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## **THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS SYSTEM IN THE ACTIVITIES OF POLITICAL PARTIES**

### **(In the Context of Digital Transformation and the Development of Civil Society)**

Dilrabo Saydullayeva

Assistant to a Deputy of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the  
Republic of Uzbekistan, Independent Researcher at Uzbekistan State World  
Languages University

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#### **Abstract**

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the role of the public relations (PR) system in the activities of political parties, its theoretical and methodological foundations, key functions, and its evolution under conditions of digital transformation. In addition, the study highlights the significance of PR mechanisms in the development of civil society, new trends in political communication, and factors that enhance the effectiveness of party activities in the modern information environment.

**Keywords:** Public relations, political parties, digital transformation, political communication, civil society, PR strategy, media environment.

#### **Introduction**

The processes of globalization and informatization are fundamentally transforming the nature and structure of modern political systems. In particular, the rapid development of digital technologies has led to the replacement of traditional forms of public communication with new communication models. As active participants in this process, political parties must align their activities with public opinion and establish effective PR systems in order to gain and maintain public trust.



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The aim of this study is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the role of the public relations system in the activities of political parties, to identify its core functions, and to reveal its development characteristics in the context of digital transformation.

According to the theory of political communication, the effective use of PR tools enables political parties to strengthen communication with state institutions, non-governmental organizations, mass media, and civil society institutions. Moreover, it contributes to enhancing the social legitimacy of political parties, their public reputation, and maintaining stable communication with voters.

PR activities in political parties are not limited to the dissemination of information but also serve as a mechanism for shaping and influencing public opinion. This system helps to build a positive perception of party activities, strengthen its image, and gain a competitive advantage in the political arena. The effective use of PR tools allows political parties to better understand real social issues, respond appropriately, and propose relevant political solutions.

Furthermore, effective public relations play a strategic role in shaping the external image of political parties and act as a key factor in their long-term development. From this perspective, the PR system is an integral component of political party activity, playing a crucial role in strengthening party-society relations, ensuring transparency, and fostering public trust in a democratic environment.

According to Article 74 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, "Political parties express the political will of various social strata and groups and participate in the formation of state power through their democratically elected representatives." As defined in the Constitution, political parties have the right to represent the interests of different social groups and actively participate in governance through their representatives.

Creating favorable conditions for the operation of mass media, establishing effective communication between the state and society, ensuring timely, objective, and comprehensive dissemination of information about reforms, and increasing the transparency of public administration have been legally guaranteed through relevant decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. These reforms have significantly contributed to improving the effectiveness of



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information services and strengthening cooperation between public institutions and society, benefiting all stakeholders involved in public relations.

The main functions of PR activities—information dissemination, advocacy, shaping public opinion, and strengthening political support—directly influence the effectiveness and credibility of a political actor in the eyes of the electorate. At the same time, the formal or superficial use of these functions, without analyzing the needs and expectations of the target audience, can have a negative impact on a party's public standing.

As Alexander Dovzhenko emphasizes, the same object can be perceived through different characteristics and aspects, depending on which features the subject chooses to focus on. The object itself has a multifaceted nature, allowing for various interpretations. From this perspective, the main task of public relations (PR) is not to artificially transform the object, but to present its existing and significant aspects in a timely manner and in accordance with the target audience. Therefore, interpreting PR activities as a tool for spreading false or misleading information is scientifically unfounded. Practice shows that communication based on false information does not produce sustainable long-term results and eventually leads to a crisis. Reality cannot be fundamentally altered by PR technologies. This idea is clearly illustrated by E. Schwartz's statement: "No communication can make a big foot appear small." This highlights a key principle of PR: directing public attention to specific aspects is at the core of professional communication strategy. Thus, PR should present reality effectively and truthfully rather than manipulate it.

Some political parties and organizations tend to use PR technologies superficially and in a standardized manner without strategic planning. Such an approach leads to distrust, indifference, and even opposition among the public. As a result, a disconnect arises between political parties and voters, weakening trust and diminishing the party's reputation as a political actor. Without a systematic and strategic approach to public relations, it becomes difficult to address these issues effectively.

The public relations (PR) system is a complex socio-communicative process that functions as a strategic and institutional component of modern communication management. It plays a crucial role in forming mutually beneficial relationships



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between social actors, strengthening social integration, and increasing the social capital of organizations.

Sevara Urinboeva, a well-known journalist who successfully led the Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan for several years, emphasizes the importance of PR as follows: “The relevance of studying the role of public relations in public administration lies in the novelty of the field and the need to approach existing problems in new ways, including through the application of modern PR management technologies.” Indeed, continuous scientific research in this field contributes to the development of new tools and achievements.

Within the institutional architecture of civil society, political parties occupy a central position, acting as fundamental mechanisms that ensure political and communicative interaction between society and the state. They perform a mediating function in political socialization, freedom of expression, and the institutionalization of public will, contributing to the articulation and aggregation of societal interests within the political system. From this perspective, political parties can be defined as key elements of institutionalized democracy that enable political representation and participation.

The Institute of Public Relations (IPR), established in the United Kingdom in February 1948, adopted a definition of PR that remains relevant today (with minor revisions in November 1987). According to this definition, “Public Relations” refers to planned and sustained efforts to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. Here, the “publics” of an organization include its employees, partners, and consumers. Such activities are strategically important for building social legitimacy, creating a trustworthy image, facilitating effective information exchange, and strengthening long-term cooperation.

In modern democratic processes, political parties increasingly focus on monitoring and analyzing public opinion, and on this basis, reformulating party programs, political platforms, and rhetorical strategies. This trend indicates that factors such as the socio-psychological state of society, public needs and expectations, levels of social discipline, and civic engagement are becoming central criteria in strategic planning and communication activities. Consequently,



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the PR system is increasingly being implemented as a mediating platform between political actors and civil society.

A British specialist in the field of public relations (PR), Sam Black, who has organized 262 international exhibitions and more than 100 conferences over half a century of PR activity, presents the fundamental principles of this field in his book *“What is Public Relations?”*. In this work, he systematically explains the key aspects of PR, including communication etiquette in service relations, professional conduct, and methods of building relationships with mass media, government institutions, as well as industrial and commercial sectors. The book also discusses how political organizations can develop their own communication style, present it through modern printing technologies, organize exhibitions or fairs, and effectively manage advertising activities.

The analysis of international political practice shows that strengthening institutional, strategic, and media-communication ties between political parties, mass media, and the broader public is one of the decisive factors ensuring their political legitimacy, electoral competitiveness, and influence in society. In the modern political environment, political parties function not only as political institutions but also as media actors that shape public opinion. Maintaining and consistently developing this position is one of the key strategic goals of any political party. This, in turn, requires building a stable socio-political foundation based on citizens’ trust and support.

In achieving this goal, one of the most important directions of party activity is the strengthening of the public relations system and its organization on new, modern foundations. Indeed, through establishing effective public relations, a political party can gain a deeper understanding of social realities, study the needs and problems of the population, and develop appropriate responses. This process increases the party’s social influence, fosters open dialogue with citizens, and creates an environment of trust-based cooperation.

At the same time, systematically organizing relations with the public, and establishing the principles of transparency, accountability, and openness in its activities, contributes significantly to strengthening the legitimacy of the political party.



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The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated February 15, 2018, “On Measures to Further Improve the Activities of Information Services of State and Economic Management Bodies,” places particular emphasis on enhancing the effectiveness of information services, increasing the transparency of state and economic management bodies, and ensuring the timely, objective, and comprehensive dissemination of information to the public about the goals, objectives, progress, and results of large-scale reforms, as well as the country’s integration into the global information society. The resolution also highlights the need to significantly improve the efficiency of information services within state and economic governance institutions.

The public relations (PR) system should not be viewed merely as a tool for information dissemination or political propaganda, but rather as an effective communicative mechanism that facilitates two-way dialogue, exchange of opinions, and participation in decision-making processes. In the modern political environment, this approach plays a crucial role in establishing stable and trust-based relationships with the public.

From this perspective, every political party must develop a well-thought-out, goal-oriented, and systematic communication strategy to ensure the effectiveness of its activities. Such a strategy should include effective cooperation with mass media, social networks, and civil society institutions.

In the process of maintaining and strengthening a political party’s social position, the development of public relations should be regarded not only as a primary task but also as a strategic direction requiring a scientific approach and systematic activity. Studying public opinion, taking into account the needs and aspirations of citizens, and providing clear, transparent, and reliable information during communication processes are key factors in ensuring the legitimacy of political party activities, increasing public trust, and establishing stable relationships with voters.

In the globalized space of political communication, political parties are required to use public relations (PR), branding, image-building, political marketing, and targeted media strategies to ensure effective and impactful interaction with their electorate. The efficient and purposeful use of all available communication tools in establishing strong public relations is a key factor in enhancing the



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effectiveness and competitiveness of modern political parties. Particularly in the current era, characterized by rapid globalization and digital transformation, the wide reach and influence of communication tools have become one of the main criteria for success in the political arena.

Political parties must effectively utilize not only traditional mass media but also digital platforms, social networks, internet media, mobile applications, and other interactive communication channels. These tools provide opportunities for continuous, prompt, and two-way communication with the public. At the same time, they enable parties to disseminate their ideas, programmatic goals, and social initiatives to a broad audience, as well as to monitor public opinion and social sentiments.

From this perspective, mobilizing all necessary communication tools to improve both internal and external communication of the party is not only appropriate but also a strategic necessity. Through an effective internal communication system, close cooperation among party members is strengthened, responsiveness to change is enhanced, and organizational discipline is reinforced. External communication, in turn, contributes to improving the party's relations with the general public, civil society institutions, non-governmental organizations, and international partners.

Therefore, developing a scientifically grounded communication strategy, identifying appropriate tools for each target audience, and using them purposefully are essential conditions for ensuring the effectiveness of political party activities. This, in turn, creates opportunities to expand the party's social influence, strengthen public trust and support, and achieve long-term sustainable political development.

Public Relations (PR), as a socio-communicative tool aimed at professionally organizing a party's relations with both internal and external audiences, plays a crucial role in shaping its political position in public consciousness. Indeed, the effective organization of public relations in the activities of political parties is of particular importance, especially in terms of increasing and strengthening voter trust. Therefore, gaining and maintaining public trust through PR activities should be considered one of the key strategic objectives of any political organization.



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If such relationships are built on systematic and continuous communication, the party can present itself not only during election periods but also as a consistently active and reliable political actor. This, in turn, creates a foundation for forming a stable public perception of the party's functions, programmatic goals, and socio-political positions. Particularly in conditions of intensified information pressures and political competition, preserving voter trust and maintaining continuous communication with them becomes a decisive factor in sustaining the party's political reputation.

It should be emphasized that public relations activities should not be limited solely to information dissemination but should also focus on listening to citizens' opinions and suggestions, studying their needs, and creating opportunities for them to influence political decision-making. Such an approach strengthens both the rational and emotional attachment of voters to the party, ensuring the stability of their political orientation.

In conclusion, maintaining continuous and meaningful communication with voters ensures that the party operates not only during election campaigns but also throughout the long-term process of political development in close interaction with the public. This significantly enhances public trust in the party and becomes a decisive factor in securing broad public support for its future activities.

Working with the electorate through communication enables political parties to demonstrate the following positive outcomes:

- analyze the needs and aspirations of citizens;
- deliver tailored messages to segmented audiences;
- promote the political agenda through mass media and digital platforms;
- continuously monitor public opinion;
- prevent information risks;
- and develop content strategies to counter competing narratives.

In these processes, the effective use of modern PR tools—such as image-making, media planning, content management, message engineering, and influencer marketing—is of great importance. The aforementioned PR instruments are not random tools but mechanisms grounded in theory and practice, tested and proven through systematic approaches. Their integrated and coordinated application



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allows organizations not only to build a positive image but also to maintain close and continuous interaction with the public.

For political parties, cooperation with mass media, the proper formulation of journalistic messages, enhancing the impact of information, and establishing managed communication mechanisms with the public serve as strategic resources in strengthening electoral support. For any political party, maintaining consistent support from its electorate—its voter base—is crucial for ensuring its influence and stability within society. This serves as a key factor in enhancing the party’s “image” (its public perception during elections) and “trust index.”

Especially in the modern media environment, there is an increasing need to move beyond simple information dissemination and to engage in public interaction through more complex mechanisms such as media communication, public relations (PR), and social communication strategies.

At the same time, every political party must take public opinion into account when shaping its programs and ideas. For this purpose, they should effectively utilize sociological surveys, content analysis, active journalistic monitoring, and media ratings. Listening to voters’ suggestions and improving political programs on this basis contributes to the formation of an “interactive brand” and creates a “trust climate” between the party and the public. In this context, journalism functions not only as a means of information dissemination but also as an “information bridge” between political actors and society. Therefore, political parties should establish close cooperation with mass media and actively present their positions through analytical articles, interviews, debates, and reports.

In the modern political environment, the relationship between public relations and mass media constitutes a complex and interdependent system. In particular, for political parties and political actors, the effective use of PR tools serves as a decisive factor in establishing close interaction with the public, communicating the content of political programs to a broad audience, and shaping public opinion. By engaging modern PR instruments—such as strategic media activity, targeted content production, image and brand management, as well as influence through influencers and digital platforms—political parties can present their positions to the public in a credible and impactful manner.



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In conclusion, maintaining open, transparent, and continuous communication with the public strengthens trust-based relationships between political actors and citizens. This not only enhances the social legitimacy of political subjects but also contributes to political stability and social consensus within the country.

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