

PRCAN urges PR practitioners to legitimise agencies

The Public Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria (PRCAN) has urged unregistered public relations agencies to legitimise their business by joining the umbrella body for public relations consultants in Nigeria and join hands in enhancing the growth of public relations in Nigeria.



Chido Nwakanma

Vice president of PRCAN, Chido Nwakanma made the call, early in June 2012, at the beginning of the fourth Public Relations Master Class training programme organised by the association at Adna Hotel, Ikeja GRA in Lagos.

Nwakanma asserted that the observed growth of public relations in Nigeria and globally is because public relations is the professional platform most suited for managing in this time. He stated, "public relations is made for this era. Our primary business is the strategic management of information flow (communication) between and among various stakeholder groups. We live in the Information Age. Not surprisingly, public relations is growing in importance".

Clients demand more from PR agencies

Nwakanma also stated that the growing acceptance of public relations by the corporate world and government institutions imposed on practitioners the imperative of continuous professional development. Training and retraining are now even more imperative for public relations professionals, because clients now demand more from public relations agencies.

Nwakanma, who is also the chief executive of Blueflower Limited, a strategic communications management firm, stated that public relations budgets were also growing in response to the increased demand. He stated that there were increased dangers as well, beyond the demand for increased accountability and results by clients.

Elevating practice standards

He added, "The other danger comes from the many persons and organisations practicing public relations on the sly and taking huge bites from the PR Cake we are trying to bake. They range from advertising agencies who should be our allies in building another arm of the communication business, to journalists with briefcase media relations agencies, to management consultants. We invite genuine professionals to come and join PRCAN so we can elevate practice standards together and enlarge the pie."

"PRCAN also calls on our colleagues on client side, from private organisations to government agencies to emulate their colleagues in other professions, from law through accountancy, in inviting professionally registered public relations firms to handle their briefs and provide external professional counsel to their organisations. They should eschew the short sightedness of running briefcase agencies to which they assign briefs from their organisations. With such practices, it is difficult to maintain standards and even less accountability, all of which denudes from the value of the profession".

Developing the PR industry

Nwakanma affirmed the commitment of the professional body to manpower development and the development of the public relations industry.

"PRCAN supports the public relations industry as a whole by insisting that staff of member agencies, particularly those who had key departments, must be registered members of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations. Our training programmes are also part of mandatory CPD required of serious professionals across disciplines," he stated.

The PRCAN Master Class Series on "Planning and Managing Strategic PR Campaigns" had 25 participants. Facilitators for the one-day workshop included Jaiye Opayemi, chief strategist of Chain Reactions Limited; Akonte Ekine, CEO of Absolute PR; Muiyiwa Akintunde, lead consultant at Leap Communications and Nn'Emeka Maduegbuna, chairman and CEO of C&F Porter Novelli and former President of PRCAN.

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