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# Importance of Public Relations and its Tools in the Hospitality Industry

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**Abstract:** *The topic of the study is the Importance of public relations and its tools in the hospitality industry. The study's goals included analyzing the purposes and goals of public relations in hotels, learning how hotels use PR tools and techniques, and looking at how hotels use corporate reputation and trust. The study's mixed methodology shows that an analysis was conducted that was both qualitative and quantitative in character. The research found that public relations were "settled" at the hotel, which had a Public Relations Unit inside the Marketing Department and well-stated aims and objectives.*

*However, based on the feedback provided by the hotel's customers, it is crucial for the establishment to regularly gauge the opinions of its stakeholders or actively involve its clientele, as recommended by public relations theories. The study concluded that effective PR techniques have a favorable effect on hotels' corporate reputations, growth, and goodwill.*

**Keywords:** *Pr Tools, Corporate Reputation, Well Stated Aims, Goodwill, Stagnation, Objectives, Hospitality.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Managing an organization's or person's reputation and communication with its different stakeholders, such as the general public, the media, clients, investors, staff members, and others, is known as public relations (PR). By successfully and openly interacting with these stakeholders, PR aims to develop and maintain a favorable reputation and connection with them.

PR experts employ a range of strategies to sway public opinion and alter impressions of their organization or client, including media relations, social media management, crisis communication, event planning, and community engagement. To assess the efficacy of their efforts and make the necessary corrections, they also track and analyze media coverage and public opinion.



The ultimate goal of PR is to foster relationships of trust, credibility, and goodwill between a company and its constituents. This may improve the company's reputation, boost consumer loyalty, and eventually lead to financial success.

The reputation and relationship with stakeholders of their clients or organizations are managed and improved by public relations specialists using a number of tactics.

Common public relations instruments include:

- Media relations - building connections with journalists and presenting stories to the media in order to get favorable coverage.
- Social media management - PR specialists utilize social media platforms to interact with their audiences, promote their brands, and keep an eye on their online reputations.
- Press releases - are official announcements made to the media in order to publicize news, events, or activities.
- Speeches - Public relations specialists prepare speeches that CEOs or spokespersons will give to the media or on occasions.
- Crisis communication - in order to handle crises and safeguard the reputation of their clients or organizations during a crisis, PR experts design and put into practice crisis communication methods.
- Events and promotions - This entails organizing and carrying out promotions, such as product debuts, press conferences, and neighborhood outreach initiatives, to gain favorable coverage.
- Influencer marketing - PR experts work with celebrities or influencers to publicize the goods or services of their clients or organizations.
- Corporate social responsibility - is the practice of an organisation demonstrating its commitment to environmental sustainability and social responsibility via the development and implementation of programmes.

In order to improve their clients' or organizations' reputations and success, PR professionals may use these methods to connect clearly with their audiences and establish solid bonds with stakeholders.

Public relations are essential to the hospitality sector since they assist in creating and preserve a favorable public perception of the hotel, restaurant, or any other hospitality firm. Relationships with customers, staff, the media, and other stakeholders may be cultivated and strengthened with the aid of public relations. This can raise brand recognition and reputation, boost customer satisfaction, and eventually boost income.

Effective public relations may be utilized to market new goods, services, and events as well as assist hospitality firms in overcoming obstacles and seizing opportunities. Additionally, it may improve client loyalty, address and lessen bad press, and position the hotel industry leader.

Having a solid public relations plan is crucial for success in the hectic and cutthroat business of hospitality. Public relations may contribute to the development of a positive reputation and the fostering of enduring connections that foster corporate growth and success, whether through conventional media, digital media, or community engagement.

The recent rise in business rivalry has made companies more cost- and price-conscious, which has changed the promotion mix and led to a higher reliance on customer-reach strategies that are more cost-effective. In order to attract and retain customers, businesses have been



compelled to adopt new strategies as a result of changing competition and the burgeoning media clutter. In order to do this, a business must establish and sustain a high level of trustworthiness with its clients. At the same time, contemporary marketing has been charged with using a rising number of resources for their promotional activities, which has led to the consumer paying more for the products and services. Public relations are a useful instrument that has recently become more significant.

Public relations' ability to foster reciprocal relationships between businesses and their clients improves a company's overall performance. It is well recognized as being reliable and economical. (1988 Williams) Promotion, or customer-company communication, is a term used to describe a variety of methods that may be used in marketing communication. In this combination, public relations initiatives play a significant role (Kotler & Armstrong, 1994). Organizations use promotion to inform clients about their product offerings and to make sure that customers are aware of the items that are available (Rowley, 1998). Kotler (1999) defined promotion as communication efforts used to inform, convince, or remind the target market of a product's availability and advantages. Promotion includes all forms of communication that can reach a target audience and deliver a message. It is regarded as a direct kind of encroachment based on outside incentives as opposed to intrinsic product advantages. Boyd et al. (1998) defines the promotion strategy as a managed and integrated program of communication techniques and tools intended to introduce the company and its goods to customers and to support long-term financial success.

Four basic categories are used to build the promotion programs: advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, and public relations. Any sort of compensated non-personal presentation and promotion of concepts, products, or services is referred to as advertising. Due to the large audience, it reaches, it is a useful instrument for raising awareness. Print advertisements, radio, television, billboards, posters, catalogues, and signage are a few examples of potential methods (Boyd et al. 1998). Sales promotion is used to generate incentives that will encourage the quick purchase or sale of a product. The technique may be used to encourage others to try your goods. Coupons, product samples, competitions, and demonstrations are a few examples of tools (Kotler, 1999). The practice of assisting and encouraging prospects to make a purchase of products or services is known as personal selling.

The connection between the parties, which frequently takes place orally, might develop into a long-lasting partnership. Presentations, meetings, and sampling are some of the tools employed (Kotler & Armstrong 1994). Public relations are the unpaid stimulation of a product's or service's demand. The purpose of public relations, commonly referred to as PR, is to build and sustain positive relationships with an organization's target audiences (Jeffkins, 1978). According to Beavers Moss (2001), PR is a type of communication that works well with and can be tailored to a company's many advertising components. Even while it strives to reinforce these elements, there is one glaring distinction between PR and advertising. Public relations go out and gives the advertising message credibility and trust, while advertising maintains control over the organization's entire message and increases exposure. PR raises brand recognition whereas marketing increases brand awareness. The issue is that, while being two sides of the same coin, PR and marketing frequently fall flat in organizations. Additionally, it is sometimes difficult to tell where PR begins, and marketing stops. If members of the public are asked to name five competitors in the same industry, and none identify yours, it is likely that the rivals are using PR more successfully (Lynn, 1999).



The marketing communication disciplines of public relations (PR) are likely the widest since they encompass a variety of activities and specializations used to communicate corporate and brand messaging. PR has evolved from activities aimed at product sales to a corporate advising function. Therefore, PR initiatives may be categorized as possibilities for long-term brand development (Barnes & Schultz, 1999). Communication with audiences deemed vital to an organization has evolved over the past ten years into a key component of business strategy (Dolphin, 2004). Companies strive to establish positive relationships with their shareholders, suppliers, distribution networks, and clients. Other groups that businesses could want to influence include local chambers of commerce, trade organizations, and professional associations.

In the hotel sector, public relations are crucial for a number of reasons, including:

- **Building and sustaining reputation:** In order to draw and keep clients, hotels must have a good reputation within their target market. By stressing their advantages, distinctive selling propositions, and dedication to client happiness, hotels may use PR methods to develop and maintain a favorable reputation.
- **Publicity creation:** PR techniques may assist hotels in creating favorable media coverage through influencer marketing, event promotion, and media coverage. This can raise brand recognition and draw new customers.
- **Crisis management:** Hotels may experience a range of crises, including natural catastrophes, mishaps, and bad press. PR experts can create crisis communication strategies to reduce reputational harm to the hotel and efficiently communicate with stakeholders during a crisis.
- **Community involvement:** Hotels can participate in their neighborhood through philanthropic, environmental sustainability, and community outreach programs. These actions can help hotels develop a favorable reputation and strengthen their image with locals.
- **Employee involvement:** PR methods may assist hotels in engaging their staff in the mission, values, and culture of the establishment through effective communication. Employee retention, productivity, and morale may all be enhanced by this.

Public relations are a crucial component of building exposure in the hotel industry, and hotels must use it to complement their marketing initiatives. Connecting with media sources is crucial if you want to develop partnerships for your brand and improve your company's story. Public relations also gives you the chance to interact with your audience and promote your hotel's experience and distinctive value proposition while guests are still in the contemplation stage of the buying process. In order to effectively use public relations in the hotel sector, you must build trusting connections with influential people who can help you communicate your brand's narrative and promote the distinctive experience you have to offer. PR experts can help you overcome obstacles by not only promoting your brand but also serving as a crucial spokesperson in crisis communications should any bad publicity about your hotel surface. The advent of new travel trends like the sharing economy, which includes Airbnb, has changed demand in the hotel business, making it more and more competitive. To help your business outperform the competition, PR may be a crucial method of communication.

Public relations are essential to a hotel's year-round performance and ability to increase revenue



during slow periods. Through media coverage and targeted message for your target audience, a strong PR plan may be the difference between you and the competition, propelling you ahead of the pack. Furthermore, by maintaining a scheduled series of targeted communications throughout the buyer journey, you may forge relationships with prospective or returning customers through enhanced communication and aid in influencing their purchase decisions.

Various public relations strategies used in the hotel industry:

- News outreach - One of the main purposes of public relations is to develop ties with the media. This is especially useful if your hotel has exciting news to share, like the inauguration of a new restaurant or bar, new partnerships with designers or local artists, an event, or pro bono activities. Regular communication with the media increases their likelihood of covering your hotel's news when anything noteworthy occurs.
- Promote customer loyalty - A client loyalty plan may be developed and promoted via public relations. Maintaining contact with your devoted consumers is a crucial component of any PR plan, whether you're reaching out to them or informing them of impending sales and promotions.
- Events - Even while hotels may already have an events coordinator on staff, public relations may help your events have even more of an effect. Through social media, they may spread the word to invite the right individuals who can assist the events gain more attention since without effective communication, it's as if the event never happened. Furthermore, one may increase the visibility of this offer if your hotel wishes to sell itself as a location for conferences, weddings, and business gatherings through public relations outreach.
- Reinforce the value proposition - In order to reinforce your value offer and reach the appropriate media outlets and potential customers, PR experts may create a plan of action. Who is better to create your guest characters than someone who is frequently in contact with the audience you want to reach? You may employ public relations to promote a number of events or promotional methods that are consistent with your hotel's unique selling points based on these visitor personas.
- Organize guerrilla marketing campaigns - Guerrilla marketing is a viral marketing strategy that uses a distinctive marketing idea to get customers talking about your company. You may plan and advertise these kinds of initiatives using public relations to generate talk about your hotel. These interactive campaigns might be implemented through street freebies, other PR gimmicks, and advertising in unorthodox locations when people aren't necessarily thinking about a hotel stay. This helps build brand recognition, which maximizes resources with minimum outlay and raises the likelihood that your hotel will come to mind when it's time to make a reservation. While exposure can be costly, guerrilla marketing can help you get identical results more cheaply and possibly even more successfully.

### **Objectives**

The establishment of a favorable reputation and image for hotels, restaurants, and other associated companies is made possible through public relations (PR), which is a fundamental component of the hospitality sector. Three goals for a study on the value of public relations and its resources in the hotel sector are as follows:

- To explain the significance of public relations in the hospitality industry: A thorough





analysis of public relations and its significance in the hotel sector should be included in the report. It should go through how PR can help develop consumer trust and credibility, create a favorable brand image, and generate exposure that might result in higher sales.

- To explore the various public relations tools and strategies used in the hospitality industry: The research should look at the many PR tactics and techniques employed by the hotel sector, including community outreach, social media marketing, events, and media relations. Additionally, it must go through each tool's advantages and disadvantages and offer instances of how it has been effectively applied in the field.

- To identify best practices for effective public relations in the hospitality industry: The report should include recommendations for creating and carrying out a productive PR strategy for the hotel sector. A solid brand image, connections with stakeholders, utilizing social media and other digital channels, and assessing the effectiveness of PR initiatives should all be suggested.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This section contains details on the particular procedures or strategies used to conduct the research and analyze the results. This section further divides these five sections—Research Design, Hypothesis, Sample Design, Data Sources, and Data Collecting Tool.

### **Research Design**

To accurately define all the qualities under study, descriptive research was done. It gives a good summary of the study's topic.

#### **Sample Design**

1. Sampling Method: Convenience Sampling
2. Sampling Unit: Individual person.
3. Sample Size: 316 respondents

### **Data Sources**

**Primary Data:** In order to gather the primary data for the study, a survey with a questionnaire was conducted and distributed to 350 people using Google Forms; 316 of them answered.

**Secondary data:** The secondary data was collected from journals, company websites, books, referrals, research papers internet browsing.

### **Data Collection Tool**

A questionnaire is created to gather information while keeping the study's goal in mind. For clarity and respondents' convenience, the survey includes closed-ended questions.

## Analysis and Interpretation

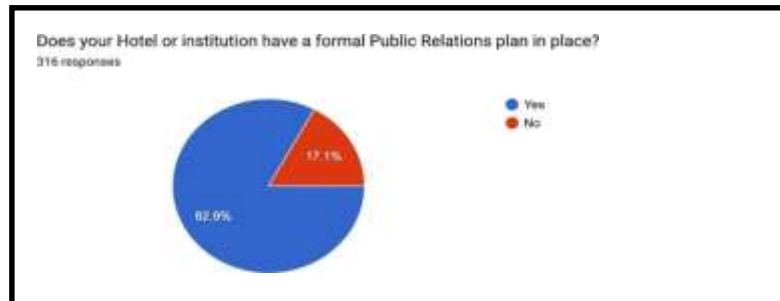


Fig 1.1: Formal public relation plan

When asked if the hotel or institution has a formal public relation in place, 82.9% of the respondents responded Yes which is a good result whereas 17.1% of the respondents responded no which can be improved. It is good to have a formal PR plan but in some cases, one needs to adapt to change and modify to fit the circumstance.

A formal public relations plan is often a smaller document that details the PR portion of a company's larger marketing strategy. Other frequent components of a comprehensive marketing plan include advertising and promotions.

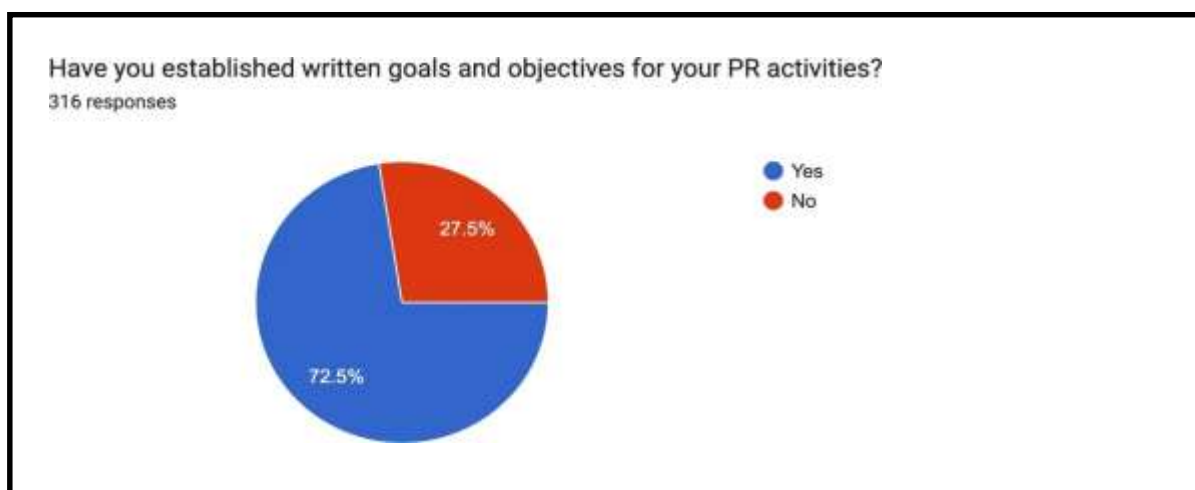


Fig 1.2: Establishment of written goals and objectives

Coming to the written goals and objectives for the PR activities, 72.5% of the respondents have a set of written objectives for their PR activities while 27.5% don't.

Every activity, in this regard, requires a unique set of goals and objectives to assist in achieving what is required. For PR operations, knowing how, when, and what to accomplish are essential, which is a key reason why the aim should be made clear from away. Every activity need not have a defined set of goals, but it is still important to keep in mind a vision, mission, and set of SOPs in order to achieve the intended results.

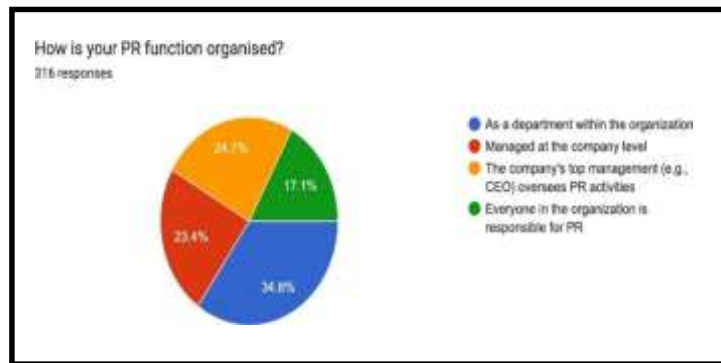


Fig 1.3: PR function organization

When we talk about PR function organization, 34.8% of the respondents organize it as a department within an organization; 24.7% of them have the company's top management like the CEO oversee and keep a tab on the PR activities.

23.4% of them prefer it to be managed at the company level as compared to the 17.1% who feel that everyone in the organization is responsible for PR.

I believe the best course of action is to create a distinct department within the company to handle the PR duties. In this manner, the working process will be efficient and successful, and the intended outcomes will also be quickly attained. The ideal solution is to create a new department because specialization and skills are needed. But the other 3 options also can be used depending on organization to organization and their nature.

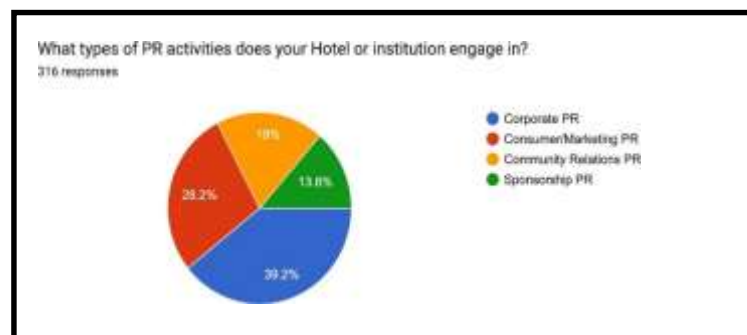


Fig 1.4: Type of PR activity

Coming to the type of PR activities, a major percentage of respondents prefer corporate PR, followed by Consumer / Marketing PR which goes on to 19% who follow Community Relations PR and another 13.6% who engage in Sponsorship PR.

Corporate PR is handled by the business. The majority of the time, CEOs or other prominent figures are positioned in front.

The goal of consumer marketing PR is to retain and sell goods and services to their most likely customers. Anyone who purchases goods for non-commercial reasons is referred to as a consumer. Community / Relations PR is a function that assesses public perceptions, links an organization's objective to the interests of the general public, and implements a plan of action to win over the public.



Although sponsorship is occasionally seen as a sales promotion activity, it should actually be seen as a part of public relations. It entails a business helping out in some way someone or something it believes will aid in the overall marketing and sales of its goods or services.

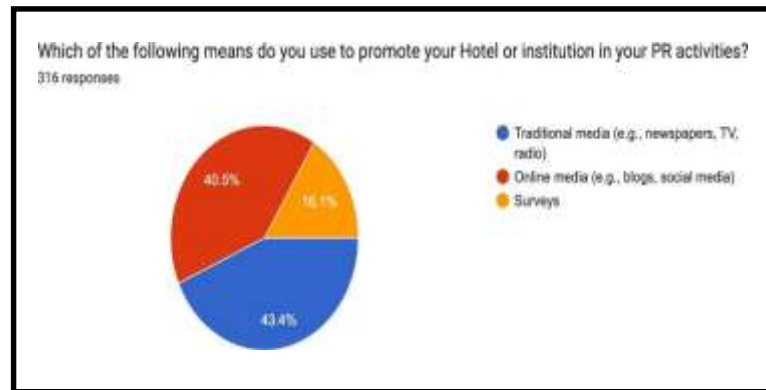


Fig 1.5: Means to promote hotel / institution

When the respondents were asked, which means they use to promote their hotel or institution and their PR activities, 43.4% of them use traditional media like newspapers, TV, radio, followed by 40.5% who use online media like social media, blogs, etc.

16.1 % of the respondents prefer using the method of conducting surveys.

We may claim that each of the approaches listed below is significant for promoting and carrying out PR efforts in the modern world. With the advent of digitization, I believe that online media, such as various social media platforms, etc., have a very broad audience and should be used by hotels or other institutions since they are time and money efficient.

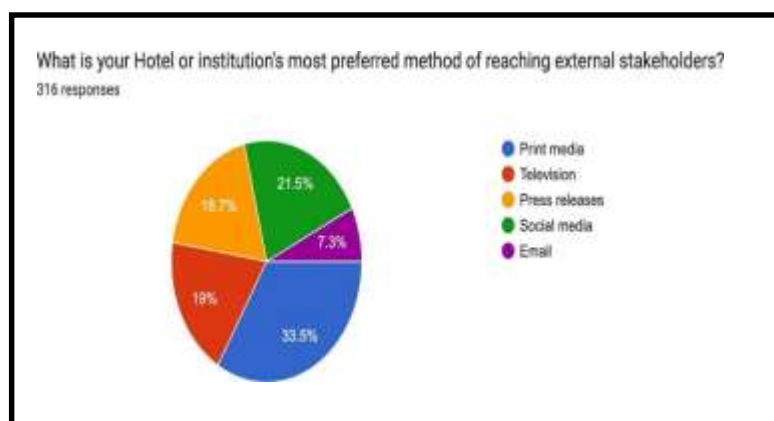


Fig 1.6: Preferred method of reaching external stakeholders

Coming to the hotel or institutions most preferred method of reaching external stakeholders, 33.5% of the respondents prefer using print media followed by 21.5%, who prefer social media, 19% who use television as a means, 18.7% who rely on press releases and 7.3% of them who use email as a preferred method to reach the external stakeholders. One can know which method is the most useful by keeping the following in mind :

1. Identify and Profile Your Stakeholders.
2. Establish the Goal For Your Communication.
3. Choose Your Communication Medium.
4. Communicate Your Message Concisely and Clearly.
5. Monitor Feedback and Follow Up.

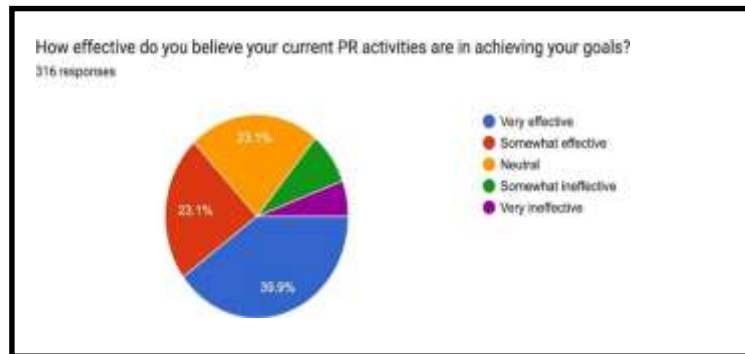


Fig 1.7: PR activities effectiveness

When we talk about effectiveness of the current PR activities in achieving the goals of an organization, 39.9% of the respondents feel that their current PR activities are very effective followed by 23.1% who feel that they are somewhat affective and another 23.1% who are neutral about this question. The remaining respondents believe that their existing PR efforts are unsuccessful since they can't help them go where they want to go or meet their goals and objectives. They must alter their present working practices and PR initiatives so that they are effective and efficient in achieving the desired results when and when they are needed.

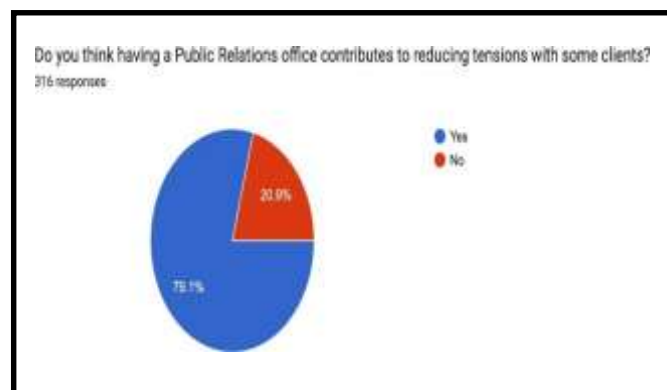


Fig 1.8: PR office contribution in reducing tension with some clients

Coming to if having a public relations office contributes to reducing tension with some clients, 79.1%. of the respondents feel it does which is the major percentage followed by 20.9% to respondents who feel that it doesn't contribute. Accordingly, I feel that sometimes it does help but not always.

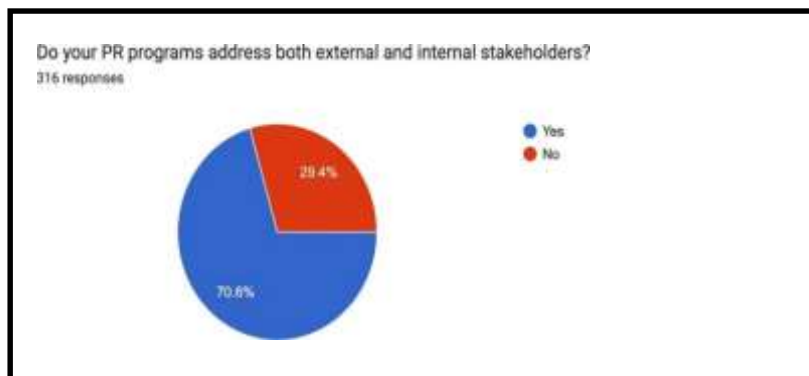


Fig 1.9: Addressing external and internal stakeholders

When talking about addressing both external and internal PR, 70.6% of the respondents address both internal and external stakeholders whereas 29.4% address either one of them. Internal stakeholders are those who have a direct interest in a firm, such as through employment, ownership, or investment. External stakeholders are those who don't work for a company directly but are nonetheless impacted by its decisions and results.

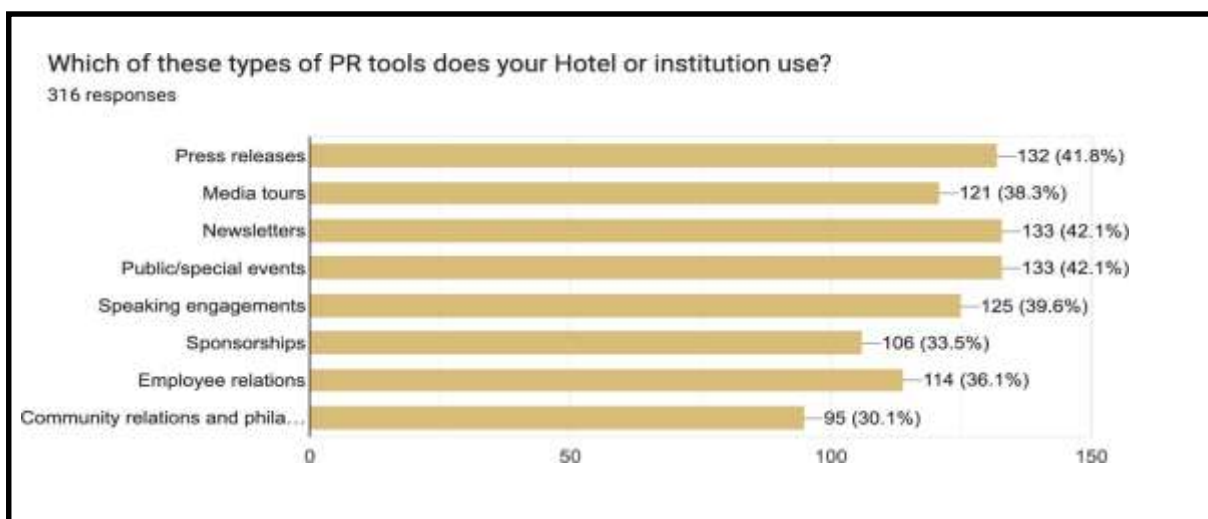


Fig 1.10: Types of PR tool

When we talk about the types of PR tools, the hotel or institution uses, newsletters and public/special events has the highest percentage given by the respondents that is 42.1%. This is followed by press releases which is 41.8% and then speaking engagements which is 39.6%. The media tours also has a good percentage that is 38.3%. This is followed by employee relations which is 36.1% and sponsorships which accounts to 33.5% of the responses. 30.1% goes towards community relations and philanthropy.

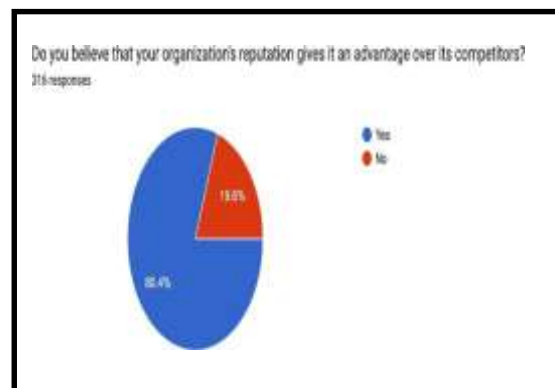


Fig. 1.11: Organization reputation gives an advantage over competitors or no

80.4% of the respondents believe that their organization's reputation gives it an advantage over its competitors while 19.6% feels it does not give them an upper hand.

According to me a reputation definitely gives you a competitive advantage against your competitor but not all respondents feel that way.

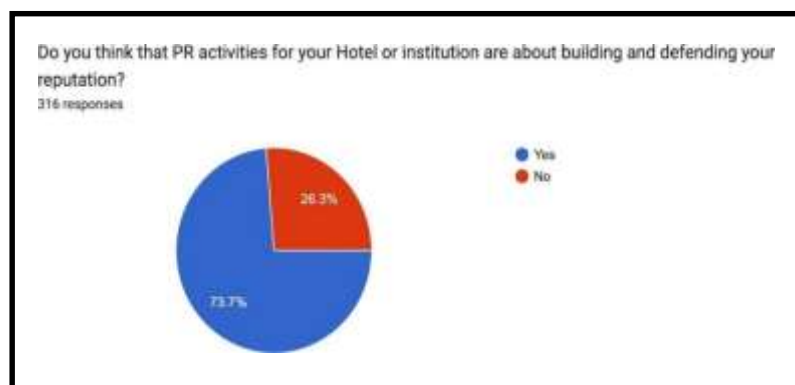


Fig. 1.12: PR activity relation to reputation

A major percentage of the respondents i.e. 73.7% feel that PR activities for the hotel or institution are about building and defending their reputation. 26.3% don't feel it that way.

An organization can get a competitive edge by having a solid reputation. This is so because a solid reputation is priceless, uncommon, difficult to duplicate, and impossible to replace. Therefore, it stands to reason that reputation is very important to an organization and should be handled and safeguarded in some way.

### 3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, public relations is a fundamental component of the hospitality industry and is critical to the development and upkeep of a company's reputation. Businesses in the hospitality sector may benefit from good PR by improving their connections with all of their stakeholders, including clients, staff, investors, and the media.

Public relations' many tools, such as media relations, crisis management, event planning, social



media, and content marketing, are essential for helping companies contact their target audiences and successfully convey their messages. Businesses may use the press's influence to reach a larger audience and establish reputation through media relations. Businesses may adapt to unforeseen circumstances and safeguard their reputations by using crisis management. Businesses can create distinctive experiences that engage customers and increase brand loyalty via event planning. Businesses may establish enduring connections with customers via the use of social media and content marketing.

For hospitality organizations, PR is not an optional extra, but rather a crucial component of their marketing and communications strategy. Effectively using PR's tools may help hospitality businesses boost customer loyalty, brand recognition, and eventually income.

For the hotel industry to build and maintain a favorable reputation, attract attention, manage crises, engage with the public and employees, and ultimately promote economic success, excellent public relations are essential. The significance of public relations in the hotel industry and the actions that these professionals may help your company take to increase visibility, brand recognition, and income.

Having a clear strategy for the actions your hotel will take to establish its brand through events and other promotional initiatives is necessary to set it apart from the competition. PR may assist you in building a solid relationship with the media and your customers in order to ensure the success of your hotel throughout the entire year.

Overall, to succeed in today's cutthroat market, companies in the hospitality sector must prioritize public relations as a crucial component of their operations. Businesses may establish a solid brand reputation and obtain a competitive edge in the market by utilizing the public relations tools to their benefit.

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