Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Public Relations

Strengthening Synergies with Human Resources

THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF MANAGING PEOPLE

Edited by Professor Emma Parry, Cranfield School of Management, Swindon, UK

The past two decades have represented a time of unprecedented social, technological, and economic change that has required a transformation in human resource management (HRM). Shifts in demographics, continued increases in women in the workforce, and greater mobility across national borders have led to higher diversity in the workplace. Advances in technology, including social media, have enabled new ways of doing business through faster communications and vast amounts of data made available to all. Mobile technology with its ubiquitous connectivity has led to renewed concerns over work−life balance and extreme jobs. These and many other changes have seen evolving attitudes toward work and careers, leading to different expectations of the workplace and mean that existing ways of managing people may no longer be effective. This series examines in depth the changing context to identify its impact on the HRM and the workforce.

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By

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

For Dr. Steven Brem, M.D.

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Preface

Conceptually, the orientation of managers working in public relations (PR), human resources (HR), and corporate social responsibility or sustainability (CSR/S) are contextual and may be dramatically different from one another. Perhaps they converge, however, with regard to organizational *reputation*. Reputation management persists as one of an organization's most important jobs; one that drives an organization's need to acquire and maintain legitimacy in the eyes of key stakeholders (e.g., community, customers, employees, and investors). PR managers work to develop mutually beneficial stakeholder relationships that contribute to an organization's reputation, HR managers coordinate employee issues that impact on products/services provided, and CSR/S managers work to meet the needs of various stakeholders with regard to the organization's people–planet–profit impacts. Both PR and HR, as practice fields, have been around for several decades. CSR/S, however, is a relative newcomer to organizations, both for-profit and non-profit – with the success of CSR/S programs often measured according to how it (or its lack) plays out with regard to the organization's reputation.

How both sets of teams could work together has escaped scholarly inquiry for years. This book examines ways HR and PR may be charged to make CSR/S an integrated ingredient and ethical hallmark of organizational culture. How this dynamic plays out in the workplace and to what effect is the focus here. Authors from around the globe have pondered these issues and offer empirical findings.

CSR/S initiatives and specific activities contribute to an organization's brand management and overall reputation when internal and external stakeholders consider the work as contributing positively – in terms of attracting, recruiting, motivating, and retaining employees. The 11 chapters presented in this collection each address the overlap and differences among PR, HR, and

CSR/S from a variety of vantage points; many attending to employees as an important stakeholder group.

I was inspired to assemble this edited collection following earlier work in exploring ways that PR practitioners may serve as insider activists for inspiring organizations to become more responsible and sustainable (Pompper, 2015). Over the course of conducting hundreds of interviews and examining just as many organizations' websites, I came away feeling that too many corporations offer fluffy, vague mission statements about "protecting the environment," "hiring diverse employees," and "sustaining the planet" with no real measurement and what could be considered a good deal of "lip service." Hence, they all sound pretty much the same! To promote organizational reputation, employees are used for short-lived photo-op community volunteer activities, raking leaves and picking up trash while wearing brightly colored T-shirts and baseball caps featuring the company logo. The photos appear across social media and on company websites, annual and CSR/S reports, and sometimes community newspapers. Some employees find the events fulfilling, while others may feel (ab)used. What does a once-per-year employee community volunteer activity do long term to substantively advance an organization's CSR/S mission anyway? Even nonprofit organizations that partner with for-profit corporations for CSR/S projects worry that they may be exploited for corporate gain; to put a good face on corporate shortcomings.

To begin, I explore a long-time rivalry between internal PR and HR departments — with accusations of encroachment — by exploring why both sets of professionals must find ways to work together with the aim of navigating organizations toward authentic CSR/S.

Lipschultz examines sustainability by considering the employee engagement movement as mapped across Twitter data in order to identify centers of social influence in which content travels through key accounts during sharing.

Bradford expands the critical social theory of youth empowerment framework by exploring representations of urban youth conservation−environmental empowerment. She conducted a textual analysis of three organizations' websites so that she could examine how corporate communicators and HR professionals can champion volunteer activities and youth engagement as evidence of CSR/S commitment.

Heinrich uses excellence theory and interviews with PR, HR, and CSR/S managers to explore how Michigan-based for-profit

corporations use CSR initiatives to attract, engage, and retain job-seeking Millennials.

Wood, Berger, and Roberts use social identity theory to undergird an ethnography conducted at a benefit corporation (B-corporation) – Cotopaxi, an outdoor company that produces backpacks and clothing through partnerships with indigenous communities around the globe as a means of alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable business practices – to study shared values of the corporation and its volunteer employees representing cultures in India, Samoa, South Sudan, Nigeria, and the United States.

Dusingize and Nyiransabimana offer a case study based on interviews with key employees to investigate university social responsibility (USR) practices within Institut Catholique de Kabgayi in Rwanda and to advance understanding of ways USR is defined against a post-genocide history.

Oshin-Martin applies the theory of open social innovation, using the case study research method, to reveal complementary roles that HR and PR may play in creating a transparent and authentic CSR program that builds community relations and value for internal and external stakeholders in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Bourland-Davis and Beverly L. Graham use a communication audit research method to examine how CSR can be an integral part of organizational culture – based on employee interviews and content analysis of newsletters produced by a healthcare facility during a major change; an opportunity to examine interplay among PR, HR, and CSR/S management.

Howes offers an essay examining why companies create special hiring programs for military veterans and Olympic athletes to demonstrate how close coordination between HR and PR can help personalize CSR.

Stokes uses social exchange theory to highlight dangers associated with not being able to activate CSR values among employees during legitimacy controversies; specifically Mylan's mishandling of the EpiPen controversy which widened its legitimacy gap among internal and external stakeholder groups.

Strauss considers the relationship between CSR and PR in the gaming industry and suggests ways to motivate employees in order to recruit a more diverse and dedicated workforce; a CSR goal at MGM Resorts International. She considers the particular challenges of communicating with employees in a vice industry and suggests what HR managers can learn from these efforts to combine CSR with employee engagement.

As a whole, this book advances an argument for HR−PR department cooperation in fulfilling an *organizational conscience* role for navigating for-profits and nonprofits toward greater social responsibility and sustainability to benefit people and planet; an outcome that ultimately may support the profit motive (for corporations) by positively enhancing its reputation. The CSR and sustainability literatures are rife with theory building and critique. This is useful, but it is time to incorporate practical advice and case studies that may serve as a foundation for later hypothesis testing and theory building. We need to provide evidence and guidance to for-profit and nonprofit organizations about how to make CSR/S happen. One way to do this is through building authentic relationships with employees for common goals in advancing organizations as *real* leaders in protecting the planet and in respecting people. We believe this edited collection begins the work in earnest.

As part of regular operations, PR and HR departments may work closely when managing and communicating with employees. However, usually, the communication flow is top-down. Support of employees as a key stakeholder group by the HR function, generally, has assumed a top-down management perspective. Meanwhile, PR increasingly is viewed as a publicity function in organizations − even though PR's attention to employees as a key stakeholder group with valuable perspectives resonates with a two-way symmetrical communication model standpoint.

To create more socially responsible, sustainable, ethical − and reputable − organizations, communication flow must be organic and two-way. Nowhere is there a confluence of these concepts that is more relevant today than in a context of empowering organizations to meet their CSR/S goals and commitments beyond maximizing profit for stockholders. Findings presented in these chapters offer practical advice for working with employees to build organizations with responsibility and sustainability built in − based on HR and PR departments working together as *organizational conscience* touchstone.

Reference

Pompper, D. (2015). *Corporate social responsibility, sustainability, and public relations: Negotiating multiple complex challenges*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Foreword

Over the past 20 years or so, we have seen a change in the emphasis of organizations, away from a focus that is purely related to economic outcomes to a recognition that businesses should also pay attention to social and environmental outcomes – leading to the creation of what has been called the "triple bottom line." Alongside this shift, has been the development of the concept of "corporate social responsibility" (CSR) whereby companies address areas of environmental and social concern while also maintaining their focus on shareholders and other stakeholders. As part of this movement, we have seen most large corporations recognize the need to consider elements of environmental and social sustainability and to align these aims with their broader corporate goals.

Despite this shift, however, and the resulting trail of academic research concerning CSR and sustainability within organizations, there has been little focus on the relationship of these aspects to human resource management (HRM). This is despite the fact that the human resource function surely has an essential role in integrating CSR within the culture of an organization. I am therefore very pleased to include this book, which focuses exactly on aligning HRM with CSR and sustainability, in my book series. This text provides a contemporary and fascinating investigation of the relationship between CSR and HRM and how the two can work together to produce positive outcomes for the organization, including the attraction and retention of talent, social innovation, and employee engagement. I hope you will all enjoy reading this book as much as I have.

Emma Parry
Series Editor

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Picking at an Old Scab in a New Era: Public Relations and Human Resources Boundary Spanning for a Socially Responsible and Sustainable World

Donnalyn Pompper

ABSTRACT

The time is right for renewed and updated attention to the relationship between public relations (PR) and human resources (HR) departments in the context of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability. For too long, conflict between the two practice areas has obscured opportunities for collaboration which benefits organizations and stakeholders. This chapter offers theoretical underpinnings for examining an interdepartmental, cross-unit working relationship between HR and PR — and advances a vision for why it is needed now.

Keywords: Public relations; human resources; encroachment; turf battles; CSR; sustainability

Thirty years ago, US public relations (PR) managers noted they were struggling against attempts of organizations' other internal departments to absorb and control the PR function – from legal, to marketing, to human resources (HR). Practitioners among the for-profit PR sector, in particular, worried that the assignment of non-PR personnel to manage the PR role or to take over PR tasks could diminish PR's hard won battle for legitimacy and seriously damage its reputation (Lauzen, 1991, 1992). Hence, attention to encroachment effects, defensive development of new techniques for measuring PR results, and studies of internal and employee relations received widespread attention among PR scholars and practitioners during the last decades of the 20th century.

More recently, these specific foci more or less had fallen off the PR scholarship radar until *internal communication* served as theme for the 18th International Public Relations Symposium (aka Bledcom) in 2011 and *Public Relations Review* published a special issue on *internal communication* the following year. Researchers examining relationship building among employees concurred that organizations must continue to support the important stakeholder group of *internal publics* or *employee publics*. Yet, formal attention in PR research to its *own* relationship with the HR function seems to attract little scholarly attention. Researchers published in this current edited collection focus on this important connection by considering the larger goal of PR supporting organizations' Corporate Social Responsibility/Sustainability (CSR/S) goals – and what PR can do to build important synergies with employees in conjunction with the HR department.

As a management function, PR must be central to organizations' relationship building efforts in using communication to advance people, planet, and profit goals consistent with Elkington's (1999) triple bottom line approach. Employees are a highly valuable stakeholder group – a social capital talent pool – for enabling organizations to create, maintain, and use relationships as building blocks toward achieving organizational goals (Kennan & Hazleton, 2006). For example, when organizations desire to build a more diverse employee workforce along multiple social identity dimensions (e.g., age, culture, ethnicity, faith/spirituality, gender, physical ability, socioeconomic status, and more), PR practitioners use communication to "foster a livable work environment where diversity is embraced, conflict is minimized, and employees are interconnected and free to form relationships in the course of addressing organizational goals and achieving their maximum potential" (Pompper, 2012, p. 101). Indeed, PR teams are accomplished boundary

spanners and relationship builders (Ledingham, 2003), linking individuals within internal departments, interdepartmentally across organizational functions, and even traversing geographic boundaries to connect with employees and other stakeholder groups located around the globe. Where our understanding falls short, however, is in exploring the fine-grained means by which PR and HR personnel work together — united by an organization's meta goals of social responsibility and sustainability.

In addition to serving as relationship builders who maximize social capital assets, PR managers also are empowered to fulfill an *ethics and social responsibility* social role (Molleda & Ferguson, 2004) and an *insider activist* role (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002; Pompper, 2015). Both roles may be conjoined as PR managers support organizations toward greater sustainability and social responsibility — especially in nations and regions where socioeconomic status inequality and negative effects of unregulated industry provide for-profit corporations with opportunities to partner with employees and other stakeholders such as NGOs and government groups alike in order to rid communities of pollution, waste, and blight. PR managers are uniquely positioned to support organizations toward social responsibility and sustainability, given their expertise in harnessing social capital — or positive energies among employees — as volunteers who connect organizations with external communities (Pompper, 2013). Hence, I have argued for shifting diversity management out of the HR arena and into the PR function — making it an integral component of CSR/S with its own budget and power to make decisions (Pompper, 2015).

This chapter critically explores the interplay between PR, HR, and CSR/Sustainability as viewed through lenses of theoretical underpinnings for examining interdepartmental relationships, PR and internal communications and its challenges, PR departments and CSR, PR and HR relationship building, encroachment and turf battles, envisioning the HR−PR cross-unit working relationship, and summary/discussion.

Theoretical Underpinnings for Examining Interdepartmental Relationships

Theorists consistently seek new ways to deepen understanding of the PR profession and phenomena central to its practice. For

example, senior scholars have urged for PR theory building as organizational standard bearer for ethics and social good − with PR practitioners being responsible for communication processes (Roper, 2005) and consequently sharing responsibility for organizations' morality (e.g., Pratt, Im, & Montague, 1994). Toth (2009) has advocated for integration of critical theory with PR excellence theory. I enjoin these threads and other meta perspectives for a multidisciplinary look at some means for building internal communication theory. While researchers have directed significant attention toward the impact of social networks and media within organizations, internal communication theory and assessment have lagged (Ruck & Welch, 2012). Next, I address several important literature subsets to support my proposition that PR and HR must work together to support CSR/S.

First, early organizational science researchers and the scientific management movement have advocated for intradepartmental and interfunctional cooperation in organizations. Frederick Taylor, an early 20th century American mechanical engineer driven to maximize industrial efficiency, is attributed with inspiring the personnel management field as part of scientific organizational management (Kaufman, 2002) and Henri Fayol, a French late 19th/early 20th century industrialist, is considered the father of modern operational-management theory (Koontz & O'Donnell, 1976). Fayol posited that employees must work together in structured harmony through organizing, coordination, and control of goals and activities − along a vertical hierarchical chain. Both prescriptions for theorizing about a well-managed organization offer antecedents to cross-functional knowledge building in organizations (Foss, Laursen, & Pedersen, 2011). Moreover, boundary-spanning long has been a useful strategy in PR as managers work to facilitate two-way communication and relationship building among organizations and stakeholders both internally and externally. Interdepartmental relations within a social system require consistent monitoring and development − such as when the marketing function links with sales (Ruekert & Walker, 1987).

Second, by the mid-20th century, systems theory emerged to explain how an organizational system may best be scrutinized in terms of relationships among its parts. By the 1970s, systems theory enabled PR researchers like Larissa (nee Schneider) Grunig (1985) to explain information flow among an organization's departments − and ways these dynamics impact the PR function.

More recently, Plowman (2013) posited that even though social systems may tend toward independence, economic and political conditions propel systems toward *inter*dependence to ensure shared survival. For example, two-way symmetrical communication wherein internal departments achieve mutual respect promotes complementary engagements for "sustainable relationship[s]" (Plowman, 2013, p. 908). In addition, cross-organizational synergies rely on intraorganizational channels of communication, shared and integrated knowledge, with efficiencies that ultimately lead to superior innovation performance (Aoki, 1986) and competitive advantage (Tsai, 2001).

Third, critical theorists have advocated for horizontal management with permeable departmental boundaries to support social justice goals. Senior PR scholar, Larissa Grunig (1989), enjoined systems theory with contingency theory to advocate for interconnectedness or gestalt of organizations; a holistic and dynamic means for coordination across managerial subsystems. This view supports organizations' internal departments working together to address the meta challenges of building a company or nonprofit organization that is socially responsible and sustainable both inside and out (Jung & Pompper, 2014; Pompper, 2015). The PR field must support idealistic values and collaborate for society's benefit (Grunig, 2000) – and revitalize our notion of the common good (Brunner, 2017) by centering on professional ethics and "moral life as a whole" (Christians, 2008, p. 3).

Beyond the obvious benefits of nurturing collegiality, harmony, and trust in the workplace, social identity theorists have advocated for organizations to support exchange relationships between an employee and immediate supervisor, as well as between the employee and the organization (more broadly) so that each employee feels oneness with the organization – for maximum job satisfaction and engagement in order to reduce employee churn (Sluss, Klimchak, & Holmes, 2008). Employees who do not identify with the organization tend to experience increased burnout, stress, sickness, and withdrawal (Knight & Haslam, 2010). Important employee engagement factors include sharing views with management, feeling informed about the organization, and perceiving that one's boss is committed to the organization, too (Truss et al., 2006). In particular, younger employees seek employers with whom they can identify – as an extension of *their own* identity – for a "greater sense of meaning and purpose in their extending work lives" because individual

employees want to promote organizational characteristics that they also want ascribed to themselves (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006, p. 200).

Finally, theorists have advanced our understanding of corporations' for-profit motives and effects on PR practice and employee relations. One corporation's monitoring of employee opinions on internal communication over a course of 70 years suggested that fewer than half seem satisfied with management's willingness to listen to employees' perspective and so Broom and Sha (2013) recommended greater attention to upward, two-way communication for mutually beneficial relationship building. Corporations exist with society's support, and therefore corporations are responsible to society (Buchholz, 1991; Manheim & Pratt, 1986). Hence, reform wherein corporate power is used to remedy social problems must happen concurrently with ethical and moral operations (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1991). PR's role is to serve as organizational conscience working on behalf of employers as well as stakeholders − especially in matters involving negotiation of profit with ethics (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002; Pompper, 2015). Outcomes include corporations' hiring of ethics officers and ombudsmen as liaisons between management and stakeholders (Brunner, 2017). Such actions also benefit the PR profession in shedding a poor reputation for unethical behavior − which endures since its early days. Indeed, there are multiple theoretical underpinnings for further enhancing understanding of how best to nurture interdepartmental relationships.

Development of the HR Function within Organizations

Formally managing employees in the U.S. emerged as a task early in the 20th century and has been called many things: labor/personnel/employment management, employee relations, and then in the 1980s − HR management (HRM) (Strauss, 2001). Regardless of label, the function is charged with attracting, developing, motivating, retaining, and using people as labor, or social capital. Relationships between employers and employees are *managed* in order to achieve maximum organizational effectiveness and/or profit (Kaufman, 2002), increase competitive advantage (Florea, Cheung, & Herndon, 2013), and to enhance

corporate social performance through engagement with social issues (Rothenberg, Hull, & Tang, 2017).

Today, organizations' internal HR departments often are charged with attracting top talent to add value to employee pools. This internal group communicates about policies and programs, training, and planning events regarding information dissemination about benefits, yet Roeser (2016) warned that HR may be challenged to protect a "core responsibility" from "fall[ing] into other camps and internal disciplines, such as marketing, public relations, community relations, operations and legal" – but simultaneously recommended "working with these folks" (p. 10) if HR and PR functions are separated into two different departments. Consequently, one research team found that HRM and innovation "create and enhance other capabilities" to the degree that corporate social performance is advanced (Rothenberg et al., 2017, p. 391). Indeed, HRM wherein employees are engaged in ongoing skill development and empowered to participate in decision making can yield competitive advantage for better financial performance (Way, 2002) – as well as good social performance (Clarke, 2001; Florea et al., 2013). Increasingly, organizations' stakeholders demand that organizations monitor their socially irresponsible behavior and solve problems they create (Lin, 2013). Research findings suggest that employees, as part of HRM practices, are best positioned to enable organizations to build their core competencies (Wright, Dunford, & Snell, 2001) – such as fostering behaviors and performance that advance companies' attention to environmental and social issues (Rothenberg et al., 2017).

In HR departments, employees are considered *assets* that must be attracted and so media that potential applicants attend to are vehicles bombarded with information about organizational policies and benefits. Hence, HRM involves "an array of norms, values and beliefs expressing the organization's philosophy concerning its relationships with its members" (Sandu, Cozaru, & Pescaru, 2012, p. 119). In marketing departments, employees are considered *internal customers* (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2002). This means that HR and marketing often work together to strategically leverage one another's skills in order to attract top talent (Withers, 2003). An HR director for a global PR and marketing agency opined that "HR should be as creative as any other part of the business" (Mallows, 2015, p. 51). PR and HR also should pool talents – especially to plan communication programs focused on attracting talent *and retaining* talented employees.

PR Perspective on Internal Relations

The nuanced role of communication in the internal organizational environment offers a portal for examining relationships between departments of PR and HR – even though several PR researchers have noted a dearth of research on internal communication despite its growing significance (e.g., Hargie & Tourish, 2009; Zerfass, Tench, Verhoeven, Verčič, & Moreno, 2010). We owe much to organizational communication scholars who have underscored the value of communication in both for-profit and nonprofit organizations (e.g., Jablin & Putnam, 2001). Overall, internal communication is an interdisciplinary management function integrating elements of HRM with communication (Verčič, Verčič, & Sriramesh, 2012); an association more relevant than ever given employee concerns about impacts of globalization and deregulation that undergirds organizational restructurings, downsizing, mergers and acquisitions, and outsourcing practices. In the 1980s U.S., similar fears were inspired by rapid social change as more women and people of color entered organizations' management levels. More recently, employees and other stakeholders have grown increasingly concerned about organizations' role in mitigating social problems (Lin, 2013) such as their response to environmental issues (Walls, Phan, & Berrone, 2011) – whether the organization created the problem in the first place or not. Indeed, organizations undergo intense pressures to measure and report on their social and environmental performance (Clarke, 2001).

Practitioners' and scholars' foci on internal communication have received international attention. In continental Europe, the European Association for Internal Communication (www.feiea.com) is dedicated to advancing internal communication practice, and in the United Kingdom, the Institute of Internal Communication (www.ioic.org.uk) serves as a group separate from the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR). In the United States, International Association of Strategic Communicators (www.ccmconnection.com) focuses on internal communication – and across the United States and in Europe, internal communication ranks among the top five responsibility areas of PR and communication management practitioners (Zerfass et al., 2010).

A variety of labels have been attached to the internal communication function within organizations and one's location in

a company or nonprofit can determine how employees are regarded. The term *internal communication* commonly is used in PR (Welch, 2012) — often equated with *intraorganizational communication* or *employee communication* (Verčič et al., 2012) or *employee/organizational communication* (Berger, 2008). More broadly, *integrated internal communications* is said to consist of four subareas: business communication, management communication, corporate communication, and organizational communication (Kalla, 2005). Welch and Jackson (2007) operationalized *internal communication* as manager-internal stakeholder exchanges designed to enhance organizational belonging, increase awareness of change, and share information about goals. In PR, employees at all levels constitute an organization's most important stakeholder group for relationship building (Broom & Sha, 2013; de Bussy & Suprawan, 2012), wherein they are given autonomy and empowered to participate in strategic decision making — while managers attend to the quality of employees' work life, personal growth, and balance of individual effort and teamwork (Grunig, 1992a). Internal communication programs that promote active, nonhierarchical employee collaboration across diverse social identity dimensions are expected to grow in the future (Men & Bowen, 2017).

For several decades, PR departments commonly have been structured to attend to an organizations' stakeholders by creating teams dedicated to engagement with specific stakeholder groups, publics, or specialties — such as an internal/employees, community, government, media, and special-interest group relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Some findings suggest that an organization's employee orientation may be synonymous with various HRM practices (Zhang, 2010). In some organizations, PR's relationship building with employees has been labeled as *employee communications, employee relations, relations with internal publics, corporate communications, leadership communications* and *management communications* — with the term *internal communication* being the most popular (Verčič et al., 2012); as "an interdisciplinary function integrating elements of HR management, communication and marketing" (p. 229). In Europe, *internal communication* ranks among the top three strategic communication disciplines (Moreno, Verhoeven, Tench, & Zerfass, 2010). Verčič and her colleagues posited that ever-broadening boundaries of what constitutes *organization* also necessitate a more comprehensive definition of *internal communication* to encompass multiple cultures and nations; a move, ultimately, that

would see internal communication achieve maturity as an independent PR practice arena. In this chapter, I also argue for closer relationships between PR and HR to establish the strongest links with employees as an act designed to make organizations more socially responsible and sustainable.

Moreover, PR researchers have endeavored to determine if/how internal communication relates to organizational effectiveness. For-profit companies are highly concerned with maintaining quality relationships with employees, with some that especially value employees as a primary stakeholder group often experiencing positive corporate financial performance (de Bussy & Suprawan, 2012; Robson & Tourish, 2005) − a business case for building strong employee relations − but some findings designed to measure relationships between employee relations with financial performance yielding mixed results (Berrone, Surroca, & Tribó, 2007). Because major organizational crises are experienced "as an act of betrayal" (Mitroff, 2005, pp. 147−149), management's poor handling of the crisis, rumors, and product recalls threaten a positive employee−organization relationship (Aggerholm, 2009), yet PR scholars have focused significantly more attention on effects among external stakeholders and we still know far less about how crises affect internal stakeholders (Frandsen & Johansen, 2011). So, formal crisis planning to address internal organizational stakeholders works to manage employee fears and to boost their perceptions regarding job security (Johansen, Aggerholm, & Frandsen, 2012). During times of significant organizational change, Lies (2012) posited that PR teams in charge of organizational communication must manage information and build/maintain trust about "hard factors (costs, yield)" as well as internal stakeholder groups' "soft factors (emotions, fears, moods, etc.)" − for employees' positive perceptions of a management team during change (p. 259).

PR-managed internal communication programs contribute positively to valued, well-informed employees both domestically and globally. Beyond competitive advantage offered by strategic internal communication that keeps employees up to date on business operations, benefits of internal communication extend beyond organizational walls (White, Vanc, & Stafford, 2010), such as when employees participate in social responsibility and sustainability programs (Pompper, 2013). For example, some corporations give back to communities and protect natural environments where they do business. Commitments are made visible

Figure 1: Volunteerism Often Contributes Positively to Teambuilding and Camaraderie, as Employees across Departments Are United by Concern for Specific Causes and Pride in Wearing Company Gear for Photo Sharing Via Social Media.

when employees fulfill an *ambassador* role as volunteers picking up litter, painting fences, planting trees, and supporting programs that benefit seniors and children — all while wearing company-logoed caps and shirts for photo sharing via social media and traditional publicity promotion (Pompper, 2013). Moreover, globalization effects inspire PR to help employees build rapport across geographic lines so that teams may collaborate and solve problems (Figure 1).

PR Departments and CSR/S

According to PR pioneer, Ed Bernays, PR is "the practice of social responsibility" (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 47). While PR practitioners and their departments uniquely may be positioned to navigate organizations toward management that is ethical, moral, and practices good citizenship by aligning interests of the organization with those of stakeholders (Spangler & Pompper, 2011), sometimes the path forward is not as straightforward as it

could be. As a discipline, PR more often has incorporated CSR as a "reactive communication tactic" for generating publicity rather than organically acting as *corporate conscience* across the organization (Park & Dodd, 2017, p. 15). Too often, *greenwashing* with regard to environmental issues and *pinkwashing* with regard to supporting breast cancer campaigns, in particular, have earned skepticism as publicity vehicles among critical stakeholder groups like consumers. Indeed, a legitimacy gap occurs when there is a difference between how organizations are perceived to be operating and how stakeholders believe they *should* be operating (Sethi, 1977).

For this reason, I have advocated for PR practitioners to serve as an *insider activist* (Pompper, 2015) shaping ethically conscientious behavior across organizational silos − such as working *with* the HR department. Society's walls do not stop at an organization's façade. Hence, I concur with L'Etang (1994) who posited that organizational civic responsibility is the practice of symmetrical PR in order to build positive relationships with stakeholders. Moreover, Kleinmann (2017) reminded us that relationships are "the core of civic responsibility, and PR professionals are the managers of these relationships" (p. 77). Referencing Devin and Lane's (2014) call for organizations to align their mission statement with social issues, she invoked the two-way symmetrical PR model as a framework for organizational management to adopt a "lived out loud" approach to civic responsibility (Kleinmann, 2017, p. 84).

In addition to navigating CSR within organizations, PR practitioners have been working for many years to build relationships with external stakeholders through community relations activities. Kent and Taylor (2017) have advocated for thinking of community as "a compelling and useful archetype" for describing PR as a coalition-building function, in general, and as a tool for actualizing communitarianism theory, more specifically (p. 177). According to the communitarianism framework − an "environmental movement" that seeks to enhance our moral, social, and political environment − communitarians engage in teamwork "to bring about the changes in values, habits, and public policies that will allow us to do for society what the environmental movement seeks to do for nature: to safeguard and enhance our lives" (Etzioni, 1993, pp. 2−3). Hence, organizations following a communitarianism philosophy are empowered to advance empathy and to create universal appeal by shifting foci away from self-centered organizational interests (cf. Kent, 2010). Overall,

this approach enables PR practitioners to engage in a new kind of practice; one where asking questions from a more universal community perspective across geographic, racial, and ethnic boundaries – is preferred (Taylor & Kent, 2014).

While CSR research in PR has been growing since 2006, much of the work lacks theoretical foundation; most often defaulting to stakeholder theory (Lee, 2017). Findings of Lee's (2017) content analysis of 11 journals from 1980 to 2015 suggested that while the business literature links CSR to financial returns, ethics, and environmental concerns, PR researchers tend to focus more on descriptions of CSR practices, communication techniques, and CSR effects. Indeed, several study findings have encouraged PR researchers to increase attention to PR's role in CSR, as well as stakeholder perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs (e.g., Capriotti & Moreno, 2007; Clark, 2000). For example, some PR researchers have noted the usefulness of disseminating information about an organization's CSR commitment as part of employee recruitment (Kim & Park, 2009; Park & Dodd, 2017).

Recent study findings have suggested that internal dynamics challenge PR in corporate settings to successfully develop mutually beneficial relationships with certain key publics (Cardwell, Williams, & Pyle, 2017) – such as the internal HR department (Goebel, Marshall, & Locander, 2003). In fact, findings of a study of chief communication officers suggested that internal communication and advising top management may not even be considered to be a goal of the communication function (Kiesenbauer & Zerfass, 2015). When practitioner age is added to the mix of investigating why PR practitioners may not adequately attend to internal audiences, Cardwell et al. (2017) found that younger practitioners are concerned almost solely with external communication via media relations – perhaps due to complex internal dynamics such as managing large budgets and large numbers of employees who may be widely distributed nationally or internationally (Kiesenbauer & Zerfass, 2015).

Measuring Internal Communication through Audits

For PR practitioners, one of the tried-and-true evaluative/diagnostic techniques for assessing internal/employee relations from an employee-centric perspective is use of the communication audit

research method which enables researchers to assess employee perceptions of internal communication processes (Ruck & Welch, 2012). Communication audits are useful for collecting data to evaluate communication needs, which when analyzed, may prove helpful as part of PR planning, as a means for driving organizational change, and as a tool for problem solving (Kazoleas & Wright, 2001).

An organization's success is linked to effective internal communication, but too often our research is more management-centric than it is viewed from employees' perspectives (Uusi-Rauva & Nurkka, 2010). For example, fewer than half of US firms report effectiveness at communicating with employees about ways employees directly contribute to production goals versus external communication efforts designed to gain new customers (TowersWatson, 2010). Moreover, employees want to know about a wide variety of operational, personal, and strategic issues (Robertson, 2005), but only about 25% of employees report that their manager "keeps me in touch with what is going on" (Truss et al., 2006, p. 17).

The communication audit research method is an inductive process involving multiple stages and use of a variety of qualitative and quantitative research methods in combination − such as focus groups and surveys − to collect and analyze employee opinions, perceptions, and behaviors. In all, an internal communication audit supports scrutiny of an organization's communication vehicles (e.g., newsletters, email messages, websites, message boards) for their usefulness, accuracy, effectiveness − and employee perceptions of their trustworthiness.

The primary benefits of the communication audit include reducing employee absenteeism, improving productivity, producing higher quality products/services, increasing innovation, and minimizing strikes (Clampitt & Downs, 1993). By analyzing who is communicating what to whom at what volume level and via which channels (Hargie & Tourish, 2009), PR managers are able to improve internal communication programs and processes. Moreover, by using the communication audit research technique, PR managers may discover employees' perceptions of an organization's performance with regard to social impact (Molleda & Ferguson, 2004). The social audit provides a unique opportunity for PR to work jointly with HR; working side by side to assess employee perceptions of an organization's environmental footprint and attention to people and planet (in addition to profit), for example.

Employer Branding and Reputation

Employer branding definitely provides competitive advantage across labor markets. In particular, millennials and some other employee social identity groups are attracted to employment at organizations that reflect their own personal values and that will earn the admiration of other members of their peer group. Another example is when people seek an employer who provides dedicated space for prayer or personal activities such as women pumping breast milk for their babies (Pompper, 2014). Some organizations use such insights, strategically, to attract (and retain) employees. HR departments, in particular, "sculpt corporate culture" so that current and potential employees easily may discern what the company is like as an employer (Withers, 2003, p. 10). A common means for applicants to gain such insight is through *best employer surveys* (BES) widely popularized among *Great Place to Work* lists and promoted across social media, as well as websites such as glassdoor.com which include reviews of what it is really like to work for a given organization. Indeed, potential employees want to know more about organizations than the stock price. They need information about work-home life balance, partner benefits, sustainability and generally seek insights into how an employer will suit *them* (rather than the other way around).

As noted earlier in this chapter, it is not unusual for HR to work with other internal departments to meet goals. Consistent attention to employer branding in order to enhance *employer attractiveness* (Gomes & Neves, 2011) and participation in various BES publicity increases job candidate application rates. Ultimately, firms wherein HR and marketing strategically maximize synergies are better positioned to attract the most qualified job applicants (Saini, Rai, & Chaudhary, 2014). Organizations' whose brand has suffered damage as during a crisis involving a damaged reputation most likely will experience difficulty in attracting or retaining talented employees. Roeser (2016) advised that communication tools may prove the most useful ally to keep employees informed and to preserve a "well-communicated corporate culture" (p. 10) which contributes to organizational branding and reputation (Verčič, 2017). Jointly, HR and PR teams are well suited to develop a corporate brand known also known as a fun work climate; especially if a "younger workforce" is desired (Scase, 2006, p. 3). For example, Abshire (2014)

posited that "employees love to work hard when they get to play hard," so recommended "a happy culture" with an at-your-service attitude. Suggestions include special events that PR practitioners are experienced at creating, like employee recognition prizes, birthday celebrations and work anniversaries, as well as social media accounts that include plentiful workplace photographs. In addition, simply and sincerely thanking employees for their loyalty and contributions may mean the most to employees (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009).

Yet, because younger employees may be "very suspicious of corporate PR," Scase (2006, p. 3) recommended corporate branding that reflects core values associated with sustainability and social responsibility. Enabling employees to be inspired by managers who *walk the talk* goes a long way in retaining top talent, as well as enabling employees to share their own ideas about how to make organizations even more socially responsible and sustainable. In many instances, employers continually must reinvent their organizations to hold on to employees; a responsibility that Scase (2006) opined falls primarily to HR.

Respecting Employees within Organizations and PR's Role

Developing relationships with employees must be a priority for the internal or employee communication manager in organizations, rather than simply focusing on the technical journalist-style skills associated with producing communication materials and disseminating messages externally. PR researchers have emphasized this point for decades (e.g., Jackson, 1994), with some lamenting the insufficient attention to internal employee relations in the classroom and in PR textbooks (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2008; Wright, 1995) – as well as top management's default segregation of HR and PR. Inside organizations, perhaps lack of clearly articulated responsibilities and function overlap with poorly defined territories is at the heart of why PR and HR have given employees short shrift and employee communications and PR may become detached (Black, 1989). Moreover, Wright (1995) argued that "employee communications has not always been given serious attention in the public relations process" (p. 183) and he partly blamed communication executives for enabling overlap of the internal communications function with

HR, personnel, and other departments. In this chapter, I argue that permeable boundaries between PR and HR (in particular) provides for more productive workflow and teamwork when advancing organizations' social responsibility and sustainability programs.

For too long, organizations have assumed that employees always are going to be loyal and that the communication flow need travel in only one direction; downward. Despite PR practitioners' advocacy for the two-way symmetrical communication model, their voices often are drowned out by C-suite managers who take the view that employees are better managed rather than viewing them as people with whom the organization needs a strong mutually beneficial relationship. Hence, since HR is charged with developing and enforcing policy regarding the hiring, firing, and disciplining of employees, employee or internal relationship building with them often has not been the objective. D'Aprix (2006) opined that both PR and HR functions too often overlook employee stakeholders, assuming that their loyalty and commitment is a *given*. More recently, PR researchers have observed that employees – as stakeholders – often are given short shrift (Waters, Bortree, & Tindall, 2013).

PR's role as change agent – or insider activist – is more necessary today than ever before. This work requires not only a commitment to high ethical standards, global awareness with cultural sensitivity, courage, impeccable communication skills, ongoing learning, ability to build authentic relationships, and resistance to defaulting to a one-way asymmetrical publicity model – but it also demands the ability to work internally across organizational departments to ensure commitment to social responsibility and sustainability. More than 20 years have passed since Wright (1995) warned that PR must inspire genuine dialog and "reclaim the responsibility" for internal communication or risk becoming known as a "publicity operation" (p. 194). Using relationship building skills to assuage employee distrust and fear of the future by enabling organizations to *actually be* sustainable and socially responsible will go far in letting employees know how valued they are. Wright (1995) summed it up well: ". . . communicate honestly and regularly with employees on topics these workers consider important . . . They need to be treated like responsible adults not irresponsible children" (p. 195).

The concept of stewardship, or maintaining relationships, can prove exceptionally useful to organizations which seek to improve employer–employee relationships through mutual

respect and two-way symmetrical communication. Kelly (2001) conceptualized stewardship in a context of nonprofit organizations with regard to fundraising and managing volunteers — as critical in developing a lasting support base with key publics through reciprocity, responsibility, reporting, and relationship nurturing. Moreover, recent investigation into the stewardship concept in PR yielded findings suggesting that trust, commitment, satisfaction, and balanced power between the employer and the employee are critical to employee involvement (Waters et al., 2013).

PR and HR Relationship Building

PR and HR departments are linked by a common interest in communicating with employees; a "strategic public" for nearly all organizations (Grunig, 1992b, p. 534). Yet, internal organization dynamics may unnecessarily complicate this useful PR–HR relationship when debates emerge as to which department or group should report to or through whom. Troy (1989) found that professionals assigned to employee relations activities less often reported to HR than a department of communication, PR, or public affairs — except with regard to issues related to employee orientation and compensation which more often are communicated by an HR department (Rawlins & Stoker, 2004).

Evidence continues to mount suggesting that the PR–HR relationship is one worth integrating and nurturing; benefitting organizations as well as individual employees. Research findings suggest that employees demand more, not less, information about their benefits (Freitag & Picherit-Duthler, 2004) — especially during major changes such as restructuring or massive downsizing when HR and PR departments may combine talents to serve employees. However, inspiring employees to embrace organizational change may be just as challenging for employee communications efforts as it is to convince PR and HR professionals to pool their talents (Corder, 1999). When asked who *owns* employee communications within their organizations, about one-third of HR executives said human resources, another one-third of the PR executives said PR, and the remaining one-third opined that employee communications tasks are a "team effort" (Corder, 1999, p. 13). Corder (1999) concluded that "Teamwork between HR and PR is and should be the goal for every organization" (p. 13).

Despite the multiple positive ways both departments could and should work together, the direction of the reporting relationship can impact the quality of the HR−PR teamwork experience. For example, in an online discussion forum, Apostelico (2008) posited that HR "really controls the employee engagement," so seamless collaboration may best be achieved when PR and HR occupy close proximity since much of an internal communicator's role will be steeped in HR-related dynamics − while PR can help maintain a focus on an organization's "bigger picture" when communicating about issues of importance to employees and ensuring that internal and external messaging is consistent so that employees never hear organizational bad news "from the outside-in" (p. 5). Indeed, PR practitioners' expertise in building mutually beneficial relationships among internal and external publics proves helpful when bridging HR and PR functions (Ford, 2009).

Yet, some recent case studies suggest that direction of the reporting relationship between HR and PR may have negative implications for the handling of organizational crises. For example, when United Airlines experienced public outrage after a passenger was violently dragged from one of its planes in 2017, a corporate communication consultant blamed the airline's poor handling of the crisis on internal dynamics of a corporate communicator reporting to the head of HR and labor relations; a manager who failed to understand the importance of communicating quickly and effectively (Walsh, 2017). Similarly, Chrysler Corporation's moving of PR under HR inspired significant negative reaction from the PR community and auto industry press, positing that PR practitioners are trained to handle multiple stakeholders while HR tends to primarily deal with employees; a dynamic that places PR practitioners in a "subservient relationship" (Guiniven, 2008, p. 6). Cobb (2008) similarly critiqued Chrysler as an "inward-looking environment" which could inhibit PR from having "unfiltered access" when counseling the CEO and other company policymakers (p. 6). Alternately, Alcoa's VP of global HR also was a trained PR practitioner who explained that cross training and broad skill sets enable both HR and PR professionals to build relationships, motivate others through timely communication, and to best engage with employees (Bergen, 2010).

Both PR practitioners and HR personnel could benefit from playing a more active role in communicating with organizations' employees about benefits; a field that underwent significant

change in the 1980s due to greater complexity and choice among health, retirement, life, and savings programs. Marques (2006, 2010) argued for an HR department fully integrated across the organization. Freitag and Picherit-Duthler (2004) found that organizations may experience confusion in assigning responsibility for benefits communication; a serious problem given that good employee communication positively impacts employee recruitment, retention, and motivation because employees need to "feel confident in those choices in order to remain satisfied, motivated and productive" (p. 475). Other changes adding to the employee benefits dynamics over the past several decades include use of online media, new social media channels, and new employee social identity profiles shaped by increases among women and minorities to the workforce (Sweeney, 2002).

Other research findings suggest that concerns once considered to be exclusively *HR issues* have become *social issues* (e.g., downsizing, sexual harassment, diversity, and healthcare) such that PR *and* HR expertise is needed beyond merely providing technical writing assistance (Guiniven, 2008) − in social responsibility policymaking. Several academics have urged for greater attention to "diversity-focused communication flow" among HR and other departments (Marques, 2010, p. 444) − as well as diversity and inclusivity initiatives for a genuine connection with employees that make them feel appreciated and welcome (Appelbaum, Walton, & Southerland, 2015). Mundy (2016) emphasized that social issue initiatives offer a perfect opportunity for PR and HR to partner in coordinating large organizational goals.

Encroachment and Turf Battles

Over the past several decades, the general working relationship between HR and PR departments − depending on organizational context − has not always been smooth due to fears of encroachment linked to some overlap in roles and activities. Dozier (1988) operationalized *encroachment* as assignment of senior positions in PR departments or units to individuals without training or PR experience − such as professionals in engineering, HR, law, or marketing (Lauzen,1992). Lee (2013) identified three forms of encroachment: *authority* (involving those assigned to manage the PR area), *structural* (subordinating PR to another department), and *functional* (when other departments assume PR or communication management work).

Most relevant to this chapter's attention to fostering a strong work relationship between HR and PR for the purpose of advancing organizations' social responsibility and sustainability goals, it is useful to note that coordination of employee communications has been identified as the "most frequent source of conflict" between both departments; one that demands cooperation for the most positive outcomes such as strategic management of employees, organizational culture, and organizational change (Broom & Sha, 2013, p. 59). PR scholars have posited that encroachment is less likely to occur when PR practitioners are permitted to enact the high-level manager role, including top decision/policymaking, rather than simply performing a low-level technician role servicing other organization units rather than operating as a central management function in itself (Lauzen, 1992). This distinction enables the PR manager to use her/his organizational power "to maintain the integrity of [public relations'] domain" and to minimize other negative consequences of *not* enacting the manager role (Lauzen & Dozier, 1992, p. 205). Collectively, environmental conditions influence how the PR function is performed in organizations — such as degree of complexity and levels of uncertainty (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967).

Encroachment has been a hot button issue and a well-traveled research topic in PR for a number of years — perhaps because PR is wrongly considered to be a highly substitutable function according to both PR practitioners and others (Lauzen, 1992). Practitioners and academics alike worry about encroachment because its effects may diminish job satisfaction and turnover — and negatively impact effectiveness, control, and autonomy (Lee, 2013). Historical conflicts between HR and PR departments often are linked to turf battles for handling employee communication issues and related tasks. Unfortunately, turf battles begin to destroy the ideal of integration (Moriarty, 1994).

Envisioning the HR—PR Cross-Unit Working Relationship

We know that a central tenet of early organizational science studies based on Fayol's (1949) work is that attainment of organizational goal success depends on interfunctional coordination and internal departments working together (Chimhanzi, 2004). Yet,

exactly what might an authentic, mutually respectful HR/PR working relationship look like across organizations? As addressed earlier in this chapter, internal organizational dynamics steeped in tradition and power challenges threaten implementation, or management of effective interdepartmental relations — such as those between HR and PR departments. To begin, linking HR professionals' expertise with compliance issues — with PR professionals' expertise in counseling upper management and communicating with internal and external stakeholders — offers a winning combination when it comes to navigating organizations toward social responsibility.

Whether both sets of expertise are housed in the same department, or are called upon to collaborate routinely, silo- and boundary-spanning crossover between the functions in the service of organizations' social responsibility and sustainability efforts is a valuable and valued skill. Indeed, interfunctional relations for organizational effectiveness are increasingly becoming a major strategic issue for organizations (Berthon, Pitt, & Morris, 1995−1996) such that extended coordination between functions is designed to enhance organizational effectiveness (St. John & Rue, 1991). Interdepartmental dynamics are shaped by senior management support, joint reward systems, and informal integration (Chimhanzi, 2004) and managers representing various functional areas are likely to perceive issues uniquely (Frankwick, Ward, Hutt, & Reingen, 1994). Yet the urgency for advancing organizations' sustainability and social responsibility goals could inspire high cooperation levels since employee buy-in and support of organizations' social responsibility programs are critical and reliant upon "meaningful, pertinent, and actionable" communications required to maximize return on initiatives (Epstein & Rubin, 2005, p. 20). Indeed, greater numbers of companies increasingly are reorganizing internal structures for improved internal communication (Foss et al., 2011) that often begins with designing and administering internal research — as a means for discovering employee perceptions needed to enhance internal communication outcomes for shared understanding among internal employees and external customers (Ulrich, Halbrook, Meder, Stuchlik, & Thorpe, 1991). Moreover, employees should be rewarded for sharing their insights and for playing a role in social responsibility programs (Foss et al., 2011) — especially when they volunteer their time outside of traditional work hours to participate in social responsibility community projects (Pompper, 2013).

Summary/Discussion

This chapter has offered theoretical underpinnings for examining interdepartmental relationships, examined PR and internal communications and its challenges, set the scene for PR's role with regard to CRS/S, explored PR and HR relationship building – complete with encroachment and turf battles – and envisioned the HR–PR cross-unit working relationship. Don Wright's (1995) astute observation endures today, as he critiqued PR practice in the United States as practitioners focusing almost exclusively on message dissemination to the detriment of authentic relationship building: "The key to success in employee relations in the future will involve building relationships much more than it will involve disseminating information" (p. 192). I concur that now is the time for internal PR departments to work concurrently with HR departments to forge mutually beneficial relationships with employees in the name of organizational social responsibility – in both for-profits and nonprofit organizations. More specifically, employee communications relate to employer–organization dynamics and shared values; variables employees often consider more important than simply a earning paycheck: "[E]mployees demand more and expect more" (Holtzhausen & Fourie, 2009; Wright, 1995, p. 193).

Early 20th century engineers and industrialists set the stage for organizational management and systems theory that later inspired PR scholars to integrate critical theory with PR excellence theory in order to advance the concept of boundary spanning as a means to facilitate two-way communication and relationship building among organizations and stakeholders both internally and externally. Scrutinizing organizations in terms of relationships enables us to examine systems' *inter*dependence among departments in order to ensure shared survival – or "sustainable relationship[s]" (Plowman, 2013, p. 908). Indeed, Broom and Sha (2013) recommended greater attention to upward, two-way communication for mutually beneficial relationship building. I have argued here, and elsewhere that collectively, these enjoined theoretical standpoints enable organizations to act in socially responsible and sustainable ways both inside and out (Jung & Pompper, 2014; Pompper, 2015).

Of course, debates have raged for decades as to who should report to whom when it comes to PR and HR working together on employee communication issues/tasks (Grunig, 1992b). I suggest

that bringing both talent pools together for *employee communication and engagement in the service of social responsibility and sustainability* is incentive enough to respectfully acknowledge differences and to recognize importance of the larger view; benefits for a people, planet, and profit triple bottom line. For example, Dalal and his colleagues (2012) found that *employee engagement* is the best predictor of overall employee performance – while findings of Gallup's 2012 meta-analysis suggested that across organizations in 49 industries and 34 countries, organizations with high employee engagement performed significantly higher than those with low employee engagement (Sorenson, 2013). Kahn (1990) operationalized *engagement* as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (p. 694) and Men and Bowen (2017) linked *internal communication* to engaged employees – which they qualified as exhibiting "high levels of energy while working; feel strongly involved, absorbed, and engrossed in their work; exhibit passion, pride, and enthusiasm in what they do and find meaning, inspiration, and purpose in their work" (p. 116). Using a horizontal approach to involve employees in social responsibility and sustainability programs offers the possibility of quality outcomes such as total employee commitment (Moriarty, 1994). Moreover, I subscribe to a definition of PR as "a management function" and, consequently, concur with critiques that senior PR practitioners in organizations must have regular, ongoing, and "unfiltered" access to the CEO in order to help shape organizational policy (Cobb, 2008, p. 6). Similarly, Kent and Taylor (2017) have warned that when PR professionals become alienated from their organizational counselor function because they are relegated to content creation and message production, then our value to organizations and society is diminished and "[t]he functional mindset of PR is not only narrow but it is unsustainable in the highly networked society of the 21st century" (p. 177). Any emphasis on media relations, to the detriment of internal relationship building, indeed, falls short of public relations' mission to be a relationship building function internally and externally.

From an academic perspective, examining the issues and complex internal relationship dynamics set out in this chapter offers the opportunity to expand our body of knowledge in PR; one of the goals of this edited collection. Numerous researchers have cautioned that internal/employee communication, benefits

communication, and employee relations (more broadly) have been under-examined and may be lacking in provision of frameworks, models, and constructs for expanding understanding of such phenomena (Freitag & Picherit-Duthler, 2004). For some years, I (Pompper, 2012) and others (e.g., Mundy, 2016) have argued that advancing diversity goals in organizations must be an ongoing process integral to broader PR activities − a mindset that is entirely in sync with shepherding organizations toward greater social responsibility and sustainability. The social capital concept and its relational, communicative, and structural dimensions are useful for undergirding a proposition for building internal PR theory (Pompper, 2012). Valuing, understanding, and defining stakeholders such as employees and their role in helping organizations to advance social responsibility and sustainability goals must be our beacon for advancing PR theory building and practice.

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