

CAREER GUIDE FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS SPECIALIST

SOC Code: 27-3031

Pay Band(s): 4,5 and 6 ([Salary Structure](#))

Standard Occupational Description: Engage in promoting or creating good will for individuals, groups, or organizations by writing or selecting favorable publicity material and releasing it through various communications media. May prepare and arrange displays, and make speeches.

Public Relations Specialist positions in the Commonwealth are assigned to the following Roles in the [Public Relations & Marketing Career Group](#):

[Public Relations and Marketing Specialist III](#)

[Public Relations and Marketing Specialist IV](#)

[Public Relations and Marketing Specialist V](#)

While Public Relations Specialist within the Commonwealth are all located within the Public Relations and Marketing Career Group, individuals may want to pursue other opportunities within the Commonwealth depending upon individual training, education, knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests.

Other Career Group(s) that may be of interest are:

[General Administration](#)

[Media and Production Services](#)

[Retail Operations](#)

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES AND TASKS

(Technical and Functional Expertise)

Skills

Note: *The technical and functional skills listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Public Relations Specialists commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the skills listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

1. Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
2. Talking to others to convey information effectively.
3. Persuading others to change their minds or behavior.
4. Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
5. Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
6. Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
7. Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.
8. Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
9. Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.

10. Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.

Knowledge

Note: The technical and functional knowledge statements listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Public Relations Specialists commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the knowledge listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.

The **Knowledge** of:

1. Principles and methods for showing, promoting, and selling products or services. This includes marketing strategy and tactics, product demonstration, sales techniques, and sales control systems.
2. Media production, communication, and dissemination techniques and methods. This includes alternative ways to inform and entertain via written, oral, and visual media.
3. Arithmetic, algebra, geometry, calculus, statistics, and their applications.
4. Transmission, broadcasting, switching, control, and operation of telecommunications systems.
5. Human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral and affective disorders.
6. Structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
7. Administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, designing forms, and other office procedures and terminology.
8. Principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.

Abilities

Note: The technical and functional abilities listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Public Relations Specialists commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the abilities listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.

The **Ability** to:

1. Communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
2. Communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.
3. Listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
4. Speak clearly so others can understand you.
5. Come up with a number of ideas about a topic (the number of ideas is important, not their quality, correctness, or creativity).
6. Read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
7. Come up with unusual or clever ideas about a given topic or situation, or to develop creative ways to solve a problem.
8. Identify and understand the speech of another person.
9. See details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).
10. Apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.

Tasks

Note: The following is a list of sample tasks typically performed by Public Relations Specialists. Employees in this occupation will not necessarily perform all of the tasks listed.

1. Arrange public appearances, lectures, contests, or exhibits for clients to increase product and service awareness and to promote goodwill.
2. Consult with advertising agencies or staff to arrange promotional campaigns in all types of media for products, organizations, or individuals.
3. Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with representatives of community, consumer, employee, and public interest groups.
4. Plan and direct development and communication of informational programs to maintain favorable public and stockholder perceptions of an organization's accomplishments and agenda.
5. Prepare or edit organizational publications for internal and external audiences, including employee newsletters and stockholders' reports.
6. Respond to requests for information from the media or designate another appropriate spokesperson or information source.
7. Study the objectives, promotional policies and needs of organizations to develop public relations strategies that will influence public opinion or promote ideas, products and services.
8. Confer with other managers to identify trends and key group interests and concerns or to provide advice on business decisions.
9. Confer with production and support personnel to produce or coordinate production of advertisements and promotions.
10. Prepare and deliver speeches to further public relations objectives.

INTERESTED?

Like people, occupations have traits or characteristics. These characteristics give important clues about the nature of the work and work environment, and give you an opportunity to match your own personal interests to a specific occupation. When you choose a job in an occupation that matches your own interests you have taken an important step in planning a successful and rewarding career.

The occupation of Public Relations Specialist has **Enterprising, Artistic and Social** characteristics as described below:

Enterprising — Enterprising occupations frequently involve starting up and carrying out projects. These occupations can involve leading people and making many decisions. Sometimes they require risk taking and often deal with business.

Artistic — Artistic occupations frequently involve working with forms, designs and patterns. They often require self-expression and the work can be done without following a clear set of rules.

Social — Social occupations frequently involve working with, communicating with, and teaching people. These occupations often involve helping or providing service to others.

LICENSURE, REGISTRATION, OR CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Generally this is not required for Public Relations Specialist positions in state government.

The Public Relations Society of America <http://www.prsa.org> accredits public relations specialists who have at least 5 years of experience in the field and have passed a comprehensive 6-hour examination (5 hours written, 1 hour oral). The International Association of Business Communicators also has an accreditation program for professionals in the communication field, including public relations specialists.

EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The Department of Labor provides the following information:

Public relations specialists—also referred to as communications specialists and media specialists, among other titles—serve as advocates for businesses, nonprofit associations, universities, hospitals, and other organizations, and build and maintain positive relationships with the public.

A college degree combined with public relations experience, usually gained through an internship, is considered excellent preparation for public relations work. The ability to communicate effectively is essential. Many entry-level public relations specialists have a college major in public relations, journalism, advertising, or communication.

The State Council of Higher Education lists Regent University as a Virginia educational institution that offers a public relations program.

The State Council of Higher Education lists the following Virginia educational institutions having a journalism program: Averett University, Norfolk State University, Radford University, Regent University, University of Richmond, Virginia Union University and Washington and Lee University.

COMMONWEALTH COMPETENCIES

Competencies are a set of identified behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that directly and positively impact the success of employees and the organization. Competencies can be observed and measured. When consistently demonstrated, competencies make employees particularly effective in their work. Competencies help lay out a road map to career success. You can use the Commonwealth Competencies to help improve your individual performance by adopting behaviors that make high performing employees successful in their jobs. In this way, you can use the Commonwealth Competencies for your further professional development.

The Commonwealth Competencies are:

1. Technical and Functional Expertise
2. Understanding the Business
3. Achieving Results
4. Serving the Customer
5. Teamwork
6. Interpersonal and Communication Skills
7. Leadership and Personal Effectiveness

The above competencies may be applied to employees throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. They can be rank-ordered by agencies and hiring managers to represent the needs of a specific job. The rank ordering will change depending upon the occupation, an organization's priorities, the actual job requirements, and the supervisor's preferences.

Career success is both about what you do (applying your technical knowledge, skills, and ability) and how you do it (the consistent behaviors you demonstrate and choose to use) while interacting and communicating with others. Hopefully, by studying the Commonwealth competencies, identifying your developmental opportunities, and working to refine your own competence, you can take charge of your career!

For additional information about the **Commonwealth Competencies** go to: http://jobs.state.va.us/cc_planningctr.htm. For the competencies, we first list the competencies and then define each. Finally, we list competency indicators; to describe what successful performance looks like.

COMMONWEALTH CAREER PATH

Career opportunities in the Commonwealth are not limited to moving “up” to the next highest role and pay band, changing positions, or to becoming a supervisor. That’s because most roles describe a broad group of occupationally related positions that perform a range of work that requires increased knowledge and skills. For that reason, Commonwealth roles describe the career paths within the same or higher-level role for the same or different Career Group. The broad salary range and the Commonwealth’s pay practices provide flexibility in recognizing career development and advancement. ([Salary Structure](#))

For example: **Public Relations Specialist**

PAY BANDS	PRACTITIONER ROLES
4	Public Relations & Marketing Specialist III
5	Public Relations & Marketing Specialist IV
6	Public Relations & Marketing Specialist V

PAY BANDS	Manager Roles
4	Public Relations & Marketing Manager I
5	Public Relations & Marketing Manager II
6	Public Relations & Marketing Manager III
7	Public Relations & Marketing Manager IV

Sample Career Path

Public Relations and Marketing Specialist III

The Public Relations and Marketing Specialist III role provides career tracks for public relation specialists performing journey-level to advanced-level responsibilities. Duties may include conducting research and market studies, project and event planning, developing various publications and/or promotional strategies, establishing and maintaining media relations, and implementing programs. Employees are responsible for a segment of an agency’s program or specialized program activities that relates to public and media relations, marketing and/or fund raising.

Public Relations and Marketing Specialist IV

The Public Relations and Marketing Specialist IV role provides a career track for public relations specialists performing advanced-level responsibilities that include: coordinating, planning, developing, implementing, promoting, and evaluating a program that relates to any agency, public, and/or media relations; marketing and sales; and/or fund raising activities.

Public Relations and Marketing Specialist V

The Public Relations and Marketing Specialist V role provides career tracks for the public relations specialists serving as experts and consultants. Employees perform specialized activities in public relations and marketing products and services of the Commonwealth of Virginia and/or coordinate business expansion and economic development opportunities within the State. Duties include creating new sales opportunities; planning, developing, implementing, budgeting, and evaluating programs.

Public Relations and Marketing Manager I

The Public Relations and Marketing Manager I role provides career tracks for managers responsible for public and media relations, customer service, marketing, public awareness, and/or fund raising activities for a segment of an agency's program or specialized program activities. Responsibilities include developing training, information and promotional materials, and policies and procedures related to a facility, supervision of staff and volunteers, and budget development.

Public Relations and Marketing Manager II

The Public Relations and Marketing Manager II role provides career tracks for managers responsible for the planning and implementation of comprehensive agency-wide programs or a major division program, supervision of staff, and utilization of program resources. Responsibilities include leadership and creativity in developing, managing, and executing public and media relations, publications, customer service, marketing, public awareness, and/or fund raising activities.

Public Relations and Marketing Manager III

The Public Relations and Manager III role provides career tracks for managers to directors responsible for the planning and implementation of comprehensive programs or a division-wide program, supervision of staff, and utilization of program resources. Responsibilities range in scope from regional to international and include leadership and creativity in developing and managing staff, policy development, executing public and media relations programs, publications, customer service, marketing, public awareness, and/or fund raising initiatives.

Public Relations and Marketing Manager IV

The Public Relations and Marketing Manager IV role provides career tracks for the executives whose responsibilities range in scope from statewide to international for an agency program or specialty area(s). Employees are responsible for extensive agency marketing and sales services, public and media relations and/or economic development and advancement programs. Duties include strategic planning, market and sales development, market and/or economic development goals and objectives, public relations and promotional initiatives, direction of staff and comprehensive fund raising strategies.

ADDITIONAL OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT:

O*NET (Occupational Information Network)

http://online.onetcenter.org/gen_search_page

Virginia Employment Commission

<http://www.alex.vec.state.va.us/>

Career One Stop

<http://www.careeronestop.org/>

Virginia Career Resource Network <http://www.vacrn.net/>