

Celebrating the
65
ANNIVERSARY

IPR SAPPHIRE ANTHOLOGY

A collection of 65-word reflections and predictions about IPR and public relations from the IPR Board of Trustees in celebration of our 65th anniversary.



INSTITUTE FOR
PUBLIC RELATIONS
Celebrating 65 Years

Dear colleagues,

In 1956, the Institute for Public Relations was founded as an add-on organization to PRSA on the basis that research needed to be more prominent in our field. But the basic research this organization was founded on would be unrecognizable compared to the rigorous research studies conducted today.

This month, IPR celebrates our 65 years—our sapphire anniversary—of offering free research that matters to the profession. I don't think we should undersell the free part. To provide resources and research to an entire field without a fee or a paywall is a noteworthy accomplishment. We wouldn't be able to do that without the generosity and support of our Trustees and their organizations, the IPR team, industry partners, and our financial supporters.

Naturally, I researched “sapphire anniversary” to learn the symbolism of this anniversary. The blue sapphire symbolizes trust, loyalty, and integrity. I think IPR has embodied its purpose throughout these 65 years with these three qualities in mind by building trust in our work, sustaining loyalty to our industry, and leading with integrity every step of the way.

IPR has significantly grown in the past 25 years, both internally and externally. Today, we have a full-time president and CEO. We built five new Commissions and Centers of Excellence. We have hired additional team members (even though we are still small). We have doubled the size of our Board. We publish more research today than we ever have with more than 800,000 unique visitors annually to our website. And we've risen amidst game-changing factors, including the internet, social media, and mobile phones, just to name a few.

Throughout this, IPR successfully kept up and anticipated the needs of our industry.

As we reflect on the past 65 years, we look ahead to the next 65 years. Public relations professionals can't be successful without research and data. Every great plan conceived today must be accompanied by great research. Our society depends on communicators to change the world. Even in the past couple of years, understanding research and communicating about it is critical for societal behavior change for the good, such as decreasing COVID-19 transmission, increasing vaccine uptake, fighting climate change, improving mental health, and advancing equity.

IPR is committed to anticipating and reacting to the changes in the field to help serve each and every one of you. We want our field to be stronger and see the reputation of public relations continue to improve. We are passionate about the work we do.

Throughout this month, we have some great programs in store for our 65th anniversary (and swag in our actual store with proceeds going to IPR). We encourage you to participate in our IPR Give Day on October 26, our official birthday. We can't do what we do without your support, and we hope you will celebrate with us. Cheers to IPR!

With gratitude,

Tina McCorkindale, Ph.D., APR

President and CEO
Institute for Public Relations

What kind of research should be at the forefront for IPR?

“The traditional top-down, broadcast-first, image-led marketing is not effective anymore. Brands must take a stand based on beliefs, values, and purpose, rather than on positioning and one-way communication. The ecosystem of conversation requires we earn attention and trust. The research that should be at the forefront of IPR is this ecosystem. How can we build brands our conscience can live with through attention and trust?”

– Rupen Desai, Global Chief Marketing Officer, Dole Sunshine Company

“Research on technology, shifting levels of government oversight, a more conscious and caring society, and a more transparent, mature set of expectations by people as consumers, customers, parents, partners, colleagues, and friends should be at the forefront for IPR. Public relations and communications must ensure organizations remain relevant in the face of constant change. That is, comprehending behavior, opinion formation, connectivity, perception, perspective, and purpose.”

– Gary Grates, Principal, Real Chemistry

“As the field of communications evolves due to rapidly advancing technology, deeper insight into omnichannel communications and ‘news bots’ will be critical to the public relations industry. The role of data as a commodity that fuels our knowledge industries will have strong implications for the public relations field, and we must be able to anticipate the changes it will bring in the next five years.”

**– Moyra Knight, VP Communications, Corporate Citizenship & President
Astellas Global Health Foundation, Astellas Pharma**

“Research that should be at the forefront for IPR is how public relations is seen by many as a predominantly North American body of theory and practice, dominated by US scholars and big business. The support of neoliberal capitalism at its core is questioned in many countries. Another topic is normative theorizing being widely discredited by ‘spin’, propaganda, and manipulation of public opinion in practice.”

– Jim Macnamara, Ph.D., Deputy Dean, University of Technology Sydney

“The public relations profession must demonstrate its value to the organizations in which we operate. We know we provide value but now must make that tangible for our clients through research – especially to receive funding. A key way to accomplish this is to research and invest in CommTech stacks to provide your team with the tools and methods they need to deliver business objectives.”

– Lindsey O’Neill, Chief Communications Officer, USAA

“Crisis and issue management will continue to be front and center for the public relations profession. The two have not been interchangeable terms and we’ve been able to understand and see differences between them. But as crises grow larger in numbers, the terms will meld together and may be harder to distinguish. “Is this an issue or crisis” will become a harder question to answer.”

– Shirley Powell, Senior Vice President, Communications, Cox Automotive Inc.

“How will corporations meet talent demands and evolve workplace models while addressing skill gaps?
What will be the long-term impacts to employee engagement and productivity in a hybrid work model world?
How will adoption and investments in advanced technologies transform the work itself? Online services and
technology companies thrived during the pandemic. Will shifts in consumer buying patterns/preferences that
occurred during the pandemic continue?”

– Mac Worsham, Managing Director and Chief Communications Officer, Deloitte US

“Given that the role of public relations will continue to evolve and grow in importance in the next few years, IPR may
wish to conduct research to better understand CEOs/C-suite’s perceptions, attitudes and expectations of the role
and function of communications in the new normal (post-pandemic), as well as the impact and effects of strategy on
advancing the practice of strategic communication in organisations.”

– Su Lin Yeo, Ph.D, Assistant Professor, Singapore Management University

“Much of the research funded and promoted by IPR in the next decade will address the growing problems of miscommunication and misinformation. We must learn more about why people believe some news and reject other news, why different personality-types and demographic groups react differently to the same facts, why people trust uncredentialed sources of information, and what factors affect the credibility of individuals and organizations.”

– Doug Pinkham, President, Public Affairs Council



What challenges or opportunities will the public relations industry face?

“An increasingly polarized society will result in more frequent and intense reputational challenges for organizations of all kinds, and public relations professionals will find themselves with an unprecedented opportunity to demonstrate the strategic value of the function – and the need for proactive investment in it – in a meaningful way. Our role as the guardians of brand and reputation has never been more important.”

– Laura Duda, APR, Senior Vice President and Chief Communications Officer, Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company

“The biggest challenge for the public relations industry and society is the public’s faith in truth and facts. Research based on data that underpins and communicates truth and facts is key to helping reinforce social institutions. It’s an opportunity to be at the forefront of understanding public opinion, using reality (instead of opinion or fiction) to help persuade and educate ‘publics’ fundamental to civil society.”

– Brian Lott, Chief Communications Officer, Mubadala

“While COVID has been highly disruptive, the challenges and opportunities facing the PR industry are not new. There remains a tremendous opportunity to work across disciplines and stakeholder touchpoints to execute integrated campaigns that advance consistent, powerful narratives. And the objectives of these campaigns must be clear and map closely to the strategy of the organization. Only then will we be considered strategic business partners.”

***– Peter Lucht, Senior Vice President — Head of External and CEO Communications
Citizens Financial Group, Inc.***

“A challenge and opportunity I see corporate communicators facing is developing the tools, skills, and mindset required to not just distribute information but to truly build trust and create a sense of belonging in increasingly remote, digital, and even virtual environments. The professionals and companies who cultivate this discipline most quickly and effectively – with both internal and external stakeholders – will be generational standouts.”

– Maril MacDonald, Founder & CEO, Gagen MacDonald

“Looking out five years, the PR industry will continue to find itself at the intersection of Enabling Avenue and Convening Street. It’s where building and executing compelling narratives meets our super power of bringing together various stakeholders to collaborate and reach consensus. Beyond content creation and curation, we will perform soothsayer-like feats daily, anticipate reputational risk and prepare our organizations to solve knotty business problems.”

- Linda Rutherford, Executive Vice President & Chief Communications Officer, Southwest Airlines

“Challenges include COVID-19 (health of the workforce, return and future of work), growing employee empowerment, increasing polarization, proliferation of disinformation, multiplying social platforms, rising business expectations, talent scarcity, and DEI. Opportunities include increasing the importance of communications in building mutually beneficial engagement, leveraging emerging technologies to improve the precision of communications, harnessing the power of purpose, creating and sustaining higher-performing cultures, and demonstrating business impact.”

- Kirk Stewart, CEO, KTStewart

“Years ago, a non-PR colleague asked: “Can’t we just issue a press release with fake news?” The PR team was aghast. Now, I’m thinking he was ahead of his time. Misinformation and polarized positions will change our profession. Traditional tactics of news dissemination are becoming antiquated. Putting out fake news releases is not the answer. Changing our toolbox is – and therein lies our future.”

- Gerry Tschopp, SVP, Head of Global External Communications and Chief Communications Officer, North America, Experian

“In the next five years, the opportunities for public relations industry professionals will expand as they continue to play a key role in building and protecting the reputations of companies globally. In addition to helping respected journalists and recreational reporters increase social shares of fact-based company stories, they will serve as trusted advisors in executing timely responses to customers, partners, investors, and other key stakeholders.”

- Therese Van Ryne, Head of Global Public Relations, Thought Leadership and Philanthropy, Zebra Technologies



What is the most impressive part of IPR's history?

“The most impressive part of IPR is its ability to continually reinvent itself, anticipate trends and provide new and unexpected, but highly relevant, research. IPR stands out thanks to its relatively small board of trustees, insatiable thirst for knowledge and authentic joie de vie. While 65 years-old, IPR acts like a start-up. IPR is just beginning to hit its stride and its future looks bright.”

– Steve Cody, Founder and CEO, Peppercomm

“IPR has many impressive moments and we believe the best is still ahead. Communications, marketing, and public relations professionals have the potential to be catalysts in advancing corporate purpose and ESG within the organizations that we represent. As we look to the future, IPR will continue to consistently publish accessible research that will arm professionals with relevant data and insights, enabling them to better leverage their seat to help navigate and drive positive change in an ever-changing society. ”

– Joe Cohen, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, AXIS

“The most impressive part of IPR’s history is its purpose: advancing the public relations field by fostering free scientific research that can be applied to business decisions. Understanding the depths of our field in conjunction with what is happening in the world is essential for effective communications. IPR consistently shares relevant data-driven insights to back up abstract PR concepts such as reputation and building relationships.”

- Eileen Sheil, Senior Communications Advisor

“As the business world and academe become even more globally focused and data-driven, the public relations industry must improve its ability to research, interpret, and aggregate data that addresses strategic initiatives. IPR is well-positioned to help lead the charge. Given its increasingly global presence and network of industry experts, IPR also can help build bridges to and strengthen public relations’ relationship with the marketing community.”

- Jim Simon, President, Simon & Associates

“The imperative for IPR to continue to connect academic research with the challenges faced by public relations practitioners is stronger than ever. Evolving consumer mindsets, geopolitics, social issues, trust and transparency, and ongoing technological advancements are some areas that IPR has been actively focusing on. This research will be undertaken not only in the U.S. but in Asia and other regions of the world.”

– Steve Thomas, Senior Communications Advisor

“Proving the value of public relations and quantifying return on investment is a question that the followers of the Institute for Public Relations (IPR) are familiar with and have the answer to. IPR’s mission is to spread research, evaluation, and data-driven insights. While we have much more to do, we have made great progress — and IPR can be proud of the advancements we ignited.”

– Mark Weiner, Chief Insights Officer, Cognito Insights

“Customer expectations are high, and brands are expected to advance their commitment to ESG. Public relations practitioners must foster collaborative environments within organizations to be at the forefront of brand touchpoints, establishing a unified vision and accountability. Through these initiatives, IPR will continue to serve as a research epicenter focused on pressing issues impacting corporations so practitioners can make important decisions that impact brand reputation.”

***– Yanique Woodall, Senior Director, Corporate Communications and External Affairs;
Head of Brand Communications, The Home Depot***



How will the public relations profession change due to COVID-19?

“COVID-19 has transformed every major sector of our economy, and public relations is no different. As a result, our ability to operate in this remote and changing world, and our need to be nimble have become ever more critical. All industries are changing at a pace never before seen, and communications professionals need to move with precision and speed to meet the needs of consumers.”

– Jonathan Adashek, Chief Communications Officer, IBM

“COVID-19 has changed the world forever. How long have we pined for a “greater seat at the table” in decisions impacting business performance and communications? Those days are prologue as our profession becomes more vital than ever, fundamental to the success of clients and brands. Committed to authenticity, data-borne decision making, creative thinking, and effective strategies, may we keep rising to unforeseen occasions more empathetic.”

– Mike Doyle, President & CEO, Ketchum

“As employers have emerged as the most-trusted source of information amidst crises, the role of the brand/communications/public relations leader has evolved dramatically. Similarly, the importance of the counsel provided to enable business success aligned with purpose, manage increasingly complex issues and optimize brand character across all stakeholders has never been more critical. Our profession has a unique opportunity to enable greater societal empathy.”

– Paul Gennaro, Senior Vice President, Chief Brand and Communications Officer, Voya Financial

“The pandemic is leaving an indelible mark on PR. Ongoing uncertainty demands adapting communications in a nanosecond as well as enormous agility and stamina. Yet, we must continue to build the future, developing strategies that fuel organizational growth and a strong, diverse pipeline of talent. Our ability to simultaneously excel on all fronts will define and secure the critical role of our industry going forward. ”

– Stacey Jones, Global Corporate Communications Lead and Senior Managing Director, Accenture

“The industry’s value will be reassessed because employee expectations have changed. Employees want more out of work, and the industry’s intensity may not be desirable. We must entice, recruit, and retain employees. Employers must articulate purpose, as employees look for shared values. Employee experience, transformation, and other internal communications roles will grow due to the need for company transparency amid COVID-19 and social justice issues.”

– Kristena Lucky, EVP, Brand Solutions Practice Lead for North America, BCW Global

“Citizens and consumers have access to more information and ways to speak out. The pandemic’s forced lockdowns and isolation have accelerated content consumption, production, and distribution. Organizations and leaders, with public relations guidance, should focus on social listening, authentic dialogues, and rapid responses to shifting public expectations of their industry and societal roles. An emphasis on community and employees’ safety and wellbeing is in order.”

– Juan-Carlos Molleda, Ph.D., Dean and Professor, Edwin L. Artzt School of Journalism and Communication, University of Oregon

“The pandemic is changing the workforce in significant ways and the public relations profession needs to adapt quickly. Concepts like virtual, remote and real-time must be front and center in any communications strategy. Preparing leaders to be effective communicators in a world of remote and flexible work is key to engaging employees. And the emphasis on diversity, equity & inclusion must be even greater!”

– Arati Randolph, Senior Communications Advisor

“If social media didn’t do it already then COVID-19 turned everyone into a public relations professional. The once bright lines between specialties like internal and external communications, marketing and advocacy, news and opinion, crisis and engagement, and many other practices have dimmed considerably, if not disappeared entirely. The PR profession has to adapt to this new continuum and not hope it snaps back to “normal.”

***– Michael Schoenfeld, Vice President for Public Affairs & Government Relations
and Chief Communications Officer, Duke University***

“2020 accelerated a trend we’ve seen coming for years. In the wake of a global pandemic and social unrest, stakeholders are looking to corporations to be a catalyst for change, insisting on public-private dialogue to drive major institutional improvements across climate, healthcare, diversity, and more. The PR industry has an opportunity to focus engagement on initiatives that are truly accretive to business, brand, and society.”

– Jennifer Temple, Chief Communications Officer, Hewlett Packard Enterprise





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Thank You
For 65 Years!
