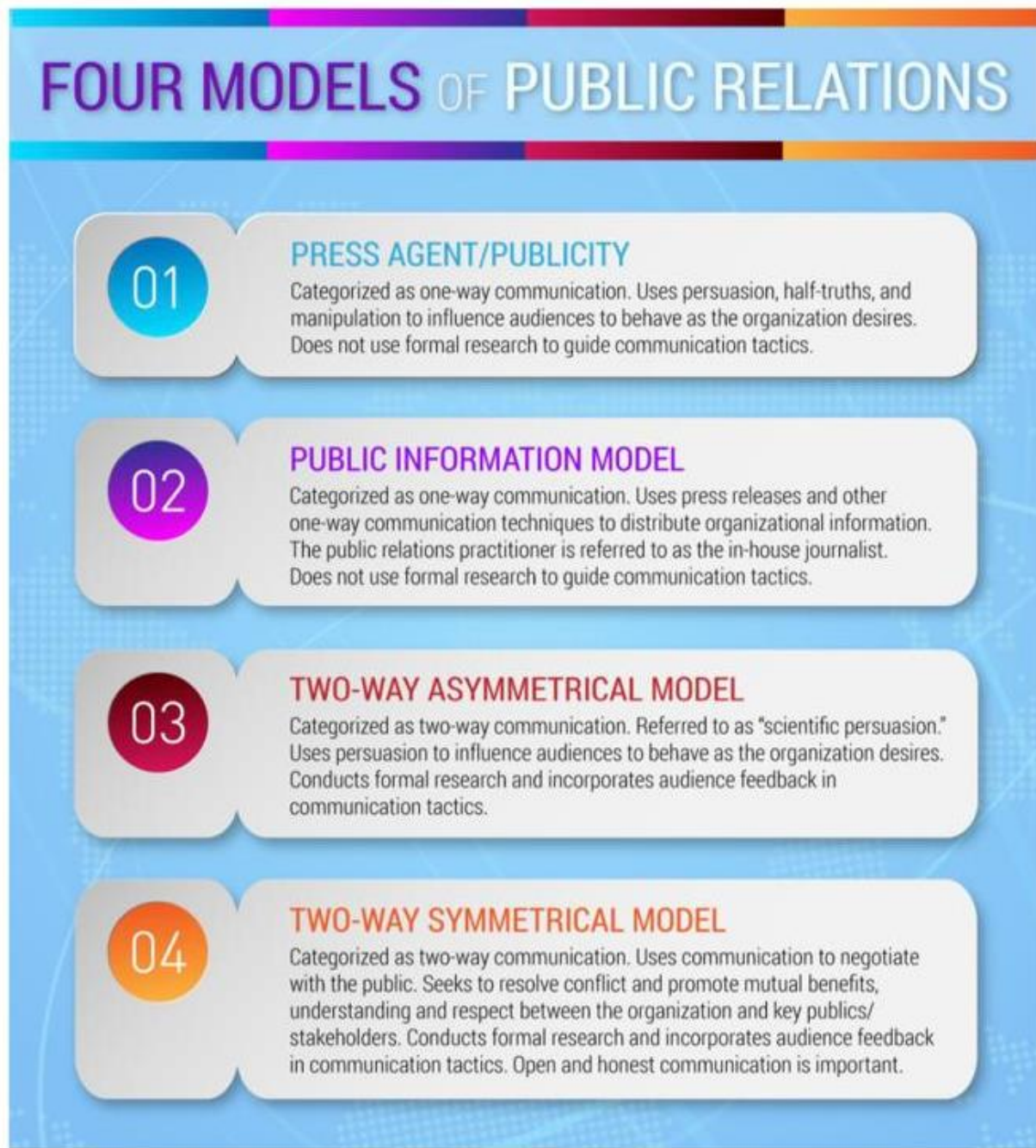


## FOUR MODELS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS:-



Models of public relations were proposed by James E. Grunig, a noted public relations theorist who has to his credit several books, articles, chapters and awards in the field of public relations.

According to James E.Grunig, there are four models of public Relations:  
THEORIES USED IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Press Agency/Publicity

The Press Agency Publicity model is also called the P.T Barnum model. Press Agency Publicity model follows one way communication where the flow of information is only from the sender to the receiver. The sender is not much concerned about the second party's feedback, reviews and so on. In the Press Agency publicity model, public relations experts enhance the reputation of the organization among the target audiences, stakeholders, employees, partners, investors and all others associated with it through manipulation. According to this model, organizations hire public relations experts who create a positive image of their brand in the minds of target audiences through arguments and reasoning. They influence their potential customers by simply imposing their ideas, thoughts, creative stories of their brand, USPs of the products and so on. Flow of information takes place only from the public relations experts to the target audiences. (One way communication)

- Public Information Model

As the name suggests, the public information model emphasizes on maintaining and enhancing the image of an organization simply by circulating relevant and meaningful information among the target audience/public. Public relations experts depend on press releases, news releases, video releases or any other recorded communication often directed at the media to circulate information about their brand among the public. Newsletters, brochures, magazines with information about the organization, its key people, products, benefits of the products, testimonials, success stories are distributed at regular intervals among target audiences for brand positioning. In such a model, public relations experts need to be creative and ought to have a flair for writing. They should be really good at putting their thoughts into meaningful words which influence the customers and end-users. Public information model also revolves around one way communication where information primarily flows from sender(organization and public relations experts) to the receiver(target audience, employees, stake holders, employees, investors and so on).

- Two Way Asymmetrical Model

Two way asymmetrical model of public relations revolves around two way communication between both the parties but the communication is somewhat not balanced. In this type of model, public relations experts position their organization and brand on the whole in the minds of their target audiences through manipulation and force the public to behave the same way they would want them to do. In a two way asymmetrical model of public relations, organizations do not utilize much of their manpower and resources to find out the reaction of the stakeholders, investors or for that matter public.

- Two way Symmetrical Model Two way symmetrical model of public relations is an ideal way of enhancing an organization's reputation among the target audience. According to the two way symmetrical model, public relations experts depend on two way communication to position their brand among end-users. Free flow of information takes place between the organization and its stakeholders, employees, investors and vice-a-versa. Conflicts and misunderstandings are resolved through mutual discussions and communication. A two way communication takes place between both the parties and information flows in its desired form. The feedback from stakeholders and target audiences are also taken into consideration.

# THEORIES

Theories predict the way things work or happen. We have theories about many actions and even in public relations. There is no one theory that will explain all public relations practices. Public Relations considered several theories when deciding how to build and improve the successful relationships between an organization and its customers, clients, employees, and stakeholders.

## **SITUATIONAL THEORY**

The situation theory was put forth by J.E. Grunig & Repper in 1957. This theory looked at the behavioral pattern of 'publics'. All people are equal in communicating with the organization. PR people could identify and can make communication effective.

The theory based on three assumptions:

- 1) A person will seek or give information when something is missing in a particular situation
- 2) He will not seek information if he faces a lot of constraints.
- 3) A person who is highly involved you will communicate actively in order to control behavior.

From the above three exemptions, Grunig arrived at three variables.

- 1) Problem recognition: Public facing an issue must be aware of it and recognize its potential to affect them.
- 2) constraint recognition: this variable describes how the public perceives obstacles that may stand in the way of a solution. If they believe they are a real shot at influencing an issue, they will tend to seek and process the information on that issue.
- 3) Level of involvement: This variable refers to how much an individual cares about an issue. Those who care a lot would likely be active communicators on an issue. those who cared little would be more passive and seeking information and processing information.

The situational theory categorizes the public into four categories. every person is a part of one of the four publics.

- 1) Aware public: Aware publics are those who identify and recognize the problem but do not participate in finding a solution.
- 2) Active public: active public or those who take initiative actively about the problem. they see the problem and are involved in finding the solution.
- 3) Latent public: Latent publics are those who ignore and turn a blind eye to the problem. they are aware of a topic or issue but do not recognize it as a problem.
- 4) Non-public: Non-publics are those who have nothing to do with the problem. they are the most passive of the groups. this group is made up of people who are unaware or do not acknowledge the certain situation.

Problem recognition occurs when people detect that something should be done about a situation and stop to think about what to do. someone cannot be a part of an active public unless they have identified a situation or problem. The behavior of people who are not aware of a situation will be passive. Recognizing whether a group has high or low problem recognition is the first step in using the situational theory of public. Will an audience need to be convinced that a situation or problem exists before going further with them, or is the audience already searching for information about this topic? This is an important question to ask while developing a public relations campaign.

The step following problem recognition in sorting people into one of the four public is finding constraint recognition. Constraint recognition occurs when

people believe there is some obstacle standing in their way to make a change in a situation. This can have a large impact on behavior and whether people take action. If people think there is an obstacle standing in their way, they will be less likely to communicate about the problem (Kim, 2011). High levels of constraint recognition will lead to people being more passive in their behavior toward an issue. People can be aware of a situation, but if there are obstacles in the way to doing something about it, then people will interact less with the situation. Constraint recognition can be the difference from people being in an 'aware' to the 'active' public, or from being latent to aware

The final variable to be measured is the level of involvement. Level of involvement measures how much a person is invested in a problem or organization (Grunig, 1989). Higher levels of involvement will lead to persons being more active. For example, if two individuals have the same level of problem recognition and constraint recognition the individual with a higher level of involvement will be more active. For this reason, measuring the level of involvement among different groups has become key for public relations professionals while researching what groups they want to communicate with. Levels of involvement are a large determinate into whether a person will be a part of an active or passive public. Because communicating with groups that have different levels of involvement can change a message, public relations professionals frequently use this variable of the situational theory of publics (Kim, 2011). Will a public need to be motivated to take action or are they already working on finding a solution to their problem? Does a public need to be told why they should take action or do you need to provide them with more information on how to take action?

## Application to PR

The situational theory of publics is important for public relations professionals to use because it gives an outline of the different types of publics. The job of public relations professionals is often to communicate a message with some public. After dividing people into the four publics, public relations people can decide how they want to communicate with each public. Each group will receive and process messages differently so each group must be targeted in different ways. Passive

publics need information put in front of them and must be given reasons to participate in some situation or problem. If a public relations professional is looking to communicate about a product, they might need to turn a passive public into an active public by persuading them that there is a problem by not owning the product. Or they may need to inform an active public how to acquire the product and that there are not many obstacles standing in their way from getting it.

Research was conducted by Ann Marie Major about how people respond to disaster predictions. She used earthquake emergency alerts as an example to understand how people respond differently to messages. Some people would listen to warnings about an earthquake and others would be skeptical of the prediction. There was not one uniform reaction to this message. She was able to define the four publics and their preexisting attitudes about being prepared for an earthquake. She states "situational theory demonstrates that there is not a single general public response to disaster predictions as has been previously assumed in studies of disaster response" (Major, 1998). This study is one example of a situation when knowing the four publics would be useful. Right before or after a disaster, communicating is crucial. You can either communicate how to be prepared right before a natural disaster, or how to stay safe or get to the necessary help after. In this situation a public relations crisis communicator would have to create messages for each of the four groups. Each message would be important and unique to motivate people to prepare for a disaster. Some people would need little motivation, while others would need a lot of information and reasons to prepare.

## Conclusion

The situational theory of publics is a useful theory for public relations professionals have. By measuring the three variables among individuals public relations professionals can put every individual within one of four groups. By knowing what type of people are most likely to be in what group public relations professionals can then craft a message to motivate or inform that group of people. Because public relations professionals should be communicating with the

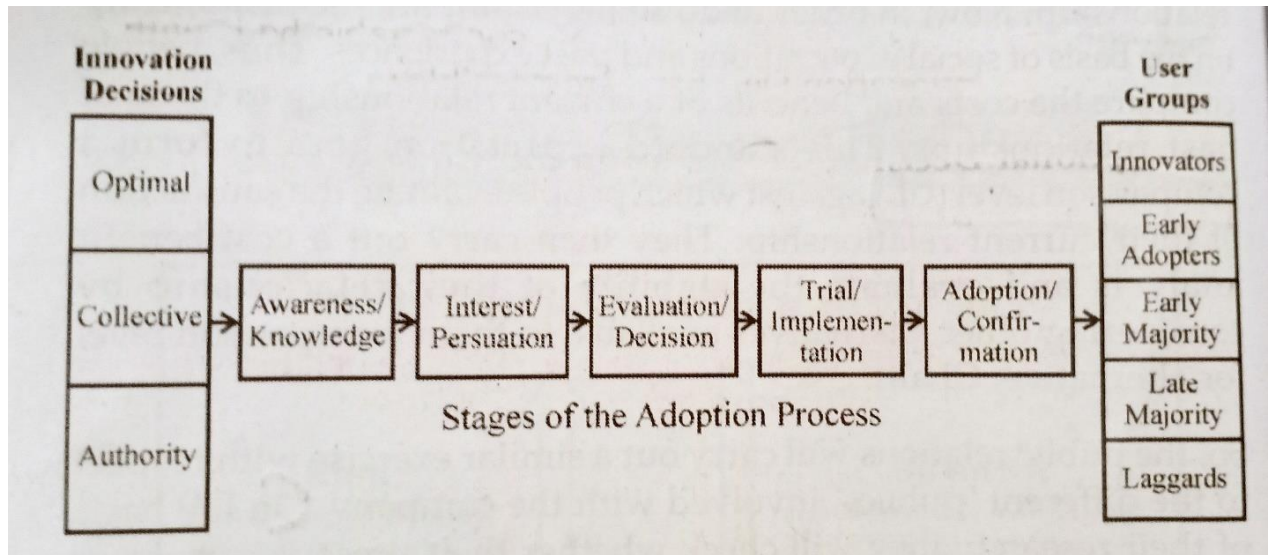
most specific group of people they can find the situational theory of publics is a useful tool to use.

## **DIFFUSION THEORY**

The diffusion of innovations theory is a Theory propounded by Everett Rogers. This theory is another way to look at how people process and accept information. it explains how, why and at what rate new ideas and technologies spread.

the diffusion theory suggests that there are five different categories of individuals that go through the process of adopting innovation. it says that people adopt a new idea or change only after going through five steps.

- 1) Awareness or Knowledge: The PR department needs to have an action plan in order to popularize an innovation. Creating awareness has to be the first step for any innovation, for only when a person becomes aware of innovation he can possibly start thinking about the pro about its functions.
- 2) Interest or Persuasion: Ignite interest for the innovation in the mind of the client, so that it forms of favorable or unfavorable attitude towards the innovation. Only when a person performs a favorable attitude towards the innovation, he would be willing to give it a try.
- 3) Evaluation or Decision: Evaluation enable him to make a choice to adopt or reject the innovation. the person must consider the idea as potentially useful.
- 4) Trial or Implementation: Having decided to give the innovation a try, the person finally puts the innovation into the trial or implementation stage.
- 5) Adoption or Confirmation: Finally, on the basis of his experience during the trial, a person gets set to adopt the innovation as the endeavors are towards creating a wonderful experience. This represents the final acceptance of the idea after having successfully passed through the four earlier stages.



Based on who takes a decision and how comfortable he is with it, Three Types of innovation decisions are possible

- 1) Optimal Decision: Made by an individual who is in some way distinguished from others.
- 2) Collective Decision: Made collectively by all participants.
- 3) Authority Decision: Made for the entire social system by individuals in positions of influence or power.

Based on the decision, the innovation is been adopted, but the relative speed at which participants adopt it, in turn, gives rise to finding different categories of innovation user groups.

- 1) Innovators: are the ones who are eager to try the innovation, even if it involves some risk-taking
- 2) Early Adopters: or opinion leaders are those who are glad to be seen in the four front of change and need only a simple manual for it.
- 3) Early Majority: after evidence that the innovation is effective, a group of people who may be called the early majority, will adopt it as they do not like to be seen as regressive.
- 4) Late Majority: it is after innovation has been adopted by the majority, that a group of people called the late majority are able to overcome their resistance to change and adopt the innovation.

5) Laggards: the group of people who are traditional and require a lot of convincing and was pressure to bring on board are the laggards.