

The History of the Profession

- Public relations is a relatively “young” profession.
- Seven eras of public relations:
 - Seedbed Era (1900 – 1916)
 - World War I (1917 – 1918)
 - Booming Twenties (1919 – 1929)



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- Seven eras of public relations (continued):
 - Roosevelt Era/World War II (1930 – 1945)
 - Post-War Era (1946 – 1964)
 - Period of Protest and Empowerment (1965 – 1985)
 - Digital Age and Globalism (1986 to the present)



Seedbed Era (1900 – 1916)

- Organizational attitudes: Public be informed.
- Muckraking, social reforms, unions.
- Public relations trend: Defensive publicity – journalists hired as “interpreters” to get the news out.



World War I Period (1917 – 1918)

- Organizational attitudes: Public be informed.
- “The war to end all wars.”
- PR trend: Organized promotion; Promote patriotism; use interest groups.



Booming Twenties Era (1919 – 1929)

- Organizational attitudes: Mutual understanding.
- Public relations trend: Promoting products; World War I publicity techniques used for social science.



Roosevelt Era and World War II (1930 – 1945)

- Organizational attitudes: Mutual understanding; depression.
- Public relations trend: Mass media use; social responsibility.



Post War Era (1946 – 1964)

- Organizational attitudes: Mutual adjustment; professionalism; post-war service economy; consumerism.
- Public relations trend: Credibility; associations such as PRSA form during this time; TV of importance.



Period of Protest and Empowerment (1965 – 1985)

- Organizational attitudes: Mutual adjustment.
- Public relations trend: Accommodation; systems theory; use of technology increasing.



Digital Age and Globalism (1986 – present)

- Organizational attitudes: Mutual adjustment.
- PR trend: Constant technological connections; international relationships; organizational transparency.
 - Internet boom: Technology innovations lead to 24/7 connectivity and information flow.



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Key Public Relations Figures

- Seedbed
 - Ivy Lee
 - President Theodore Roosevelt
- World War I
 - George Creel
- Booming Twenties
 - Edward L. Bernays
 - Arthur Page
- Roosevelt Era/World War II
 - Louis McHenry Howe
 - Elmer Davis
 - President Franklin Roosevelt
- Protest and Empowerment
 - Marshall McLuhan

