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Public Relations: The Story Behind a Remarkable Renaissance

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Good evening. Thank you so much for inviting me to speak at this prestigious event. I gather, incidentally, I am the first non-American to deliver the Distinguished Lecture since 1976, when Professor Tim Traverse-Healy spoke.

I do hope it has been worth the wait.

I'd like to begin with some numbers. According to the Holmes Report, the global Public Relations industry is now worth more than $8 billion. This is, I'd think, a conservative estimate.

Perhaps more surprising is the Holmes Report's estimate for growth in the public relations and public affairs industry in 2008. That figure is around 8 percent.

Given the unrelenting bad economic news of the past month, it's an astonishing forecast. True, Holmes says that number that could move by a percentage point in either direction, depending on the fourth quarter. And true, the industry grew 12 percent in 2007.

Nevertheless the numbers justify a small pause for congratulation. Public Relations has enjoyed a remarkable renaissance these past few years. And it is well placed to get through what will be a rocky 2009.

Indeed, we at WPP cannot remember a time when our public relations and public affairs businesses were more vibrant. All our firms are performing better than they have ever done before. That is set to continue.

It seems to us that this will be driven by a number of factors.

- **First**, the growth of social media, a natural territory for Public Relations
- **Second**, the unstoppable rise of China, India and other nations
- **Third**, the need for internal communications in changing companies
- **Fourth**, the lack of public trust in companies and government
- **Fifth**, the increasing ability to assess data and measure performance

- **Sixth**, the rising cost of television advertising

First, the growth of social media.
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They may sound cool and high tech, but social networking, blogs and citizen journalism are actually reassuringly old-fashioned.

In essence, blogs are a modern form of letter writing – or gossip on the front porch. In some ways, they also hark back to 18th century pamphleteers like Thomas Paine. In that sense, very much back to the future.

Moreover, blogging emphasises that editorial publicity is more powerful than paid-for publicity – a fact research consistently proves.

Today, after two centuries of institutionalised media, content creation has been democratised. The voice of ordinary people is increasingly as loud as that of mainstream media.

Our definition of media has been expanded to include not only *The New York Times* but also people like Heather Armstrong, the stay-at-home mom who writes dooce.com.

New social networks spring up every day, such as Argentina's Sonico and Russia's Vkontakte. What's more, they can be set up in minutes using speciality sites like ning.com.

There are Ning networks for New Zealanders, parents seeking information about nursery places in New Delhi, and women dedicated to advancing Sarah Palin.

The latter, I guess, may be reconsidering its brand proposition today.

Now everyone has the potential to influence a company's reputation – whether peer-to-peer, word-of-mouth, or through online comparison and product recommendation sites.

This is where Public Relations comes in. In all this clutter and fragmentation, it falls to Public Relations professionals to lead companies into this conversation between consumers, mainstream media, employees, analysts, investors, bloggers and competitors around brands.

It's crucial that they do so, because brands make up a big part of bloggers' conversations. Four in five post product or brand reviews, according to Technorati, the blog search engine.

The Victoria's Secret Pink brand, for instance, has a Facebook page with 550,000 "fans."

People are now listening to many voices before they make a choice to purchase or invest in a corporation. That advice can be positive or life-threateningly negative for a brand.

It is certainly powerful. Consumers feel more communal ownership of social media than other distribution channels. They have chosen to look at these sources. They tend to drop their guard when accessing them.

This is especially so for Millennials – that much-targeted group of 20 somethings who've grown up online. They share an inherent, cynical distrust of institutions, be it government, traditional media or brands.

But we are not necessarily talking about spotty kids here. In the new model, the people with influence and credibility can be gardeners, priests and hairdressers.

More than half the users of MySpace are more than 35 years old. More surprisingly still, 11 percent are more than 55, according to comScore.

The challenge is what to do this with this explosion in media. This is Public Relations' natural territory. After all, it has always used social networks to engage.

Other marketing disciplines such as advertising mainly focused on mass messages. Communication was a one-way road. Information was handed down to the consumer from on high.

But Public Relations always understood a more nuanced model of influence. It needed to earn column inches, not buy them. It engaged all the stakeholders that make up the community that supports – or does not support – a brand or corporation.

So how do we make sure those posts are positive? Well, you certainly can't spin your way to a blogger's heart. Respect and engagement are essential. Handing product over to bloggers would not be enough.

If, however, you invite bloggers in to get their ideas on a brand, you might succeed. Get them involved, give them something of value.

The prize for getting it right? The stakeholder becomes a brand loyalist and tells other people.
It doesn't, however, stop there. Brands and corporations, as we constantly say, need to be transparent, authentic and human. But that's a waste of time, if a brand then fails miserably at the first human interaction a consumer has with it.

Bloggers might purr like cats by a fireside about your new phone launch. But if a purchaser can't get through on the help line, it's all been a waste of time.

Companies that get it right can reap huge rewards. The Dell story, for instance, has become a classic case study. Rather than ignoring complaints, the company's executives embraced the new media.

They set up Dell's own customer spaces, such as IdeaStorm, where people could record their experiences and post suggestions. The aim, the company says, has not been to come over all touchy-feely. Instead it wanted to reach out to potential customers. In effect, what they created for themselves was a real-time focus group – free of charge.

Most importantly, Dell did not censor negative posts and reordered its customer services department to respond to the complaints.

Within two years, Dell had halved negative online chatter about its products. It is hard to believe that an ad campaign with a cheery message would have achieved a similar result.

Such changes require a certain humility. Dell's embracing of social media would have been a pointless gesture, had it not moved to respond to the complaints it received.

Some executives instinctively understand this. They must change and they must also be humble enough to listen. If they do, bloggers and others in the social media world will be flattered. They may even become advocates for the brand.

It is Public Relations' job to educate clients and explain this process. Not just to get column inches in newspapers and minutes on television. That might mean fewer convivial lunches with reporters, but it will produce a more sustainable industry.

Public Relations practitioners will seek out the influencers. How big is the network around an issue or brand? Who are the advocates, detractors or supporters?

It isn't easy. There are risks and opportunities inherent in the more complex and uncontrolled environment of social media. But Public Relations is used to working in an uncontrolled environment. It is its natural territory.

In traditional Public Relations, distributing a press release and making contact with journalists results in articles written and distributed by third parties. We like to think Public Relations might influence the final published piece.

So we do everything in our power to understand the relationships needed to get the right result – that's the job. But we must accept that we do not have control – even if letting go is a little scary.

Many have likened being involved to being invited to a dinner party. If you sit down and listen to people's concerns about a product – some positive, some negative – you will be welcomed.

But anyone who came to the table trying to sell something between pudding and coffee would find themselves uninvited pretty rapidly. Fakes can always be spotted. In the early days of social networking, some companies tried to infiltrate sites to sell their services. It never works, unless it's very clever.

Equally, other sorts of behaviour are not tolerated. Take John Mackey, founder of Whole Foods Market, the organic supermarket chain. Mackey was caught using a pseudonym on a Yahoo Finance forum, praising his company and trashing a rival.

Rather than hiding, Mackey came clean and defended himself in a blog on his own company's site. For that he was applauded, and avoided the worse repercussions.

This willingness to surrender control is essential, because in digital and social media there is an inverse relationship between credibility and control. The more control you keep over the message, the less credible it is. And vice versa.

In this context, I'd like to talk about six trends that we believe will inform Public Relations professionals working in the digital media.

- Things will get more and more customised. Using digital media to reach the right person at the right time will grow ever easier – and be more expected. Again, it's back to the future. Before the 1930s, companies used to sell directly to the customer, often by knocking on doors. Digital allows us to move back to that more intimate interaction.

- Search is everything in influencing a decision to buy. A good website is no longer enough. Content of all types – video, graphics, networks, conversation – needs to be searchable from every direction.

- Conversation is in. For brands to have influence they must be talking. And not just mindless chatter but serious information presented in an authentic way.

- But it goes further. Consumers also want the chance to participate in brand and product development. They want to experience and live the brand. Think about being able to test drive a car online before going to the showroom to try it out in person.

- Ultimately everything will be mobile. Ultra-mobile laptops, advanced cell phones and everything in between all offer the opportunity for a persistent presence with stakeholders. In that sense, companies will become syndication organisations, channelling content into different media.

- Don't forget the transaction. At the end of the day the cash register must ring if Public Relations is to prove its worth in the new communications landscape.

There's little doubt that technological change has made this is an exciting time to be in marketing and communications.

I'd now like to move on the equally exciting geographic challenges and opportunities, in particular the unstoppable rise of China, India and other nations.

Now as I said previously, it is clear that Public Relations will not come out of the prolonged downturn we face without some pain.
The economy will worsen next year, as recession takes hold. Even before the current crisis, 2009 was going to be a tough year. One in which your new president will have to deal with the twin deficits of trade and a federal budget – the latter pushed to breaking point by the credit crisis.

If it's any comfort, I'm bullish on 2010. We'll have the Vancouver Winter Olympics, the FIFA World Cup in South Africa and the Asian games in Guangzhou. There's also the World Expo in Shanghai Pudong.

And, of course, the US mid-term congressional elections, where the new president will be focused on protecting his majority.

While growth will decline and probably go into reverse in the US and almost every western European country, there are opportunities elsewhere.

Here I'm talking about the BRIC nations, Brazil, Russia, China and India. And the Next 11 identified by Goldman Sachs – Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, The Philippines, South Korea, Turkey and Vietnam.

Of course, China and India will experience some scaling back in the runaway growth they have enjoyed in the past decade. But their expansion is hardly likely to be curtailed. It's all relative. China recently said that its growth dropped to a mere 9 percent in the third quarter. That's the sort of bad news most western leaders would be give their eye teeth to announce.

The same applies to the other BRICs nations, the Next 11 and other economies. Incidentally, I don't call countries with rapidly growing economies "emerging" markets. That's demeaning – they have emerged. We in the West just need to get used to it.

Here's a good example of the world being remade. The Public Relations industry in the Middle East is now valued at an estimated at $100 million. It is predicted to grow by 200 percent next year. As I say, everything's relative.

And what of WPP? Today we have operations in more than 100 countries, but we're a 40/40/20 company.

What I mean by that is that 37 percent of our business – about $5 billion out of the $14 billion revenues – is in the United States. A similar but larger slice is in Europe. The remainder is in Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Central and Eastern Europe. All those regions – present troubles notwithstanding – are enjoying rapid growth.

In five to 10 years we want our business's regional distribution to be a third, a third, a third – that is, a third in the United States; a third in Western Europe; a third in those faster growing markets.

China is already our fourth largest business, producing $600 million in revenue, or about four percent of our business. I have no doubt it will surpass the UK to become our second biggest business in the next 10 or 20 years. It may even overtake the US.

Now, what do all these rapidly expanding countries need? Answer: Public Relations.

If their companies are to grow from being producers of cheap generic goods to makers of brands, they will need Public Relations.

If they are to expand beyond their own shores, they will need Public Relations.

If their governments are to move from control and command to democracy, they will need Public Relations.

And if these countries are to take their place on the world stage, they will need Public Relations.

Of course, China's inevitable rise isn't a new story. I prefer to see it as a return to where we were two centuries ago, before western industry overtook its eastern rivals. Again, back to the future.

I travel to China a lot and I am always amazed by the startling statistics it generates. It has 600 million mobile phone subscribers, for instance – 400 million of them with one network, China Mobile. Its middle class stands at around 200 million.

Oh, and even its usual population estimate – 1.3 billion – is reckoned to be out by about 200 million. That's 200 million people sculling around that we just happened to have failed to count. The equivalent of two Mexicos and two-thirds of the United States.

Here's another stat. There are more internet users in China than in the United States. Its online population stands at about 275 million users today and is forecast to grow to 375 million by 2012, according to IDC.

These users may well be bloggers. The research firm Netpop reckons that 47 percent of Chinese broadband users post comments to blogs, chat rooms and forums, compared with 28 percent of Americans.

Now Chinese blogs are different. They aren't perhaps as vociferous or as swift to condemn as their western counterparts, but they are still hugely influential.

And, if you doubt their power, Starbucks will be happy to remind you. Seven years ago, it opened a shop in Beijing's historic Forbidden City. Then a blogging campaign began. It argued that the shop was trampling on Chinese culture. All those extra shot skinny lattes, it was said, undermined the solemnity of the Forbidden City. More than 500,000 people signed an online petition. Result: the shop closed last year.

Such cultural clashes are occurring on a far larger scale. And with far more toxic Public Relations fallout. In particular, several Chinese forays into acquisition in the United States have foundered because they have failed to appreciate political sensitivities.

Chinese telecom giant Huawei's attempts to buy a stake in router-maker 3Com collapsed earlier this year in the face of Bush administration concerns about national security.

Equally, the Chinese oil company CNOOC's bid to acquire Unocal attracted fierce opposition from American politicians three years ago. Again, concerns about national security derailed the bid.

CNOOC will probably be back, along with other Chinese companies. This time, however, they will be better prepared to handle the inevitable Public Relations firestorm. Again, there are opportunities for our industry.

Chinese and Indian companies will also need sophisticated Public Relations as they seek to establish their brands with western consumers. The Tatas, Bhartis, Lenovos and China Mobiles, Sinopecs and Haiers are the multinationals of the future. They will need strong guidance and counsel.

Last time I looked, eight of the top 30 companies in the world by market valuation were Chinese. That will grow. As will their need for Public Relations professionals to engage the interest of potential customers.

Now all the geographical power shifts and technological change I have described require businesses to constantly remodel themselves.

This means CEOs will be obliged to communicate internally as never before. Of course, internal communication to secure internal alignment is a polite way of putting it. To express it little more brutally, probably the biggest block to progress for our clients is internal politics. The same may well apply to ourselves. Again Public Relations comes in to play.

So often turf wars, territory and ego within a business prevent strategic change. You could argue that most of the communication we co-ordinate for our clients is aimed at internal audiences rather than external ones. Some people have maintained that ensuring your internal constituencies are on side is often more important than external ones. Sometimes, if customers saw what went on within a company they would be horrified.

Only when internal communications are working, can your company talk positively to customers, suppliers, potential employees, journalists, analysts, investors, government and NGOs. Once achieved – and it is a battle – internal unison and common focus make a very powerful army.

So living the brand is critical. In that sense, all business is marketing – as even Harvard Business School has now discovered. Again, this is a job for Public Relations.

Another challenge for Public Relations is the growing lack of public trust in companies and government.

We live in a sceptical age. If there is one defining mood among consumers, voters and investors it is lack of trust. Companies – especially financial institutions – and governments face an uphill struggle over the next few years to convince their customers and electorates that they are competent. And, more importantly, above reproach.

Of course, mistrust of large corporations began during the last downturn with the Enron and WorldCom accounting scandals. It has been amplified by the current banking crisis.

Social media can only multiply that mistrust. Every toxic story about a bank's inefficiency or unfairness will chime with the horror of the credit crunch. If they can't handle my account properly, is it any surprise they can't run their own affairs without bringing the world economy down?

In such a climate, stakeholders will soon turn from a brand if they find that its practices do not support its advertising proposition. If, for instance, its ethical claims are not matched by its behaviour.

The solution should be to communicate more, not less. As Jack Welch said recently: "Trust is the very foundation of effective leadership; it's the grease of change. Leaders need to be building trust every single day. In every communication, they must rabidly avoid complexity and gobbledegook… Just the plain, old truth, delivered the same way to every audience." That's true inside a company as well as outside.

Of course, there are those who argue that the Public Relations industry is counter-cyclical. It should flourish in a downturn. The truth is more complicated, but this particularly intense crisis does indicate a little optimism.

Last time round, when the dot.com boom ended, many firms either went bust or simply stopped communicating.

This time, however, the financial services industry is in no position to batten down the hatches and ignore the anger. It must build confidence again with its customers, its investors and the politicians who seek to control it. True, there will be fewer mergers and acquisitions, fewer lucrative share offerings. But in their place will come this important trust-building work.

Neither is this demand going to end when we pull ourselves out of the downturn.

It is, like it or not, a more transparent world. As I have shown, everything a company does and says will be dissected and discussed. The mainstream media is doing it – especially during this current economic crisis. And so are thousands of special interest groups – those, for instance, lobbying for the environment, emerging markets and minorities.

In this atmosphere, companies are under pressure as never before to explain their corporate social responsibility policy. They can expect short shrift if they fail to live up to those expectations.

Really, CSR is a no brainer. No company hoping to be around in 10 years time can ignore its wider responsibilities. Sure, if you want to make a quick buck, please don't worry. But if you want to prosper long-term, then take it very seriously indeed.

Naturally, the empowerment of citizens and lobbying groups can bring problems. Advocacy groups have conflicting agendas. Protecting American jobs may mean improvishing manufacturers elsewhere.

Get the balance wrong and you can expect an avalanche of criticism or – worse still – a consumer boycott or investor flight. The internet spreads bad news at a faster rate than good news.

The empowered citizen is hardly likely to stop his/hers activities in a recession. Indeed, the lack of public trust in the banks and financial regulators has been heightened by the credit crunch. It is going to be a long, slow road to rebuild reputations. It will need Public Relations professionals to do it.

Here's another reason for optimism. Public Relations now is far more professional and can draw on increasingly sophisticated tools to assess data, and measure issues and performance.

At one time, it used to be argued that Public Relations was harder to measure than advertising. Certainly, weighing the volume of newspaper cuttings an agency achieves for its client would only be telling half the story. Coverage does not equal sales.

Those doubts have probably held back spending on Public Relations. But huge progress has been made on return-on-investment analysis in recent years.

With the advent of digital media come easy methods to evaluate the effectiveness of the marketing spend – the answer to the age-old question of which half of a budget is wasted. These smarter methods of measurement are absolutely key. We need to get beyond counting to an agreed standard measurement of the effectiveness of online Public Relations, a way of comparing return on investment.

Sophisticated tools like Millward Brown's CrossMedia and Precis can assess a campaign's effect by looking at brand consideration. In, say, a car launch, it is possible to show that TV advertising had the biggest absolute impact. But Public Relations and digital advertising delivered a greater uplift in consideration for every dollar spent. Moreover, Public Relations increased purchase intent.

These tools were able to assess consumers' views of banks during the current crisis. Perhaps unsurprisingly, their concerns were different to those reflected by the traditional media's agenda. Rather than fearing that the financial system was on the brink of armageddon – as newspapers and TV enjoyed suggesting – their worries were more down to earth. The attitude was more likely to be, yes I might cut back on holidays, but I'll be all right in the long term. So perhaps banks didn't need to demonstrate they had the right capital ratio. They needed to show how they would help customers weather a downturn.

Now return on investment is one thing. Return on inactivity – doing nothing during a crisis – is another matter and it is harder to calculate. How, for instance, do you measure an agency's performance in trying to keep a story *out* of the news?

A completely untrue story can spread like wildfire. The power of the web allows information and images to jump countries and continents in minutes. Sadly, blogging does not respect national boundaries. The region in question may not be in an executive's remit. That doesn't mean it isn't going to hurt their sales.

For instance, a chocolate company withdrew a product from Britain after Salmonella contamination. It was precisely the right reaction and all done in good time. Then an utterly false story emerged in South Korea. It suggested that the company was going to dump the contaminated chocolate on the Third World.

Once that story had spread, no volume of press releases is going to correct the damage. With the volatility of the web comes an ever-greater need for crisis management and a need to understand how information moves.

Naturally, no discussion of the changes in public relations and public affairs would be complete without referring to Barack Obama's campaign/election.

Obama 2008 marked the coming of age of modern public affairs. In recent years, every presidential election has demonstrated a leap in the sophistication of campaigning. The 2008 election took it to a new level in fine-tuned handling of data and polling.

Obama's methods of fund raising through small donations have demanded targeting of potential supporters through email, social networking and web-based management of canvassing. Backed, please note, last week by a 30-minute TV ad. No wonder he won *Advertising Age's* Marketer of the Year, ahead of Apple and Zappos!

It is a model for political campaigns, and not just on the national stage. The building of networks, conversations and electronic communities works at state and local level. It will put huge power back into the hands of voters. Politicians who fail to recognise its importance – who insulate themselves from the realities – will find themselves out of a job. This is democratisation of democracy.

Many chief executives are now looking to Public Relations as a cost-effective alternative to traditional advertising. It's worth considering why this has happened.

Within our group, Advertising and Media Investment Management – which concentrates historically on traditional areas such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, outdoor and cinema – has grown well in recent times. Indeed, it led the industry out of the last downturn.

But its overall share has declined and in its place supposedly less sophisticated, less global and less-developed marketing services have gained. In fact, 64 percent (post TNS) of our revenues come from outside pure advertising.

They come from public relations and public affairs, from branding and identity, from healthcare communications and what we call specialist communications, which primarily are direct, interactive and internet. There's also information insight and consultancy, a posh phrase for market research.

In five to 10 years, I expect see two-thirds of our business coming from these areas. Public Relations and Public Affairs, clearly, will drive part of that growth.

There are two reasons why I expect the traditional advertising side of the business to shrink. First, network television just got too expensive. Big advertisers are sick and tired of paying more for less. And second, at the same time audiences have declined.

This, of course, has to be seen in perspective. Clients still need reach. And if we were launching a consumer brand from scratch, we would still use network television. As shown above, it can still influence the largest number of people in the shortest time at the lowest cost per thousand.

So no one is suggesting clients avoid mass marketing. Rather that they use mass marketing to build awareness and then use more targeted, intimate digital media to convert that awareness into sales.

Here is a critical point. Advertising offers scale. Public Relations has its limits. There are only so many newspaper column inches, only so many blogs that can laud your brand. Public Relations has yet to prove that it can consistently make the same noise as a big TV campaign.

And you can't ignore the big events with world reach. The FIFA World Cup Final reaches about 500 million people, the Olympics 400 million, the Super Bowl 90 million and the Academy Awards around 30 million. The Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony reached 2.3 to 2.4 billion people.

The Chinese New Year Gala on CCTV in China, Asia and elsewhere, is watched by more than one billion.

Such events are in relatively fixed supply and will always command big prices. But elsewhere TV audiences are declining – and significant segments are going missing.

The missing viewers may be online. They are very likely to be in the younger segments who are cynical about advertising.

But there's more to it than declining audiences. Other more measurable, more credible cheaper ways of engaging with consumers have emerged. Of those the biggest beneficiaries, as we know, have been the digital and social media.

According to a survey in July by Millward Brown for *PRWeek* and Manning Selvage & Lee, more than 75 percent of senior marketers say they expect spending on new media and online initiatives to increase in the next year. Only four percent expected to see it decline.

Some 37 percent anticipated spending more on Public Relations, a majority – 52 percent – expected to spend the same, and just 11 percent forecast a decrease.

Marketers also overwhelmingly agreed they would be "most likely" to cut from other disciplines before turning their axe on digital, if forced to scale back budgets.

Moreover, there remains a lag between the growing time people spend online as a percentage of their media consumption and the proportion of marketing budgets devoted to digital. That gap will surely narrow. Public Relations firms can expect to see a decent cut of that money.

So can Public Relations embrace the natural synergy between skill set and the changing environment I have described? I believe it can.

Certainly, for those who know how to harness every form of influence, there have never been more platforms available.

But could Public Relations go one step further and take a leading role in managing other marketing disciplines in this new space? In the new model of influence, integration across marketing disciplines is crucial.

That is a question not only for us but also for our clients.

Within a company, dealing with citizen journalism and bloggers isn't merely something for Public Relations. Marketing or branding departments will want their say. It could also involve customer services, if complaints, say about a bank, are not being answered. Equally, if the blogs are by a company's people and concern their company, it could be something for human resources.

In agencies and groups like ours, social networking and electronic word-of-mouth marketing also belong to several disciplines. It isn't advertising, unless it's a wacky viral video made by the creative team. And it isn't wholly a question of research, although that plays a significant part. Branding experts will also have a role.

So Public Relations, of all the disciplines, could be well placed to bring them together if it is involved from the start. We are certainly a long way from the days when Public Relations was the last discipline to be brought into a campaign, long after branding and advertising. Now it has the potential to join other disciplines from the start in determining the marketing mix.

That's a nice thought, but there is something more important to remember.

Clients don't actually care where the solutions come from. All they want is the best talent available – plus the resources to match it.

Moreover, our clients aren't tied to agency brands; they're tied to people providing solutions. To that end, I would certainly expect to see more custom-built, cross-group initiatives like the one we employed for Dell.

So the future is optimistic. At this stage in the last economic cycle, public relations and public affairs were in disarray. The end of the first dot.com boom, bloated firms, fattened by easy account wins and inflated fees, were forced to make significant lay-offs.

It's different this time round. Public Relations companies have learned their lessons. They are more professionally managed and spend more time on staff retention and incentivisation. Clients' satisfaction is valued. Quality and financial controls are firmly in place.

At the same time, flackery and spin have become less effective. Public Relations and Public Affairs are becoming more scientific and professional. It is less a case of who you know. And more a case of what you know.

So in conclusion, I believe Public Relations's renaissance will continue for one simple reason. It is this. Public Relations professionals cannot buy the attention of the consumer. They have to earn it. They have to work for it. That is why they will succeed.

Thank you for listening me to so patiently. I hope these insights will give you a little understanding of how we see the opportunities and risks in Public Relations in the next few years. Thanks very much indeed.