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**FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION**

**COURSE CODE:**

**MCM 308**

**COURSE TITLE:**

**ADVANCED COPYWRITING FOR ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

**LEVEL: 300**

**LECTURER IN CHARGE:**

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## **Module 1: ADVERTISING COPY**

Advertising copy is the sum of all the elements of a creative work. These are elements annex to produce a ready-to-disseminate advertising message. The elements that make up a copy include: headlines, sub-headlines, texts, pictures, sounds, and every other thing that would make the success of the advertising campaign; be it electronics, print or social media.

Ucheanya, (2013: 60) opines that “advertising copy is to perform the function of development of familiarity with the brand name, shapes, motive and desire to build believability and to provide a reason for selecting a particular brand over all other competing brands.” The existence of a copy is the reason for why most advertising agency craves for excellent copy writers. Copy writing is a painstaking and herculean task which requires critical thinking and application of ideas to the briefs received from the advertiser in order to produce a salesmanship content that can provoke purchases from the target audience.

Many products are competing earnestly for large market shares and as a result, advertisers invest heavily on advertising to enable them enough publicity that would drive traffic to them as much as possible. According to Ucheanya (2013), it is the function of a copy to heighten the Unique Selling Point (USP) so that the target audience would begin to get attracted to the brand, patronise it and maintain patronage for as long as it existed in the market. The person who writes the copy is known as a copywriter.

The copy writer concerns himself with every element that will appear in the complete advertising message. He ensures that all the copy elements are correctly and creatively interplayed to ensure successful sales return after the campaign is launched. A copywriter is an individual who is professionally trained in advertising methods, techniques and tactics and who has good years of experience during which he acquired skills, expertise and creative endowments in an advertising agency.

There are no rules that state how copy elements should be applied; this is why advertising is regarded as a highly creative job. Ucheanya (2013) supports this by saying “it does not matter if

advertisement begins with an illustration". The expression of copy elements is the sole responsibility of the creativity of a copy writer.

Copy writing is also a variety in advertising copy. It is the process or art of annexing those elements that will project a brand to its audience in order to get patronage in return. John-Kamen (2006) posits that "Since advertising space is very valuable, the copy writer must convey his message without waste of words. He must condense a bridge and revise what his reader thinks in a thousand ways.

### Elements of an Advertising Copy

There are some basic elements of an advertising copy. Some advertisements may contain almost all, while some may contain two or three elements, the most important to the copy is its ability to deliver

and get desired result. As mention ealier, no rules guide the application or usage of copy elements; it is solely the creative responsibility of the copy writer to determine that. The following are the basic elements of an advertising copy:

1. The headline
2. The sub-head
3. The body copy/texts
4. The caption
5. The blurb of balloon
6. The box and panels
7. Slogans, logotype and signature
8. Illustrations
9. Colours

## 10. Background.

1. **Headline:** This is the first copy interface which anyone would come in contact with, it is usually written in large type face. Also referred to as caption, the headline is designed alongside a catchy illustration to capture and attract attention to the advertisement. It drives prospective buyers to further investigate the brand.

2. **Sub-Head:** This goes after the headlines often, sometimes some copy writers display the sub-head first before the headlines. This is also called upper-head and is basically for a purpose which they deemed would drive in the audience to the entire copy. The sub-head is written in a smaller type face than the headlines, but larger than the body text.

3. **Body Copy/Texts:** This is the illustration text, always in the smallest type face in the copy than the headline and the sub-head. The body copy or texts explain a brand in a few and concise but creative words that stick faster in the mind of the audience. It explains a brand in the best possible ways.

4. **Captions:** These are written in a smaller type face than the body copy to represent sales points by illustrating and explaining them at the same time. Captions are less important to the main selling

points in the advertisement than the body copy

5. **Blurb or Balloon:** This is term used in advertising to represent the illustration of an advertising copy as if it is coming out from mouth of one of the characters used in the advertising campaign. At times they are used as headlines and displayed in large size.

6. **Boxes and Panels:** These are elements in a copy which display unique and special information other than those already displayed by the advertisement. They are use in such features as coupons, special offers and contest rules.

7. **Slogan, Logotypes, Trade-Marks and Signatures:** These elements often shown in every advertisement. They are companies identifying tags; they differentiate one organization from another especially when they offer competitive brands. For instance: MTN, GLOBACOM,

ETISALAT, and AIRTEL, all these organisations offer telecommunication services, if they have none of these elements, they might just confuse customers in a bid to identify with their preferred brand.

8. Illustrations: These could be photographs, graphs, maps, tables or any other matter which form part of the copy and aim at further amplifying the advertisements.

9. Colours: For purpose of embellishment, various colours are used to increase the attractiveness of the copy among other purposes.

10. Background: This is the predominant element occupying the back of the copy. Its nature, form and colour adds to the attractiveness of the copy.

### **Module 2: VITAL QUESTION TO ASK BEFORE DISPLAYING A COPY**

Copy writing is not done haphazardly; it requires critical thinking, conceptualisation, meditation and experimentation of creativity. It does not matter the media variety you are writing for; the common consensus is that a copy writer must be skillful in words, and have good understanding of his target audience to which the communication is directed. John-Kamen (2006:163) says “copy writers often do more than writing headlines and text. They are frequently called upon to help plan the layout and illustration for the print advertisement or to develop the idea on which it is based”.

For an advertising copy to appeal to its audience it must stimulate the five sense organs of man, hence, our actions and reactions are predetermined by these organs. These are the vital questions that must

be answered by a copy writer before displaying his creative work or copy. These include:

- a. Can this copy attract attention?
- b. Can it arouse desire
- c. Is it capable of creating interest?
- d. Can it provoke purchases action?

a. Can this copy attract attention? The first purpose of a copy is to catch attention. If it fails here, it would fail in other stages of the campaign process. Attracting consumer's attention is the best bet of a copywriter. So every creative measure to enable this should not be compromised.

b. Can it arouse desire? If a copy succeed to attract attention, the next is to determine whether it stirs interest in the audience. To arouse desire is to make one long for something or someone. This stage of the copy is crucial and should not be jeopardised by non- availability of the brand as promised in the advertisement. The desire of consumers to purchase a product is the key to achieving an advertising objective.

c. Is it capable of creating interest? Desire gives birth to interest. If the desire to have a product or service is there, automatically, the interest to purchase would follow. If a copy moved to create an

interest in the brand, it is almost successful. It is a different scenario, if interest persists and the will to purchase the brand is not there, hence that does not mean the goal of the copy is defeated. This leads us to the last question that needs to be self- asked by a copy writer before showing or displaying his creative work.

d. Can it provoke purchasing action? The bottom line of an advertising copy is to encourage the sales of a brand. A copy should above all other vital questions be able to provoke buying attitude of consumers toward the brand displayed to them. By so doing, the advertiser would do more to advertise his brands in the agency.

### **Advertising Layout**

Ucheanya (2013), while citing Dennis and Jenkins (1983: 37), defines layout as the "Arrangement of all the units or elements into a printed useable format". Ucheanya further states that the combination of ideas or concepts used in planning and designing advertisement is critical to the functions of an advertising layout. According to him, layout is a work-drawing which is usually pencil sketched to show the positions of copy elements, sizes of text, typefaces, colors of different units or items that are put together to inform a complete advertising campaign John-Kamen, (2006) sees advertising layout as "a part of sales promotion..." He further posits that advertising

layout shows how finished the advertisement will look; this look consists of drawing, product illustration or painting that can later be reproduced in the advertisement. A finished advertising layout, according to John-Kamen, (2006: 171) is compared to the blueprint of a building drawn by an architect. The following layout indicators are stated for printers to note:

- i. Shape
- ii. The size and location of the illustrations
- iii. Type style, size, space and mass to be occupied
- iv. Border style (if any)
- v. The width of the margins of white space
- vi. Any additional direction that may help the printer to execute the plane of the designer
- vii. Color combination in type, border and illustration.

The creative officer who produces advertising layout is known as layout designer. A layout designer is the visualiser of the entire copy output.

He projects his concept of how the copy would appear before the target audience. He is usually experienced and a professional in the job. Often, he is a creative and aesthetic personality.

John-Kamen, (2006) opines that “Before an advertising layout designer proceeds to work on his design, he must first consider a number of principles of layout design elements, which control the finished design”

The layout designer observes the following guidelines to enable him perfect a layout procedure. Hence he should note that:

- i. Layout design space allocation, size, amount of figures and copy to go into the media are well arranged.
- ii. The designer knows the brand very well enough to give it an excellent layout.
- iii. He should know the advertising policy of the company.

iv. He should be able to adapt his layout design to fit the publication in which the advertisement is to appear.

The Importance of Layout Layout displays the components of an advertising campaign on the media to be used for dissemination. It lays them originally on line format to determine their respective slot in the advertisement. The work done by the layout designer makes the job easier for printers, clients and agencies to view and understand. This leads to acceptance of the output of the advertisement. Ucheanya (2013: 58) states the following as the purpose why advertising layout is necessary and important. These are:

1. It enables the advertiser to see in advance before printing what the exact picture of the advertisement would be like
2. It gives the printer a guide on what to do
3. It provides to the printer in advance picture of the complete work and how it will look like when printed.
4. It eliminates arguments and misunderstanding between the advertiser and the printer in the areas of marginal notations.
5. It gives a concrete proposal to the agency to make a bold presentation to its clients
6. It gives the advertiser/client an opportunity to examine what the agency submitted for approval. A carefully prepared layout makes the tasks of decision making easier.

### **Module 3: DEFINING ADVERTISING COPY AND COPY WRITING**

Advertising copy means different things to different persons. However, the biases they hold on it tend to inform their definition of what it is. Some people define it as salesmanship-in-print, John-Kamen,

(2006:144). Some rational thinkers disagree with that definition; their argument predicated on the ground that some advertising copies have nothing tangible to offer the public, hence, nothing concrete to sell. This group holds that any advertising copy that does not present a product to the



public for purchase and does not present reasons why buyers must purchase it, is not salesmanship, but propaganda and impression development.

John-Kamen, (2006:145) shares with others authors that the definition of salesmanship-in-print is too narrow and myopic; hence, it reduces the advertising personnel to the role of merchandise peddling. He furthers his opinion by saying these people point to advertiser's prominent position, the total marketing process, and called it a force for mass consumer education and a tool for effecting social change.

Ucheanya, (2013: 60) defines advertising copy from a functional perspective thus: "advertising copy performs the function of development of familiarity with product or service brand name, shape,

motives and desires to build believability, giving reasons for selecting a particular brand over other competing brands." Ucheanya's assertion agrees with the school of thought that defines advertising copy as salesmanship-in-print and putting into consideration the advertising elements which he stated in his definition. Putting these two viewpoints together, one would say advertising copy is aimed at stirring up a feeling which can either be to sell or buy something or sympathise and support a cause which is directed to enhance better lives for the public. For instance, an advertising copy projected on HIV/AIDS or polio campaign is to engender better life for the public. Critically, it is rare to question that the overall objective of advertising copy is to sell something. Most advertising copies have sales motive. Even if the salesmanship tendency is inactive, the end is to endear patronage whether physically or emotionally.

Therefore, advertising copy can be defined as any creature write up or sketch which is meant to build a feeling of good will, strengthen public opinion or to break down a possible negative public opinion and to sell a product or service for the purpose of goal accomplishment. There are two basic type of advertising copy according to John-Kamen, (2006:145). These are:

(a) Product-selling copy: This is a copy type which is basically designed to sell a product to a particular target audience.

(b) Service-selling copy: This copy design primarily aimed at promoting services and ensuring the advertiser get optimum reward for it.

### **Principles of a good copy**

In preparing an effective advertising copy, some vital principles need to be adhered to. These principles are guides towards launching a successful advertising campaign. John-Kamen, (2006) enumerates these

five principles.

You must make people:

1. see it
2. read it
3. understand it
4. believe it
5. want it.

1. You must make people see the advertisement: Your advertising copy must be aesthetic enough to capture the sight of your target audience. The use of colours such as red, blue and green catch attention more. It is practically the duty of the copy developer to ensure this is achieved.

2. You must make people read the advertisement: Every human is a rational being. He tends to look for things and situation that is favourable to him. To get your audience to read your copy, you must make sure you project more of the benefits he would derive from the products or ideas you are selling. Again, showing concern for your target audience endears their interest toward your products. A quote goes thus "people don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care".

3. You must make people understand your advertisement: Your copy is expected to be clear, distinct and intelligible enough for the type of audience you designed it for. How comprehensive

our copy is, matters a lot; if care is abused, your audience may not give you a second chance, so understand your audience to

determine the language and words with which you can reach them.

4. You must make people believe it: Believe is a mental attitude, it can motivate or demotivate a person. Most people's beliefs aid them in life to either achieve success or become failure. In the Bible, Romans 10:10 to be precise, states that man believes with his heart before he confesses his support for or against a faith. As creative personnel, if your copy lacks the trust of your audience, its aims automatically is forfeited. It is therefore your job to package messages in a way that would provoke sympathy or

patronage for your products or service, making it truthful and simple. This principle according to John-Kamen, (2006:149) calls for the principles of truth and restraint moderation in advertising copy. "These principles are unfortunately and frequently disregarded. Some copies are full of extravagant claims and

superlative statements, which are far from convincing. As a matter of rule, over statement is less powerful than understatement. Make fewer promises to your audience, but deliver more. With this, you would win their loyalty for a long period of time.

5. You must make people want it: It is not all advertisement that leads to immediate sales. Some advertisements are projected with the aim of creating goodwill and friendliness. Its aim is to register

its presence in the mind of the audience to provide them with different choices of product or service. Hence, providing consumers with substitutes. For example, Coca-Cola and Pepsi can operate on this level. As an advertising copy writer, your copy must stir up the desire of your audience to want and desire the product or service being sold.

## **Module 4: ELEMENTS OF A COPY**

Having exhausted the principles of an advertising copy, it is necessary to know and understand the various elements that characterise a copy. These elements are rarely lavished on a particular advertising campaign. Ucheanya (2013) posits that copy elements are inputs in an advertising copy which direct and ground the objective of a copy to its target audience in such a way that patronage would be given in return. John- Kamen (2006:155) supports the position of Ucheanya, by itemising the

elements of a copy. An advertisement will be made of two to three of the common elements. Certainly, there is no rule governing the use of these elements. The peculiarity of an advertising campaign is pre-requisite to which elements to be used.

The following are some of the elements of an advertising copy, according to Kanem-John, (2006):

- The headline
- The sub-head
- The body copy
- The caption
- The blurb or balloon
- The box and panels
- Slogans, logotype and signature.

1. The headline: being the first element of a copy, it is the first contact element to target audience. It is displayed in large type face than the rest texts. It is designed with illustration to capture the attention of the reader. The headline usually presents a selling idea which intrigues prospects to further read the advertisement.

2. The sub-head: This is displayed below the headline, it is written in smaller type face than the headline, but larger than the body text. In some cases, sub-heads are placed before the headline because of the role it has to perform in the advertising copy, that of introducing the headline. In

this case, it is called upper-head. It usually consists of some crucial information the advertiser wants his audience to know before the copy illustration. Research has shown that people read the headlines and sub-heads before

reading other parts of the advertisement. It is not all advertisements that require sub an institution does not need it, because it has no selling points to get across like a product. Sub-head is useful only when full text reading is not needed.

3. The body copy: This is the part which tells the story of the advertisement. All details that the advertiser wants to get across to his audience are exhausted in this element. In the body copy, the writer gets down really to the important facts and business with the readers. John-Kamen (2006:156) explains that "some advertisement copy do not have body copy from a technical stand point. They contain no major unity type." Advertisement built around a comic-strip style, picture, and caption advertisements, fall into this category.

4. Captions: They are small units used with illustrations, coupons and special offers. They are generally less important to the main selling points in the advertisement than the body copy. They are

set in type sizes smaller than body text. Captions are used in representing sales points by both illustrating and explaining them at the same time.

5. The blurb or balloon: This is an advertising term used to set up a copy illustration in the mouth of a character illustrated in the advertisement. It is usually used as captions to portray a secondary feature in the story. At times, it can constitute a body text as in the cosmic-strip style. They are sometimes used as

headlines and in such cases they are not changed in any way except to be displayed in large size type and placed at the head of the advertisement.

6. Box and panel: A box is a caption around which a rule has been lined by an advertiser; singling it out from other copy. A panel on the other hand, is a solid rectangle of black or colour in the centre

of which is the caption, either in white or black type. Box and panel are both used in advertisement in features such as coupons, special offers and contest rules.

7. Slogans, logotypes, trade-marks and signatures: These are insisted on by companies to appear in every advertisement they disseminate. They logically demand that the company's name be displayed in its familiar form. This display practice is called a logotype which is often abbreviated in advertising jargon or slang to "logo", "sig" or "sig cut".

Trademark is a design, placed on goods by a manufacturer or merchant to distinguish his products or service from those made or sold by other competitors. A trademark is usually called a "Trade name". Also, the copywriter's notice required for legal reasons is included in all the copy prepared for such advertisers.

#### Module 5 MEDIA AND TOOLS EMPLOYED IN PR PRACTICE

As stated earlier, the diverse nature of the activities and functions of public relations demands that appropriate media and tools be used to communicate to the relevant publics. These consist of PR Marketing Media A variety of media is employed in public relations marketing, ranging from the following: The mass media – The mass media is used to reach various segments of the organisation's public with messages about the product of the organisation, new products and product innovations, etc

Publications – This consists of annual reports, brochures, articles, audiovisual materials, company news letters and magazines as well as documentary films.

Events – These includes news conferences, seminars, outings, exhibitions, plant tours, contests, competitions, anniversaries, sports, cultural events, etc.

News – news releases about products and services, editorial materials, sponsored feature articles, as well as new product or service information.

Speeches – Spokespersons, speaker's bureau, reprint of previous speeches etc constitute a veritable medium to interact with an organisation's publics.

Public service activities – organizations utilize opportunities to contribute money and time to charitable and good causes, such as participating in blood donation campaign organized by the Red Cross, Road Safety campaigns, etc.

Identity media – Organisations utilize visual identity media to communicate with their publics. These include company's logo, stationery (letter heads, envelopes, etc) brochures, business cards, sign poster, uniforms, buildings, etc.

## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Media As, in PR marketing a variety of media is used to create and maintain mutual relations between an organisation and its workers. These include: Employee publications of various types

- House journals (both for internal and external circulation)

- Annual report/newsletters - Employee policy manuals, guide books these are used to explain the policy guidelines which staffs are expected to conform to in their interaction with the organisation and its various stakeholders.

The guide books are used as a form of indoctrination to build loyalty and cohesion within the organisation.

Music (public address systems) and atmospheres. Public address systems are useful in large organisations when the chief executives need to have direct interpersonal intercourse with staff to give them first hand explanations and to build morale necessary for productivity in the organisation.

Exhibitions (in house)

Meetings, conferences, workshops, etc - Bulleting boards, suggestion boxes, information racks, pay inserts, etc. These are used to pass information to the staff and obtain necessary feedback. Suggestion boxes are used to encourage staff to contribute ideas for the running of the organisation.

- Service awards: They are used to reward staff for meritorious services rendered to the organisation and to encourage staff to emulate the awardees. Long service awards, (10 years, 20

years, 25 years etc) are used to project the organisation as a stable place to work in and be recognized.

- Induction programmes: These are used to familiarize news staff with the orientation and cultures of the organisation. Newcomers are introduced to the ways the organisation conducts its affairs so that they fuse into the organisation team spirit.

Management/employee committee: These meetings provide opportunity to listen to staff complaints and grievances as well as suggestions for future programmes. It helps to reduce conflict and acts as a conflict resolution mechanisms.

Direct Mail” An important medium used to communicate to staff is the direct mail. Messages from the Chief Executive Officer can be reproduced and mailed to each staff in a personal human tone. This helps reduce the distance between the top management and the staff as well as provide opportunity to enlighten the staff on the policies and programmes of the organisation.

End of year greetings and felicitations to individual staff helps to build in them a sense of belonging, with the wide use of the internet facilities in organisation, electronic mail message (e-mail) has become an important facet of direct mail.

Community Relations Media The press and mass media: These are used to pass information about the organisation to the general public as well as the position of the organisation on current issues, particularly environment. Oil companies for example can use the mass media to explain its position on the youth restiveness on the Niger-Delta, the plans to reduce environmental pollution, amnesty plan for repentant militants as well as the company’s corporate social responsibility development programmes and projects to improve the standard of living of its host communities.

Open house, factory visits and tours: Organisations utilize houses and factory visits to familiarize their publics with the goings on in the organisation or institutions. This helps to increase the knowledge of the public on the activities of the organizations and their positive impact on their lives.



Opinion leader meetings: These provide forum to interact with the leaders of the community who are expected to influence other members of the community in their attitude to the organisation.

Involvement of company's employees in civic activities: Companies encourage their staff to participate in community development activities, contribute their expertise and experience in project execution and generally partake in socio-cultural activities. This helps endear the organisation and its employees to the community as well as project them as socially responsible members of the community.

Publicity vans and photo exhibitions: These are used to mount publicity campaigns to promote the organisation's activities and generally enlighten the community. Film shows and photo exhibitions are particularly useful medium in community relations

## Module 7 PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH PRINCIPLES

What is Research?

We have earlier defined Public Relations as "the art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences... which will serve the public interest. Public relations deals with human beings. Human beings and the society in which they live are changing and dynamic. The public relations practitioner must find ways to update his knowledge of man and his society.

Research is the systematic collection and interpretation of information to increase understanding. It is therefore important to state that the first stage in the public relations process is research. For example, a company must acquire enough accurate relevant data about its products, publics to plan how to communicate effectively with all its constituent publics. In spite of its importance, many public relations practitioners tend to downplay its significance and insist on intuition and guesswork, believing that they are dealing with intangibles which are not easily measurable.

They think they already know as much as necessary on the issues and problems at hand, and should not bother themselves further. Do you see how misplaced that view can be in this scientific age? May be many people avoid research because they do not know what use research could be.

At every step of the public relations process, research is required to formulate strategy, to test messages, to influence opinion, get publicity and evaluate success or otherwise of our efforts. Research can be done to preempt a problem or prevent crisis from developing. We need research to track issues before they develop into a full blown problem. Public relations research is conducted to do three basic things.

Describe a situation, process or phenomenon

Explain why something is happening, what are its causes and what effect it will have. Predict what will probably happen if we do or do not take action. It is clear that the price of not doing research is enormous. Precious resources and finance is expended without clear cut idea of the outcomes or expected results from the endeavour. Research is the very essence of successful PR activity. Research has a vital role to play in each stage of the public relations process.

At the planning stage, it is used to identify the problem, refine the problem, and identify the relevant publics as well as the prevailing perceptions of the organisation. Research should provide answers to such questions as: what exactly is the problem and its source? When did the problem start, who is affected or involved by the problem and how are they affected. Before the implementation of the recommended action; research is used to identify the audience trusted media channels that can be used to get them. The message must be pre-tested to determine if they will be understood by the target public. At the implementation stage research is used to measure message distribution message exposure as well as audience acceptance. At the evaluation stage research is used to measure audience awareness, attitude and behaviour change, in fact the impact the campaign has made on the target publics.

#### MODULE 8: PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH PRINCIPLES

Certain principles guide public relations research endeavours. The Institute of Public Relations Research (1997) has provided us with some principle for measuring public relations research

effectiveness. They include: Clear programme objectives and desired outcomes tied directly to business goals should be established.

Measuring of PR 'outputs' which are short term such as amount of press coverage received or expressive of a particular message should be differentiated from measuring 'out comes' such as changing awareness, attitudes and even behaviour which are long term and have far reaching impact. Measuring media contact should be a first step in the PR evaluation process. This is because media content measures are limited as it cannot establish clearly whether a target audience actually saw a message or responded to it.

No single technique we can evaluate PR effectiveness. Evaluation requires a combination of techniques from media analysis, focus groups to poll surveys'. Public relations effectiveness should not be compared with advertising effectiveness. This is because while advertising placement and messages can be controlled, public relations cannot.

The organisation should precisely identify its key messages, targets and desired communication channels. This is because unless an organizations is clear about its targets, its public relations measurements will not be reliable.

## TYPES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Research Most public relations research can be classified under two broad types: Applied research and theoretical research. Applied research is strategic or evaluative and is used to solve practical problems. On the other hand, theoretical research generates studies that aids understanding of the public relations process.

Let us examine the two types of research further to give you deeper understanding of how the two interrelate. Applied research in public relations as stated earlier, can be either strategic or evaluative. They are designed to provide answers to specific practical problems.

Strategic research is used in developing PR programme objectives, such as what we intent to achieve, what we need to achieve it and how we can achieve it. It can be used to develop message strategies which addresses the question of what is to be said, how it is to be said, the emphasis to be adopted and how and when to reach the audience with the message strategic research is

also used to establish programme benchmarks on what can be achieved by the programme that is measurable, the goals of the programme.

On the other hand, evaluative research is conducted primarily to determine whether a public relations programme has achieved its goals and objectives. On the other hand, theoretical research is used to develop a body of knowledge which helps the work of the public relations practitioners. It helps build theories in such areas as why people communicate, formation of public opinion and how a public is created. Knowledge of theoretical research is also important as it provides a framework for persuasion and understanding why people do what they do.

It can also enable practitioners understand the persuasive limits of communication. Generally, knowledge of theoretical research can help PR practitioners to understand the basis of applied research findings as well as moderate the expectations of management on the results of public relations programmer.

#### MODULE 9: WRITING IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Writing occupies an import aspect of the work of a public relations practitioner. Writing is a conscious effort. Unlike speaking which is picked up effortlessly from the environment, writing has to be learned. It involves a formal learning process. Few people are born writers. Writing is very important because it performs several basic communication functions for us; It is used to preserve our thoughts, observations and experiences.

It enables us to keep records of what we have done or intends to do in a permanent form Writing is a basic skill of communication. Writing takes patience and hard work. The more you write, the better skilled you become. This is true of the adage: "practice makes perfect". To develop good writing skills, you must master some basic fundamentals of writing which include: Develop ideas before writing - Writing requires ideas that relate to the reader, engage the reader's attention, concern the reader and be in the readers' interest. Ideas will help you establish, the purpose of communication.

Prepare a draft - Every writing, no matter how good, can always be improved with a second look. A draft helps you to organize the ideas before they are put in a final form. Simplicity and clarity – Simplicity and clarity are very important in any writing.

The simpler your writing, the more people will understand you. Clarity ensures that the meaning the reader gets is the meaning the writer intended. In other words, the reader does not have to guess to get the meaning of the message. Every word or paragraph that is superfluous should be eliminated. Aim at a particular audience – To message must be tailored to reach the target audience you have in mind. A writer cannot aim for all audiences. Your message must aim at your specific target.

A writer must identify his/her audience. Knowledge about the audience will help the writer tailor his/her writing to meet their needs. Rudolf Flesch a renowned writer has provided writers the key to good writing which he referred to as the A's and B's They are:

Avoid big words

Avoid extra words

Avoid cliches

Be specific

Be active

Be simple

Be short

Be organized

Be convincing

Be understandable A good public relations writing generally follows the inverted pyramid structure which is popular in news writing. This style presents the facts in descending order of importance.

Phases of writing

As we earlier explained, good writing is a function of good organisation of thought. Good organisation follows a defined process. Writing involves a series or phases of activities both mental and physical. There are various phases or stages that constitute the process of writing. Let us look at them briefly. Prewriting – This stage involves generating and conceiving ideas of what to write research, planning, drawing and outline; setting goals and objectives of your writing.

Writing – This has to do with selecting/rejecting words, sentences, paragraphs and writing units.

Rewriting/Editing – This involves putting finishing touches to your work. It entails checking and correcting the grammatical and other errors. This is the stage where you fine tune, smoothen, polish and edit your material and it is crucial in producing a well written material.

Evaluation/Product Assessment This involves going through the whole piece to evaluate if the objective or purpose of the writing has been achieved.