relations
- Social media relations
- Issue management
- Crisis management
- Internal or employee communication
- Special event, conferences and meetings
- Community relations
- Stakeholder relations

(For ease of receiving comments during the consultation period elements of the GBOK are marked with a letter (e.g. K, S, A, B) and a number (e.g. K1). Objectives or categories of tasks and functions are indicated with a capital letter).

**To excel in these early career and entry-level roles, a public relations professional should have:**

**Knowledge (K) of:**

### **A. Research, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation**

- K1 Measurement and evaluation approaches vis-a-vis objectives and outcomes
- K2 Uses of research and forecasting
- K3 Research methods and concepts
- K4 Proactive and reactive communications approaches
- K5 Stakeholder analysis, influential individuals or organizations
- K6 Cultural preferences of audiences
- K7 Planning and implementation techniques
- K8 Sequencing and rollout approaches
- K9 Evaluation methods
- K10 Best practices in public relations

### **B. Ethics and Law**

- K1 Ethical principles, issues and framework
- K2 Codes of practice
- K3 Legal requirements and issues
- K4 Ethical behaviour, transparency, professionalism, governance considerations

### **C. Crisis Communication Management**

- K1 Identification and evolution of a crisis and its distinct stages
- K2 Communication approaches and need for constant and immediate communication

#### **D. Communication Models and Theories**

- K1 Communication models and public relations theories
- K2 Communication and persuasion concepts and strategies
- K3 Relationships and relationship-building techniques

#### **E. History of and Current Issues in Public Relations**

- K1 Societal trends and trends in modern engagement tools, transparent communications
- K2 The effect and impact of current and emerging technology on communications models
- K3 Multi-cultural and global issues
- K4 Various world social, political, economic and historical frameworks
- K5 Public relations history, its origins and evolution
- K6 Public relations and other related disciplines such as publicity, advertising, marketing, public affairs, lobbying, investor relations branding, social networking

#### **F. Business Literacy**

- K1 Marketing and finance
- K2 The business case for diversity
- K3 Organizational change and development
- K4 Management concepts and theories
- K5 Organizational issues, internal and external, including business drivers for clients and employees
- K6 Second language skills and cultural awareness

#### **G. Media and Social Channels, use of Technology**

- K1 Knowledge of distribution channels, audience preferences and limitation of channels
- K2 Knowledge of communication tools, including knowledge of social media
- K3 Media needs and requirements

### **Skills and Abilities**

**An early career or entry-level professional should have these foundation skills, abilities and personal attributes:**

#### **Foundation Skills and Abilities (FSA)**

##### **Writing, oral and visual communications abilities**

- FSA1 Writing proficiency at the basic level
- FSA2 Writing ability at an advanced and specialized level, informative and persuasive writing
- FSA3 Mastery of language in written and oral communication in one language and preferably second language skills
- FSA4 Sensitive interpersonal communication
- FSA5 Public speaking and presentation
- FSA6 Digital and visual literacy

##### **Abilities and Personal Attributes**

- FSA7 Critical listening skills
- FSA8 Has global awareness and monitors global news and issues
- FSA9 Management of information and knowledge
- FSA10 Critical thinking, problem solving and negotiation
- FSA11 Management of communication
- FSA12 Technological and visual literacy

- FSA13 Applying contextual, cross-cultural and diversity considerations  
FSA14 Ability to set strategy and contribute to the strategic direction of the organization

**In addition, the following skills and abilities, although not considered essential and universal, are deemed necessary to practice and excel at the entry level:**

#### **A. Communication Models and Theories**

- SA1 Demonstrates familiarity with communication theory and its application in research, analysis, and audience prioritization, developing messages, spokesperson identification, establishing trust  
SA2 Ability to build and maintain relationships with key audiences and stakeholders

#### **B. History and Current Issues in Public Relations**

- SA1 Ability to identify current and emerging trends in technology and social media and its impact on communication objectives  
SA2 Differentiates between public relations and advertising, marketing and other disciplines

#### **C. Research, Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation**

- SA1 Ability to apply theoretical and applied primary and secondary research, formal and informal, qualitative and quantitative methods  
SA2 Community identification. Ability to identify and decide on population and sample techniques. Ability to conduct environmental scanning and stakeholder analysis  
SA3 Ability to design instruments for research  
SA4 Analytical skills. Ability to undertake stakeholder analysis. Ability to understand and interpret data and results  
SA5 Forecasting. Ability to use results of research, identify trends and link to communication objectives, set measurement targets, outcomes and other metrics  
SA6 Ability to identify influencers and institutions, organizations and groups to support objectives  
SA7 Planning. Ability to execute, prioritize and sequence communications to identified audiences  
SA8 Implementation. Ability to plan production of documents, messages, platform and campaign rollouts  
SA9 Measurement. Ability to determine if goals and objectives were met and the extent to which results and outcomes have been accomplished

#### **D. Ethics and Law (see also section on Behaviours)**

- SA1 Ability to identify key ethical principles and elements of decision-making as well as barriers to ethical communication in public relations  
SA2 Demonstrates an understanding of national, regional and local laws, as well as governance policies and procedures of organization or client

#### **E. Organizational and Business Literacy**

- SA1 Ability to identify and, if called upon, manage issues  
SA2 Demonstrates an understanding, and importance of, internal communications, client relations  
SA3 Ability to manage programs and resources

#### **F. Media and Social Channels, Digital Literacy**

- SA1 Ability to plan and use available channels to distribute communications and manage issues with media or individual

- SA2 Data Management. Ability to analyse data, identify trends and engage audiences on social media
- SA3 Digital literacy. Demonstrates an understanding of limitations and possibilities of media and social channel
- SA4 Ability to curate content and provide insights on processing information

### **G. Crisis Communications**

- SA1 Ability to monitor issues that are of critical importance to organization
- SA2 Demonstrates the ability to interpret and react quickly at the onset of a crisis
- SA3 Ability to map out communication at each phase of a crisis and understands importance of crisis relative to reputation

## **Mid-career or senior roles & GBOK elements**

Our research identified the following roles as typical of a more experienced professional and of senior professionals:

- Reputation management
- Government relations and public affairs
- Evaluation and measurement
- Definition of values and guiding principles Building and managing trust
- Advanced environmental scanning and trend identification
- Evaluative research
- Building and managing trust
- Issue identification

**To excel in these roles, a public relations professional should have:**

### **Knowledge (K) of:**

#### **A. Research, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation**

- K1 Measurement and evaluation approaches vis-a-vis objectives and outcomes
- K2 Uses of research and forecasting
- K3 Research methods and concepts
- K4 Proactive and reactive communications approaches
- K5 Stakeholder analysis, influential individuals or organizations
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- K9 Evaluation methods
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#### **B. Ethics and Law**

- K1 Ethical principles, issues and framework
- K2 Codes of practice
- K3 Legal requirements and issues
- K4 Ethical behaviour, transparency, professionalism, governance considerations

#### **C. Crisis Communication Management**

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- K5 Public relations history, its origins and evolution
- K6 Public relations and other related disciplines such as publicity, advertising, marketing, public affairs, lobbying, investor relations, branding, social networking

#### **F. Business Literacy**

- K1 Marketing and finance
- K2 The business case for diversity
- K3 Organizational change and development
- K4 Management concepts and theories
- K5 Organizational issues, internal and external, including business drivers for clients and employees
- K6 Second language skills and cultural awareness

#### **G. Media and Social Channels, use of Technology**

- K1 Knowledge of distribution channels, audience preferences and limitation of channels
- K2 Knowledge of communication tools, including knowledge of social media
- K3 Media needs and requirements

**Experienced professional mastery (at an advanced level) of the following:**

#### **Senior Foundation Skills and Abilities (SFSA)**

##### **Communications Abilities (writing, oral and visual)**

- SFSA1 Writing ability at an advanced and specialized level, informative and persuasive writing. Ability to write for diverse applications and platforms. Visual communication skills
- SFSA2 Mastery of language in written and oral communication in one language and preferably second language skills
- SFSA3 Sensitive interpersonal communication, emotional intelligence
- SFSA4 Higher level of public speaking and presentation skills. Persuasive, clear and articulate

##### **Abilities and Personal Attributes**

- SFSA5 Critical listening skills
- SFSA6 Has global awareness and tracks global news and issues
- SFSA7 Management of information
- SFSA8 Contextual awareness
- SFSA9 Leadership qualities. Innovation and flexibility
- SFSA10 Problem-solving, critical thinking and adaptability
- SFSA11 Strategic management of communication
- SFSA12 Technological and visual literacy

SFSA13 Applying cross-cultural and diversity considerations

SFSA14 Meeting facilitation skills

In addition, the following **senior skills and abilities (SSA)**, although not considered essential and universal, are deemed necessary to practice and excel at the more senior levels:

#### **A. Research, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation**

SSA1 **Research:** Uses a variety of research tools to gather information about the employer or client, industry and relevant issues. Investigates stakeholders' understanding of the product, organization and issues. Applies research findings

SSA2 **Analytical skills:** Continuously analyzes the business environment that includes the employer or client, stakeholders, employees and suppliers. Ability to filter and process large amount of data and to extract valuable information for decision-making. Objectively interprets data and has ability to gather key insights from data points

SSA3 **Strategic thinking and management:** Synthesizes relevant information to determine what is needed to position the client, organization, or issue appropriately in its market/environment, especially with regard to changing business, political, or cultural climates

SSA4 **Planning:** Sets goals and objectives based on research findings. Distinguishes among goals, objectives, strategies and tactics. Distinguishes organizational/operational goals and strategies from communication goals and strategies. Aligns project goals with organizational mission and goals. Identifies specific desired PR outcomes. Establishes budget and strategic direction for communication in relation to organizational goals. Establishes communication metrics to evaluate success. Establishes rollout sequence.

SSA5 **Audience Identification:** Differentiates among publics, markets, audiences and stakeholders. Identifies appropriate audiences and the opinions, beliefs, attitudes, cultures, and values of each. Assesses interests of influential institutions, groups and individuals. Identifies appropriate communication channels/vehicles for reaching target audiences. Identifies communities including those formed through technologies. Understands conflicting aims and areas of mutual interest of individual constituent groups (e.g., investors, governmental agencies, unions, consumers) with the organization

SSA6 **Diversity:** Identifies and respects a range of differences among target audiences. Researches and addresses the cultural preferences and/or needs and barriers to communication of target audiences. Develops culturally and linguistically appropriate strategies and tactics. Works to be inclusive

SSA7 **Implementation:** Understands sequence of events and communication actions. Develops timelines and budget. Assigns responsibilities. Executes planned strategies and tactics. Demonstrates project management skills

SSA8 **Evaluation and measurement:** Determines if goals and objectives of public relations program were met and the extent to which the results or outcomes of public relations programs are supporting organizational goals. Uses evaluation results for future planning

#### **B. Applying Professionalism, Ethics and Law**

SSA1 **Ethical behaviour:** Understands commonly accepted standards for professional behaviour. Recognizes ethical dilemmas. Identifies solutions to ethical dilemmas and demonstrates ethical conduct

SSA2 **Democratic principles:** Understands free speech as a foundational principle for public relations in democratic societies. Distinguishes between political and corporate speech. Able to articulate conditions for libel, slander, defamation and defenses thereof. Understands impact of digital record on the status of public and private figures and organizations

SSA3 Privacy issues: Understands prevailing laws regarding privacy identity protection, ethical implications and digital record keeping. Effectively advises organization on the strategic adoption and effective use of technology for listening to, communicating with and engaging priority publics

### **C. Managing Issues and Crisis Communications**

SSA1 Issues and risk management: Identifies potential or emerging issues that may impact and effect on the organization. Identifies potential risks to the organization or client. Analyzes probability and potential impact of risk. Ensures organization develops appropriate legal, ethical and reputational response plans. Designs and deploys and leads response to crisis

SSA2 Crisis management: Understands the roles and responsibilities of public relations at the pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis phases. Communicates the implications of each of these phases and understands the messaging needs of each. Looks beyond current organizational mindset and explores solutions

SSA3 Counsel to management: Understands the importance of providing counsel to the management team or client regarding issues, risks and crises. Looks beyond the current organizational mindset and explores solutions. Considers and accommodates all views on an issue or crisis. Factors views into communication strategy

### **D. Understanding Communication Models, Theories and History of the Profession**

SSA1 Communication/public relations models and theories: Demonstrates familiarity with public relations and social science theories and research that guides planning, prioritizing audiences, developing messages, selecting spokespeople, establishing credibility and trust

SSA2 Barriers to communication: Understands how different audiences interpret messages and messengers. Understands barriers that prevent changes to knowledge, attitude and behaviour. Understands how semantics, cultural norms, timing, context and related factors affect the communication results. Understands that greater transparency leads to greater trust

SSA3 Knowledge of the field: Defines public relations and differentiates among related concepts (e.g. publicity, advertising, marketing, propaganda, press agency, public affairs, lobbying, investor relations, social networking, and branding). Identifies transformations in the practice and major trends in the development of public relations

### **E. Leading the Public Relations Function**

SSA1 Values and character: Understands the role that public relations plays at the strategic level. Provides advice and counsel to management. Helps to shape the organization's values and character

SSA2 Business literacy: Understands and explains how employers/clients generate revenue and how their operations are conducted. Identifies relevant business drivers and how they affect the business. Understands how the public relations function contributes to the financial success of the organization and its 'license to operate'

SSA3 Resource management: Takes into account human, financial and organizational resources. Prepares, justifies and controls budgets for departments, programs, clients or agencies. Understands what information needs to be collected, evaluated, disseminated, and retained. Is able to obtain information using innovative methods and appropriately store it, so that it can be retrieved easily for future use

SSA4 Organizational structure and resources: Recognizes chain of command, including boards of directors, senior leadership, middle management, direct line supervision, line positions, and each level's distinctions. Knows how organizations are horizontally and vertically structured. Identifies which divisions within an organization need to be involved in

any communication program. Understands and accommodates organizational governance imperatives. Recognizes the relationships among PR, legal, marketing, finance and IT, etc., as essential management functions

SSA5 Problem solving and decision-making: Approaches problems with sound reasoning and logic. Distinguishes between relevant and irrelevant information. Evaluates opportunities for resolution. Devises appropriate courses of action based on context and facts. Makes sound, well-informed and objective decisions in a timely manner. Assesses the implications of these decisions

SSA6 Leadership skills: Influences others to achieve desired goals. Motivates and inspires others, builds coalitions and communicates vision. Demonstrates influence in organizational changes in policy, procedures, staffing and structure, as appropriate

SSA7 Organizational skills: Integrates multiple dimensions of a public relations campaign. Integrates internal and external components, so that there is a synergy among the messages

## **F. Managing Relationships**

SSA1 Relationship building and engagement: Understands consensus-building strategies and techniques to engage key stakeholders in decision-making. Ensures discussions allow key stakeholders the opportunity to express opinions. Recognizes need for affected parties and stakeholders to find mutually acceptable solutions. Utilizes persuasion, negotiation and coalition building

SSA2 Reputation management: Understands need for maintaining individual and organizational credibility with and among key constituents. Recognizes value of reputation, image, public trust and corporate social responsibility

SSA3 Internal stakeholders: Understands importance of internal relationships to the public relations function. Understands the importance of organizational culture and communicating key messages through appropriate channels. Uses mediated and non-mediated channels of communication for effective engagement. Prioritizes internal audiences

SSA4 Media relations: Understands definitions, strengths, weaknesses and needs of different media. Understands the relationships among public relations professionals, journalists and media organizations. Builds effective relationships with media based on mutual respect and trust. Analyzes current events and trends for opportunities and threats. Identifies appropriate controlled and uncontrolled media channels and key influencers

SSA5 Networks: Understands how to establish and enhance relationships with stakeholders (e.g., electronic communications, special events, face-to-face communication, networking, social networking, and word-of-mouth and third-party communication). Recognizes inter-connectedness among various stakeholders. Considers broad/global relationships

## **Behaviours**

Having the knowledge to practice, as well as the skills and abilities deemed desirable to excel in the work environment is not sufficient unless one also demonstrates a set of behaviours- an attitude- that can make the difference in serving organizations, clients and society.

**The following elements are seen as a recipe for success in the practice of public relations and communication management.**

**All professionals should exhibit the following behaviours:**

### **Integrity and accountability**

B1 Conducts professional activities in a lawful and principled manner. Functions as the conscience of the organization. Adheres to commonly accepted standards of professional



behaviour and upholds codes of ethics of professional bodies. Takes responsibility for own actions and those of employees under them.

### **Ethical conduct**

B2 Acts to remedy unethical acts. Refuses to participate in unethical or deceptive actions.

### **Judgment and Collaboration**

B3 Demonstrates sound judgment and works collegially. Understands the need for teamwork, collaboration and adaptability.

### **Transparency**

B4 Conducts professional activities with the greatest transparency, avoids spin or deceptive communication

### **Legal and contextual awareness**

B5 Awareness and knowledge of applicable international, national, regional and local laws regarding disclosure, privacy, and defamation of character, copyright, trademarks and fair use. Upholds these laws in an ethical manner. Awareness of industry trends and consumer patterns

### **Influence and leadership**

B6 Leads by example in managing people and issues. Demonstrates a values-based approach to deal with stakeholders, employees and clients

### **Learning**

B7 In a rapidly changing profession commits to a program of lifelong learning and professional development. Contributes to the advancement of the profession by sharing knowledge and mentoring others

### **Inclusiveness and accommodation**

B8 Shows respect for and accommodation for diverse points of view, ethnicity and cultural differences

### **Adaptability**

B9 Is able to change course quickly due to events and scale activities in response to changing circumstances

### **Citizenship and Sustainability**

B10 Acts with due consideration to the environment and with awareness of sustainable practices. Shows leadership in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives