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## APPENDIX A

8 August 2000

Dear Colleague

### **EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT: A SOUTH AFRICAN STUDY**

In our on-going efforts to make the communication profession more professional, we, as communicators, constantly strive towards excellence in communication. In this effort it is important to realise that one of the most important determining factors of communication excellence in an organisation is the relationship between top communicators and senior management.

A team from the University of Pretoria is currently undertaking research to establish the nature of this relationship in the South African organisation. As part of this research, top communicators from a selection of corporations, associations, government agencies and non-profit organisations are questioned as to how they contribute to the practise of communication excellence in their organisations.

As a top communicator in your organisation, you could make a valuable contribution to this project and we would thus sincerely like you to take part in our investigation. The attached fact sheet contains more information on the project.

I would like to request that you take a few minutes to complete the attached questionnaire and send it back to me by e-mail, fax or post before or on **Friday, 11 August 2000**. The survey consists of 40 questions and will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

This survey is strictly confidential and neither you nor your organisation will in any way be connected to the findings of this study. However, if you are interested in the results of the project, you are welcome to give your particulars at the end of the questionnaire, so that the findings can be forwarded to you.

Thank you, in advance, for your co-operation.

Kind regards

Estelle de Beer  
**COMMUNICATION MANAGER**  
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## **EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS (PR) AND COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT**

**A NATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING AND  
COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

Dear Communication Manager/ Practitioner

### **BACKGROUND ON THE INTERNATIONAL *EXCELLENCE STUDY***

Research in the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom, generally known as the *EXCELLENCE STUDY*, has indicated that the public relations/corporate communication function will make a vital contribution to the organisation's bottom line if the person in charge of communication, functions at the managerial level and has the *knowledge* to practise strategic communication management.

The second prerequisite for 'excellent communication', as identified by the *EXCELLENCE STUDY*, is *shared expectations* between the communication manager and top management. In other words, if the chief executive (CEO) does not understand the corporate communication/ public relations/ public affairs manager's strategic role in decision-making and does not allow him/her a place at the boardroom table, the communication function cannot practise 'excellent communication', no matter how knowledgeable and experienced the communication manager is. This finding provides an explanation for the frustration experienced by many communication managers who feel that they are not being 'allowed' to contribute that which they are capable of.

A team at the University of Pretoria has been conducting research over the last two years in order to obtain empirical findings on 'excellent communication' in this country. The following findings were obtained from the first phase:





### BACKGROUND ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN STUDY: PHASE ONE (1997-1998)

Maybe you were one of the respondents who participated during 1997 in the first phase of the South African research project on 'excellent communication', undertaken by a team at the University of Pretoria (project leader: Retba Groenewald). The findings on the *skills and knowledge* that South African communication *managers* considered imperative in order to contribute to organisational effectiveness, were widely publicised. The background of the study was explained in two editions of the PRISA COMMUNIKA, the preliminary findings at the IABC Conference in September 1997, and the statistical findings at the PRISA Conference in Port Elizabeth, in May 1998. (On the latter occasion, the findings of the literature review on '*shared expectations*' was also touched upon--this constituted the beginning of Phase 2 of the research).

The main findings of Phase 1 was the following:

- Only 37% of the respondents (which consisted of communication *managers*) can be seen as communication specialists (having undergone *communication training*);
- Only 10% of the respondents (communication *managers*) have undergone *management training*;
- 51% of the respondents have undergone training *other than communication or management*
- South African communication *managers* considered strategic communication skills and management skills as significantly more important than technical communication skills, and thought that they had not been sufficiently trained in this.

### REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE WITH PHASE TWO OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN STUDY: 'SHARED EXPECTATIONS'

We are now ready to start the empirical (quantitative) research, which consists of two surveys that will run concurrently—corporate communication managers will be asked to '*share their expectations*' of, and comment on, the nature of their relationship with top management, whereas their chief executive officers (CEOs)/ managing directors will be asked to comment on their '*expectations*' of an ideal role for, and their perceptions of the behaviour of, their most senior manager/practitioner responsible for the communication function. As in the 1997 survey, the sampling plan consists of the membership lists of professional communication associations (PRISA, IABC, SACOMM and UNITECH).

## APPENDIX B

**For this questionnaire the terms public relations management and communication management will be regarded as synonyms.**

### Part 1

#### Section A

**In this first of three sections you will answer questions on the value the senior management in your organisation attaches to the communication department, and the strategic contribution that you as top communicator make in the organisation.**

Please select a number between 0 and 10 to indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Totally disagree					Totally agree					
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Senior management supports the communication function in your organisation.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. Senior management recognises that communication can make a strategic contribution.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3. You readily have access to senior management.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. Senior management value your input before they make decisions.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5. Senior management expects you to make communication decisions fairly autonomously.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6. Senior management expects you to contribute towards effectiveness by helping the organisation to meet its goals.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7. Senior management expects the communications department to manage its own programme in line with the principles of strategic management.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8. Senior management expects you to work closely with them to solve organisational problems that involve relationships with target audiences.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9. Senior management expects you to use (formal and informal) research techniques to monitor trends in the organisation's environment for use in business decision making.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10. You are in a position to influence key strategic decisions of senior management.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

## **Section B**

**The next section deals with questions about the communication model which is being used in your department and the expertise in your department.**

Please select a number between 0 and 10 to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	<b>Totally disagree</b>					<b>Totally agree</b>					
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Senior management believes that the purpose of communication is predominantly to get your organisation's name into the media.											
2. Senior management believes that the success of communication is measured by the number of people who use your products or services.											
3. Senior management believes that the purpose of communication is to prevent unfavourable publicity for your organisation in the media.											
4. Senior management believes that it is your task to prepare news stories that reporters will use.											
5. Senior management believes that it is only necessary to keep a clipping file to determine the success of public relations.											
6. Senior management believes that the top communicator is a neutral disseminator of information.											
7. Senior management believes that in communication, the broad goal is to persuade publics to behave as the organisation wants them to behave.											
8. Senior management believes that after completing a communication programme, research should be done to determine how effective this programme has been in changing people's attitudes.											
9. Senior management believes you should make sure that the organisation's policies are described in ways its publics would be most likely to accept.											
10. Senior management believes that the purpose of communication is to change the attitudes of management as much as it is to change the attitudes of publics.											
11. Senior management believes it is the role of communication to facilitate mutual understanding between the management of the organisation and the publics the organisation affects.											
12. Senior management believes communication should provide mediation opportunities to help management and publics negotiate conflict.											

## Section C

Next you will answer questions about your role in the communication department. (These questions specifically refer to your role and not that of your subordinates.)

Please select a number between 0 and 10 to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Totally disagree					Totally agree					
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Senior management expects you to predominantly write communication material such as speeches, articles, advertisements, etc.											
2. Senior management expects you to produce brochures.											
3. Senior management expects you to edit the grammar and spelling of the material written by others in the organisation.											
4. Senior management expects you to use your journalistic skills to establish what the media will consider newsworthy about your organisation.											
5. Senior management expects you to issue news releases.											
6. Senior management expects you to keep others in the organisation informed of what the media report about important issues.											
7. Senior management expects you to take responsibility for the success or failure of your organisation's communication programmes just as other managers take responsibility for their terrain.											
8. Senior management expects you to develop strategies for solving communication problems because of your experience and training.											
9. Senior management expects you to make communication policy decisions.											
10. Senior management expects you to act as counsel to top decision makers when communication issues are involved.											
11. Senior management expects you to create opportunities for management to hear the views of various (internal and external) publics.											
12. Senior management expects you to represent the organisation at events or meetings.											

## **Part II**

Finally, there are a few demographic questions about you and your organisation.

1. **To whom do you report to in your organisation? (State designation)**

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**Would you regard that person to be part of:**

**Junior management**

**Middle management**

**Senior management**

2. **Approximately how many people are employed by the organisation you work for?**

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3. **Approximately how many communication practitioners are in your department?**

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4. **What is your highest qualification?**

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5. **How many years experience do you have in the communications field?**

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6. **What is your designation?**

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**Thank you. That completes the questionnaire**

I am interested in the results of this study. Please forward it to me at:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

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