

# Advertising vs. Public Relations

## What's the difference?

---

If you're searching for a career or trying to promote your company, you may have questions about the differences between advertising and public relations. These two industries are very different, even though they're commonly confused as being one and the same. The following 10 properties only scratch the surface of the many differences between advertising and public relations.

### 1. Paid Space or Free Coverage

**Advertising:** The company pays for ad space. You know exactly when that ad will air or be published.

**Public Relations:** Your job is to get free publicity for the company. From news conferences to press releases, you're focused on getting free media exposure for the company and its products/services.

### 2. Creative Control vs. No Control

**Advertising:** Since you're paying for the space, you have creative control on what goes into an ad.

**Public Relations:** You have no control over how the media presents your information, if they decide to use your info at all. They're not obligated to cover your event or publish your press release just because you sent something to them.

### 3. Shelf Life

**Advertising:** Since you pay for the space, you can run your ads for as long as your budget allows. An ad generally has a longer shelf life than one press release.

**Public Relations:** You only submit a press release about a new product once. You only submit a press release about a news conference once. The PR exposure you receive is only circulated once. An editor won't publish your press release three or four times in their magazine.

### 4. Wise Consumers

**Advertising:** Consumers know when they're reading an advertisement that they are being sold a product or service. Accordingly, they often view sales pitches very guardedly.

#### Adspeak

**Ad copy:** The printed text or spoken words of an advertisement.

**Artwork:** Materials, other than type, prepared for reproduction. Photographs, illustrations and diagrams are examples.

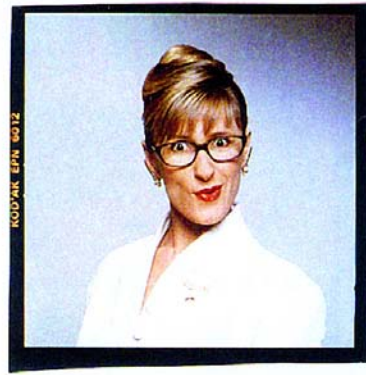
**Audience:** The number of people or households (often adults over 18) who are exposed to a medium or advertising message.

**Readership:** (1) The total number of readers of a publication (includes primary and pass-along readers). (2) The percentage of people that can recall a particular advertisement, aided or unaided.

FÖRE:



EFTER:



"The difference is called Skaga."

Agency: United  
Creative Director: Bo Ostergren  
Copywriter: Helena Helsing  
Art Director: Bo Ostergren  
Client: Skaga (eyeglass frames)

FÖRE:



EFTER:



Logos for the Earth Art Institute. One powerful word is hidden within another. Left, Michael Stantard Inc and right, Kiyoshi Kanai Inc, USA, 1992



**Public Relations:** When someone reads a third-party article written about your product or views coverage of your event on TV, they're seeing something you didn't pay for with ad dollars and view it differently than they do paid advertising.

### 5. Creativity or a Nose for News

**Advertising:** In advertising, you get to exercise your creativity in creating new ad campaigns and materials.

**Public Relations:** In public relations, you have to have a nose for news and be able to generate buzz through that news. You exercise your creativity, to an extent, in the way you search for new news to release to the media.

### 6. In-House or Out on the Town

**Advertising:** If you're working at an ad agency, your main contacts are your co-workers and the agency's clients. If you buy and plan ad space on behalf of the client, then you'll also interact with media sales people.

**Public Relations:** You interact with the media and develop a relationship with them. Your contact is not limited to in-house communications. You're in constant touch with your contacts at the print publications and broadcast media.

### 7. Target Audience or Hooked Editor

**Advertising:** You're looking for your target audience and advertise accordingly. You wouldn't advertise a women's TV network in a male-oriented sports magazine.

**Public Relations:** You must have an angle and hook editors to get them to use info for an article, to run a press release or to cover your event.

### 8. Limited or Unlimited Contact

**Advertising:** Some industry pros have contact with the clients. Others, like copywriters or graphic designers at an agency, may never even meet the client.

**Public Relations:** In public relations, you are very visible to the media. PR pros aren't always called on for the good news.



*Agency:* Jenner Keating Becker Reay  
*Creative Director:* Patrick Keating  
*Copywriter:* Patrick Keating  
*Art Director:* Buzz Garwood  
*Photographer:* John Turner  
*Client:* Pizzaland (restaurant chain)

Advertising in metros

3



### Adspeak

**Publicity:** A type of public relations in the form of a news item or story that conveys information about a product, service, or idea in the media.

**Media plan:** A plan designed to select the proper demographics for an advertising campaign through proper media selection.

### Real Advertisements ... yes, these actually appeared in print!

1. Illiterate? Write today for free help.
2. Auto Repair Service. Free pick-up and delivery. Try us once; you'll never go anywhere again.
3. Our experienced mom will care for your child. Fenced yard, meals, and smacks included.
4. Dog for sale: eats anything and is fond of children.
5. Man wanted to work in dynamite factory. Must be willing to travel.
6. Stock up and save. Limit: one.
7. Three-year-old teacher needed for pre-school. Experience preferred.

## Adspeak

**Consumer advertising:** Advertising directed at a person who will actually use the product for their own benefit, rather than to a business or dealer.

**Green advertising:** Advertising that promotes a product or service's ability to help or, more likely, not hurt the environment.

**Outdoor advertising:** Any outdoor sign that publicly promotes a product or service, such as billboards, movie kiosks, etc.

**Prime time:** The broadcast periods viewed or listened to by the greatest number of persons and for which a station charges the most for airtime. In television, the hours are usually 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

If there was an accident at your company, you may have to give a statement or on-camera interview to journalists. You may represent your company as a spokesperson at an event. Or you may work within community relations to show your company is actively involved in bettering society and is committed to the city and its citizens.

## 9. Special Events

**Advertising:** If your company sponsors an event, you wouldn't want to take out an ad giving yourself a pat on the back for being such a great company. This is where your PR department steps in.

**Public Relations:** If you're sponsoring an event, you can send out a press release and the media might pick it up. They may publish the information or cover the event.

## 10. Writing Style

**Advertising:** Buy this product! Act now! Call today! These are all things you can say in an advertisement. You want to use those buzz words to motivate people to buy your product.

**Public Relations:** You're strictly writing in a no-nonsense news format. Any blatant commercial messages in your communications are disregarded by the media. 🖊️

**Illustrations: "A Smile in the Mind", Phaidon; Epica Book**

### Henry Wolf on the split second when he got an idea

"I was young, twenty-seven years old, when the American Institute of Graphic Arts asked me to do the poster for their first paperback show. I couldn't get a good idea. I tried all the usual routes of books, or people reading, and came up with nothing. Then I went to Vienna to photograph a story for the Esquire on the Spanish Riding School. The client at the AIGA called me there, saying "We have to go to print". I told her I really couldn't produce anything, because I didn't have an idea that was good enough. While I was talking, this photograph was lying on the desk (without the tear, of course). I was looking at the man's back, and suddenly said to the client 'Just a minute, I'm going to try something'. I put the phone down, punched a pencil through the photograph, and tore it. I then said, 'I've changed my mind. You'll have it tomorrow.'

That's how it happened. I worked on the problem for four weeks, trying different ideas, because the project was very important to me. Then in a second I had it.

