
Annexes

Annex A – Request to conduct surveys

Sent via e-mail to PR course co-ordinators mid-June 2005

SUBJECT: PR GENDER SURVEY

Hi, (Name of course co-ordinator)

I am undertaking a PhD through Central Queensland University. The project is a gender study of the PR industry. To that end, I would like your permission to conduct a survey of second- and third-year [University name] PR students.

All I request is time at the end of a lecture to present the survey and to distribute questionnaires. All up this should take 30 minutes (that includes time for the students to complete the survey, which I have attached).

The methodology has been approved by the CQU Ethic Committee (Ref. H05/05-54 of 2 June 2005).

Any assistance is appreciated, [name]. Thanks for your consideration.

Regards,
Greg Smith

Sent via e-mail to University Heads of Communication, June 2005

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

I am a Perth-based PhD student (Central Queensland University) researching the predominance of women in communications (PR) in Perth.

I am in the stages of initial research and would like to know if your School would be able to provide statistics of course enrolment, preferably for as many years as possible, please?

Could you also indicate to whom I should address future requests for possible participation of [University name] students in survey and/or focus groups, please?

The research has been approved by the CQU Ethic Committee (Ref. H05/05-54 of 2 June 2005).

Your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Greg Smith

2005 gender survey into the public relations industry

This survey is the second stage of research into the predominance of women in public relations (primarily in Perth) and is being conducted as part of a PhD in Communications through the School of Infomatics and Communication at Central Queensland University, Rockhampton. The supervisors are Professor Alan Knight, and Kate Ames.

It is intended to form the basis for interviews and focus groups, to be conducted later in 2005 and 2006.

In brief:

- o All information in this survey is confidential.
- o No names are being used.
- o No-one will be identified.
- o There is no compulsion for you to complete the survey.
- o All surveys will be destroyed once the results have been collated.

You will be advised of the survey results by e-mail. These will also be published at the web site <http://members.westnet.com.au/gsmith/study>. If you require further information, please contact me at gsmith@westnet.com.au.

I thought it necessary to ask a question about income. While I realise for many people this is “private”, its inclusion will help show the relationship between gender and earning capacity. Again, I assure you that this information is strictly confidential. No person is identified, and all responses will be destroyed. Results will be used only in this study.

Finally, thank you for your continued interest and participation in this study, which, as far as I am aware, is the first of its type. It should form the basis of future research. Your involvement will contribute to knowledge about our industry, particularly in Perth.

Sincerely,



Greg Smith

3 June 2005

INSTRUCTIONS

This survey should take no more than 25 minutes. Please answer all questions. To answer multiple choice questions, highlight the box, and click your mouse. For answers which require wording or numbering, type in the grey area. Please save your document and return by e-mail to gsmith@westnet.com.au. Thank you.

1. Sex

☐ M ☐ F

2. Highest schooling

A ☐ High School

B ☐ TAFE

C ☐ Uni

3. Highest qualification

A ☐ School Cert/HSC/Leavers

B ☐ TAFE Cert/Diploma

C ☐ University Degree

D ☐ Post-Grad

E ☐ Other

4. In order, list the three areas you mostly work in.

Community relations

Media relations

Issues management

Event management

Product promotion

Other (specify)

5. What sector of the industry do you mostly work in?

- A ☐ Private company (in-house)
- B ☐ Government
- C ☐ Non-profit
- D ☐ Consultancy (in-house)
- E ☐ Other

6. How many years have you worked in public relations?

years

7. What type of role best describes the work you do?

- A ☐ Writer
- B ☐ Client liaison
- C ☐ Event management
- D ☐ Media
- E ☐ Support and co-ordination
- F ☐ Strategy development?
- G ☐ Other

8. What level are you employed at?

- A ☐ Junior/entry
- B ☐ Technician (writer, media, events)
- C ☐ Middle (some client liaison, some strategy)
- D ☐ Senior (strategy only)

9. What is your salary range?

- A ☐ \$20,000–\$35,000
- B ☐ \$36,000–\$45,000
- C ☐ \$46,000–\$60,000
- D ☐ \$61,000–plus

10. On average, how many hours a day do you work?

- A ☐ 6–8 hours
- B ☐ 8–10 hours
- C ☐ 10–12 hours
- D ☐ 12–plus hours

11. Several factors may influence the choice of PR as a successful/good career.

Number (in order) what you believe makes PR a good career?

- Money
- Career path
- Creative aspect
- Variety
- Mental challenge
- Other (specify)

12. What three aspects of PR interest you most (number 3 only, in order):

- Goal-setting
- Marketing and branding
- Project management
- Budgets/cost control
- Graphic design
- Writing
- Media liaison
- Events management
- Investor relations
- Reputation management
- Research
- Community relations

13. In order, what type of PR would you/do you prefer to work in:

Consultancy

Government

Corporate/in-house

Non-profit

14. Do you think there is a balanced workforce in PR (as it relates to gender)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

15. A census of the Perth PR industry and universities this year showed that on average that 74 per cent of the industry is female. Were you aware of this?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Why do you think this has happened?

16. Do you think men or women are better suited to a communications career?

☐ Men

☐ Women

Why?

17. Do you think a person's gender influences his/her entry into PR?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, in what way/s?

18. Do you think men or women (or neither) are best able to build rapport with clients?

☐ Men ☐ Women ☐ Neither

Why?

19. Are there any barriers that you believe could hinder a person's career in PR?

☐ Yes ☐ No

What are they?

20. Do you think there should be a balanced workforce in PR?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Why

21. Do you think gender impacts on individual performance in PR?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Why?

22. Do you think gender imbalance might have any effects/s on the PR industry?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what effects might they be?

23. Do you think there is a difference in the way males and females work with clients?

☐ Yes

☐ No.

If so, how?

24. Are there any aspects of working in this industry that affect your ability to work with clients and other industry professionals, media, target audiences?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What are they

25. Are there any ethical issues that effect your work within the industry?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What are they?

26. Does this differ between males and females?

☐ Yes ☐ No.

What are they?

27. Will you be available for an ☐ Interview and/or ☐ Focus group?

28. What day and time best suits you for:

a. An interview Preference: ☐ In-person ☐ Phone

b. Focus group

29. Do you have any comments or questions about this survey?

Thank you for your participation

- Greg Smith

June 2005

PR GENDER – STUDENT SURVEY



This survey is the first stage of research into the predominance of women in public relations.

This questionnaire is being conducted as part of a PhD in Communications through the School of Infomatics and Communication at Central Queensland University.

It is intended as a guide towards more in-depth interviews and focus groups, to be conducted late in 2005 and 2006. Supervisors are Prof. Alan Knight, and Kate Ames.

In brief:

1. All information in this survey is confidential.
2. No names are being used.
3. No one will be identified.
4. All surveys will be destroyed once the results have been collated.
5. No e-mail addresses or names are passed to any third party.

You will be advised of the survey results by e-mail. These will also be published at the web site <http://members.westnet.com.au/gsmith/study>. If you require further information, please contact me at gsmith@westnet.com.au.

Please read the instructions on each question carefully, as some of the pilot surveys were invalid due to questions not being completed correctly.

Finally, thank you for your interest and participation in this study, which, as far as I am aware, is the first of its type. It should form the basis of future research. Your involvement will contribute to knowledge about our industry.

Sincerely,

Greg Smith

INSTRUCTIONS

This survey should take no more than 20 minutes. Please answer all questions, marking boxes with an X. Please answer all questions, otherwise the survey is invalid.

1. Sex

M ☐ F ☐

2. Year of study

Year 2 ☐ Year 3 ☐

3. Course Major being studied

- ☐ Public Relations
- ☐ Journalism
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

4. How do you see PR?

☐ A Career ☐ A Job ☐ May lead to something else

5. What aspects of PR interest you most (**LIST 3 ONLY**, in order of interest):

- ___ Goal-setting
- ___ Integrated Marketing Communication
- ___ Project management
- ___ Budgets/cost control
- ___ Production (print/web design)
- ___ Writing
- ___ Media relations
- ___ Events management
- ___ Investor relations
- ___ Reputation management
- ___ Research
- ___ Community relations

6. What type of PR would you prefer to work in? (**MARK ONE**):

- ☐ Consultancy
- ☐ Government
- ☐ Non-profit
- ☐ Corporate (that is, in-house for one firm)
- ☐ Anything I can get
- ☐ Undecided

7. List in order (from 1–3) the areas of PR that interest you most.

- ___ Beauty/fashion
- ___ Travel/tourism
- ___ Non-profit
- ___ Entertainment
- ___ Health/medical/pharmaceutical
- ___ Food and beverage
- ___ International
- ___ IT
- ___ Financial
- ___ Industrial/manufacturing
- ___ Sports

8. Reasons for studying (and therefore presumably wanting to work in) PR vary. For the following, rate in order (1 to 9) what might motivate you to choose a PR career.

___ Desire to work with people

___ Money

___ Job satisfaction

___ Job security

___ Perceived benefits

___ Interest in current affairs

___ Career variety

___ Prestige

___ Creative aspects

9. What chance of success do you think you will have in obtaining work within PR:

☐ Less than 20 per cent

☐ 20–40 per cent

☐ 50–70 per cent

☐ 80–100 per cent

10. List the number of male and female tutors you have

Male ___

Female ___

11. Do you perceive any differences in the way your male and female tutors/lecturers teach?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what are they?

12. A census of the Perth PR industry and university courses this year showed that on average 74 per cent of students are female, with some courses up to 80 per cent female. Were you aware of that?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Why do you think that is?

13. Do you think men or women are more suited to a communications career?

Men ☐ Women ☐ Neither ☐

Why?

14. Do you think a person's gender might influence his/her entry into PR?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not really ☐

Comment:

15. Do you think men or women would best be able to build rapport with clients?

Men ☐

Women ☐

Neither ☐

If you answered male or female, why?

16. Number, from 1 to 3, the three qualities you believe make a good PR practitioner.

___ Verbal skills

___ Written skills

___ Planning skills

___ Organisational skills

___ Knowledge of the media

___ Strategic thinking

___ Financial management

___ Listening ability

17. Do you see any barriers that might hinder your career in PR?

18. Rate whether you disagree/agree with the following. Place X in the box.

| | Strongly disagree | Mildly disagree | Mildly agree | Strongly agree |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|
| A. PR is an easy study option | | | | |
| B. I am mildly interested in PR | | | | |
| C. PR will suffice until other opportunities arise | | | | |
| D. PR allows me to be inventive/creative | | | | |
| E. PR offers good practical skills | | | | |

19. Are you aware that in PR, men are, on average, paid more than women?

(PR Week Opinion Survey, 2002)

Yes ☐

No ☐

What do you think of that?

20. In PR, do you think men or women are more likely to be hired for basic (technician) communication skills (that is, writing, editing, design, web/print)?

Men ☐

Women ☐

Both equally ☐

The following information is confidential. It will be destroyed after the interviews and focus groups are completed.

Would you be available for a ☐ focus group and/or ☐ interview?

Your name:

E-mail address:

Phone number (optional):

1. Your gender 1 ☐ Male 2 ☐ Female

2. Your university 1 ☐ Curtin 2 ☐ ECU 2 ☐ Notre Dame
4 ☐ Murdoch

3. Which socio-economic (family) group do you come from? (ABS definitions).

1 ☐ Low (\$6k-\$21k) 2 ☐ Average (\$22k-\$58k)
3 ☐ Above average (\$59k-\$70k) 4 ☐ High (above \$70k)

4. Which of these traits best describes you? (Select one only).

1 ☐ Positive 4 ☐ Creative 7 ☐ Quiet
2 ☐ Personable 5 ☐ Outgoing
3 ☐ Decisive 6 ☐ Organised

5. What was your favourite subject at school? (Select one only)

1 ☐ Science 7 ☐ Economics
2 ☐ Geography 8 ☐ Politics
3 ☐ Maths 9 ☐ Art
4 ☐ English 10 ☐ Drama
5 ☐ Other language 11 ☐ Other (list)
6 ☐ History _____

6. What influenced you most to study PR? (Select one only).

1 ☐ Friend 5 ☐ Influenced by media (TV)
2 ☐ Knew someone in the industry 6 ☐ Knew about it and made some enquiries
3 ☐ Schools careers counsellor 7 ☐ Always had an interest
4 ☐ Switched to PR course 8 ☐ Other _____

7. How do you think most people view PR? (Select one only)

1 ☐ They have a positive impression
2 ☐ They think it's about spin
3 ☐ They're a little unsure about it
4 ☐ They don't know
5 ☐ Other (specify) _____

8. What type of work situation suits you best?

- 1 ☐ Prefer to produce my own ideas
2 ☐ Prefer to implement others' ideas
3 ☐ Prefer to weight up my ideas against others'

9. Rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement: "PR is 'fuzzy' in its logic".

- 1 ☐ Strongly agree 2 ☐ Mildly agree
3 ☐ Mildly disagree 4 ☐ Strongly disagree

10. Did you have any perception about PR before studying it?

- 1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

11. Do you think students study PR because of their perceptions about it?

- 1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

12. If "yes", what did you think about PR then? What do you think about PR now?

Q. 14. Do you think there is a balanced workforce in PR (as it relates to gender)?

1. Balance and performance is not gender-specific. (M)
2. Balance would better represent the needs of diverse clients. (F)
3. Like any industry, there should be gender balance. (F)
4. I can't see what advantage it would confer or difference it would make ultimately. If the job is done properly doesn't matter who does it, regardless of gender or age. (F)
5. There should be a balanced workforce in PR; just as there should be in other fields. (M)
6. It should be about hiring the best person for the job. (F)
7. A predominance of female PR and media practitioners leads to a bias toward women's issues and beliefs. Female beliefs should have an equal male counterweight in both the choice and analysis of issues. The genders might be equal but they still think differently on many issues. (M)
8. Those who best suit the job should get the job. (F)
9. It may bring a greater measure of external respect for the industry if more men were in it (sad but true). (F)
10. It's good for the industry, to provide aspects from both genders. (F)
11. Attempts to enforce arbitrary balances are futile. We should be attracting the best people for the job regardless of their gender, eye colour, race or shoe size. (M)
12. Balance is necessary to uphold principles of equity and diversity. (M)
13. It is always preferable to have a range of opinions, experience and views, so of course a workforce should be balanced rather than dominated by any one view. (M)
14. If PR is to be seen as a profession rather than a trade then gender imbalance should be addressed. It shouldn't be an issue. (M)
15. There should be a balanced workforce everywhere. (M)
16. Every workforce should be balanced. Employment should be about merit and what individuals, regardless of gender, can bring to the mix. (F)
17. I think like any function PR benefits from balance between creativity and a more business and structured approach to work. (F)

18. I believe there should be balanced workforce in every area that an equal amount of men and women are interested in pursuing - unhindered by stereotypes. (F)
19. A better gender balance would help ensure better client relations at all levels. If the industry is seen to be exclusive to women it is likely to not be able to fully understand or service the needs of all client groups. (M)
20. Balance can help, depending on who the client and stakeholders they are dealing with. Also, it appears that male and female approaches can be quite different. (There's a) need to be able to consider different angles. (M)
21. It should be a natural product of selecting the best people for the relevant jobs. (M)
22. We should simply get the best people. Do you think the engineering industry (or other male-dominated industries have suffered due to their gender balance? If we agree with the question, does that mean an 'imbalanced' workforce is good? (F)
23. I don't believe it makes any difference if there is a gender imbalance. (F)
24. Balance is not relevant. However, I think the upper echelons of PR should reflect the female dominance at lower levels. As the industry is so female dominated woman tend to primarily work with and around women. A male influence is needed to balance teams.(F)
25. In consultancies, particularly, you will usually have a client list which includes brands/services which target different audiences. It is helpful to have both a male and female (as well as younger/older for that matter) perspective on consumer insights. (F)
26. Teams work best when there is a balance of ideas, backgrounds and orientations - obviously gender plays a part in that. (F)
27. It can sometimes create a one-gender approach. (F)
28. I think the industry is best served by intelligent, articulate, strategic people, irrespective of gender. (F)
29. Some people may work better (or not) with (or without) men/women in the workplace. (F)
30. The high proportion of women in junior roles contributes to the image of the profession being tactical in nature – not corporate, strategic. The over-proportion of men in management positions contributes to the reality that the industry is a poor promoter of relationships in the workplace. There should be balance because half the people we communicate with are men. (M)
31. Yes, there should be balance. Yes, because men bring different skills and some corporations still simply prefer dealing with men - particularly in industries like engineering and mining. Men and women both have different qualities to offer and a mixed team creates a better dynamic. It's less effective marketing to men, lack of men's perspective. (F)

32. It creates diversity (F)
33. Balance in any industry is preferable but I'm not sure it will change the outcomes for the client. (F)
34. A balanced workforce can address the needs of all clientele at a particular time and deliver an even spread of creative thinking. (M)
35. It's not necessary to have men in this profession. (F)
36. Balance brings variety and different approaches to the work. But an office with too many women can be bitchy. I sure know that. (M)
37. There should be a balanced workforce in any industry. (F)
38. (Males and females) complement each other's skills, provide a gender balance in the office and help steer away from it being a traditionally female-dominated area. (F)
39. Does it matter? (F)
40. We need the right person for the right job, which can be any gender. (M)
41. Any workforce that contains a more equal balance of males and females is generally a happier and arguably more functional workplace (comment made from personal experience of almost 30 years in the workforce). (F)
42. All industry sectors should strive to have a balanced workforce. (F)

Q. 15. A census of the Perth PR industry and universities this year showed that on average that 74 per cent of the industry is female. Were you aware of this? If yes, why do you think it occurred?

1. PR has been promoted as an attractive career for women. (M)
2. Women are drawn to PR because of their confidence and their knowledge. (F)
3. A lot of girls study PR at uni I believe, as they think it's a fairly glamorous career, thinking it's lots of parties and schmoozing. Often they think of very consumer-oriented PR with lots of events. Most of PR is not really about that. It's more media relations. As you become more senior, issues management, corporate reputation. It's seen as a more female occupation due to the perception of events, schmoozing, very tactical work. PR is often perceived by men to be a glorified secretary's role. (F)
4. People think PR is glamorous so mostly women are attracted to this as a career path. (F)
5. Women have better natural skills for undertaking PR and are more interested in it. (M)
6. In the older age groups, I feel it could be due to secretaries and PA's having moved into the PR area or given 'PR' to do as part of their original role

because they have secretarial skills. I suspect many small PR consultancies are run by women and if they're home-based then a woman is less likely to bring a man into that situation; people say the nature of women is better suited to PR and communications (that of course is debatable. (F)

7. Female high school students often have PR suggested because of basic psychometric assessment which identifies the creative/intuitive aspects of the profession as suitable for women. There has also been a strong promotion of PR as a celebrity profession through media, which seems attractive especially to young women. (M)
8. Senior government positions in particular are occupied by women and they simply recruit other women. It's quite scandalous. (M)
9. There's been a focus on softer/product marketing aspects of PR encourages PR houses to hire softer employees and housekeepers for event management. Women see it as a career in itself, particularly in sub-disciplines such as event management. (M)
10. Women are conditioned to believe PR is a right-brained industry and women are 'naturally' right brained. I've actually heard people say, 'you can talk, you get on with people, who don't you go into PR. (F)
11. I think PR has a perception of being a female industry a bit like nursing and thus men are not naturally drawn to it, unless they come in via journalism or publishing. (F)
12. It has traditionally been an area women have been seen to excel, so I imagine as a female student you would want to chose a career path that doesn't appear to have an overt glass ceiling. (F)
13. The industry generally has more opportunities today for females and, as women gain more senior PR roles they tend to engage more females. As the numbers of females grow in the industry they tend to influence others to pursue the profession. (M)
14. I think PR is a great profession for men and women but women have taken to it as an alternative to journalism with the opp. to work in with clients, flexible career paths, events, media, marketing etc and still write - without the issues of death knocks, chequebook journalism, male dominated media circles. (F)
15. PR shifted from being a career progression for ex-journalists (mainly men) to a more recognised professional option in its own right with university courses attracting more women. (F)
16. Young men tend to view communications as a career path for women. (F)

17. Women are better-suited because it is more natural for women to communicate. (F)
18. It is now perceived as 'female' sector. (F)
19. It was traditionally viewed as a female career path. (F)
20. More women entering previously male-dominated roles in media generally. (F)
21. Possibly women are drawn more to humanities. (F)
22. Males are actively discriminated against at [uni] course selection and at time of employment. (M)
23. PR is based strongly on communication skills, and women felt that it was an area they could specialise in. (F)
24. Women are more interested in communicating than men. PR is mainly about communicating. (F)
25. Representations in popular media portray PR as a 'cool' profession for women. I believe it is viewed as a 'chicks' field and therefore is not taken as seriously as it would if there were more men. (M)
26. The whole world of (white collar) work is becoming feminised, but PR is the most visible example of this phenomenon. PR work tends to work best as a group activity. Could this be another factor that tends to suit females more than typically solitary and competitive males. (M)
27. Maybe due to school/parental career choice (that is, what's encouraged or lack of understanding of what PR involves).
28. The PR industry perhaps is seen as a more a 'softer' alternative and perhaps men are more attracted to what are seen as more 'harder' hitting' industries such as journalism. Because there are more females in the industry, it naturally attracts more females. (F)
29. Because it's largely a communication discipline, which women are typically attracted to. (F)
30. Both can be suited but for reasons above women are attracted to the field. Men and women can be good at anything. Have worked with men and women who are brilliant and both who aren't. It's not a gender issue but a mindset. (F)
31. Females are more suited to PR because they are better communicators, possess stronger interpersonal skills, are more intelligent emotionally and enjoy being creative. (M)

32. It is an industry in which women can be just as successful/ possibly more successful than men and I was aware of this when I chose it as a career. Also, I believe women are sometimes more suited to the hands-on, creative, communicative requirements of PR. (F)
33. I think it's the creative aspect of the industry. Plus, I also think the PR industry allows women to progress to management positions, which traditionally has been difficult in other industries. (F)
34. I think it is not common for men to enter PR as it is traditionally seen as a job which involves a large amount of organising. Men are not typically known for being good organisers and are not really brought up in the household as being responsible for having to organise themselves much. The imbalance of responsibilities in the home may still contribute to this. I think men who get into journalism also see PR as a soft option and don't want the extras that come with it, such as events management. (F)
35. Perhaps because PR is increasingly seen as a job women are most suited to. Men may think they should be doing more 'blokey' professional jobs, like law or engineering. I also think the public perception of PR as a bit of a 'blow up balloons and make sure the coffee is nice' side of it doesn't appeal to men. (F)
36. Girls are still (surprisingly) encouraged to follow more creative paths. (F)

Q. 16. Do you think men/women/neither are better suited to a communications career? If men or women, why?

1. Suitability for PR is not gender specific. It comes down to ability, and either gender can succeed. It comes down to individuals and natural selection. Some PR tasks are better suited to men or women, but that is a generalisation. Some women perform better in the corporate PR world, if given the chance. Some men are brilliant organisers for events, which is traditionally a female area. Again it is the individual that counts. (M)
2. Women have better natural skills for undertaking PR and are more interested in it, this is because it involves large amounts of people skills, use of intuition and expression through writing. Women are naturally better at this. (F)
3. Some sectors of industry and commerce, such as design, cosmetics etc will benefit more from female input. similarly, men would be better suited to engineering or agricultural PR. (M)
4. Women are better-suited to PR because they are more level-headed. (F)
5. Women have greater empathic qualities, better listeners, able to multi-task, less reliant on relationships/contacts to succeed. I believe women feel more

comfortable about entering the industry. Men rely on 'old boy' network and have more time to network/socialise outside of working hours. (F)

6. Both are equally – it's not a gender issue. (M)
7. A career in communications is all about building relationships. If you don't have the wherewithal to do that you will fail. (M)
8. Women are more likely to enter PR as a career in sub-disciplines, such as event management, so they may get more satisfaction out of that. Men often burnt out, in PR as the last option, tend to be cynical and the maladjusted. (M)
9. I unfortunately believe that being a physically unattractive, or poorly groomed person, and even possibly being a much older person, especially if you are female, would be a barrier to success in PR – as is probably true of most jobs. (F)
10. I think men, if they are interested in this kind of work, would be more attracted to advertising/marketing, business/commerce, rather than PR itself. (F)
11. Both have pros and cons. There is need for a balance. (M)
12. Perhaps they're (men are) taken more seriously. (M)
13. Everybody is different. I look for someone with integrity, honest and respect (and a degree). (F)
14. I think both men and women are equally suited to PR. (F)
15. Neither. Both are capable. (M)
16. Women tend to score better in English/humanities subjects and tend to be better organisers than men, and PR is largely about organisation. (F)
17. Women are generally more intuitive; strong verbal and written skills; high emotional intelligence; detail oriented; can multi-task. (F)
18. Young men tend to view communications as a career path for women. (F)
19. Women are better-suited because it is more natural for women to communicate. Women are (also) more adaptable and able to make fast decisions. (F)
20. I think gender is irrelevant to ability to communicate and strategise. (F)
21. Women make better professional communicators. They can relate to a larger range of people. (F)

22. It suits both genders. (F)
23. Females are more suited to PR because they are better communicators, possess stronger interpersonal skills, are more intelligent emotionally and enjoy being creative. (M)
24. No media experience. (M)
25. Neither men or women are best suited. Both have varied and positive skills that they can bring to the industry. (M)
26. I don't think gender matters. (F)
27. I think both sexes can do a really good job at PR, though it tends to appeal more to women. (F)
28. The psychological make-up of females which affects their superior ability to balance several tasks at one time and that they are also recognised as possessing better fundamental communication skills. (F)
29. Depends on the specific person. You just need to be good at communicating with people: that's not gender specific. (F)
30. I don't think gender impacts on one's ability to excel in the PR industry. (F)
31. I believe this is true in some cases. There are men who I am sure are good communicators, but it is an intrinsic quality that most women possess. (F)
32. Women are naturally good communicators and organisers. (F)
33. It comes down to personal aptitude. Men can be equally good, perhaps even better than, some women in writing and client liaison, etc. I think neither are more suited than the other. It's a fairly flexible job. (F)
34. Everyone has different talents - gender doesn't necessarily determine this. Either you're good at PR-related activities or you're not. (F)
35. I think it is very dependent on the personality of individuals. Whilst my experience is that women dominate the industry and seem to have the personality fit for the job - this doesn't exclude males. (F)
36. I think women are more attracted to the field because men view it as 'fuzzy'. (M)

Q. 17. Do you think a person's gender influences his/her entry into PR? Yes/no. If yes, in what ways?

1. It depends on the individual rather than gender. (M)
2. Women are naturally more interested in the type of activities that are involved in PR, from event management to writing and client liaison. Young men (early 20s) find it harder because they are invariably less mature than their female counterparts, can't express themselves as well, and can't intuitively read group or individual dynamics so a lot of stuff just goes over their heads. (M)
3. Some sectors of industry and commerce, such as design, cosmetics etc will benefit more from female input. similarly, men would be better suited to engineering or agricultural PR. (M)
4. Yes, to some extent. I think as it is seen as a female dominant industry that it may be harder for men to get jobs in the industry over women. (F)
5. The gender imbalance makes it difficult to work within the mainstream media. (M)
6. In looking at gender differences, I suspect it is still the woman usually who has to drop work to attend a sick child, and this would impact on performance, although one would expect irregularly. (F)
7. Men become much more matey, joke a lot more with clients and don't take criticism as personally as women practitioners. (F)
8. The only impact of gender would be only in as far as women seem to be better communicators; there is no actual preference for men or women that I have experienced. (F)
9. Gender doesn't really have an influence, or an impact. It has an impact as much as any other characteristic, no more and no less. (M)
10. Men are more likely to see it as a career move after burning out in journalism or politics. Women see it as a career in itself, particularly in sub-disciplines such as event management. (M)
11. Gender is virtually irrelevant, as it is skill sets, personalities etc. that matter. (F)
12. I think the statistic of 74% of females entering PR proves gender influence and I would assume, as I have earlier, that female students have a perception that this is an area where they could pursue a successful career path. I imagine given the gender basis for females studying PR that maybe some men could feel it is not a 'manly' profession but I would only be guessing, as I have

- never heard any man say this. I would think this would come down to personality and interpersonal skill of the PR person. (F)
13. Yes, gender does influence, because it is now pretty well established as a female-dominated profession. (F)
 14. As the numbers of females grow in the industry they tend to influence others to pursue the profession. (M)
 15. Men tend to think PR is a 'woman's career'. (F)
 16. I think gender is irrelevant to ability to communicate and strategise. Some corporates believe men are better at "tough" strategy, hence their number in senior mining and government PR. (F)
 17. Both genders bring their own abilities and experience to the profession. (F)
 18. Many men perceive PR as frivolous and touchy/feely. That's why more women pursue the career. (M)
 19. Gender does influence entry. Males are actively discriminated against at [uni] course selection and at time of employment. (M)
 20. I do not think gender matters. Both can be equally as suited. (F)
 21. Assuming (as is the case) that senior positions still tend to be taken by men, then they may prefer to hire a woman onto their team. There need be nothing improper in this, simply a recognition that a mixed team may have greater overall strengths. To the extent that public relations is about relationships, gender may play a part. (M)
 22. PR is one of the 'soft' careers that appeals to women. (F)
 23. Both have skills that are gender-based. The old adage: women are better communicators than men, is often bandied about but quite simply untrue. (M)
 24. If it is male-dominated, then I feel creativity is stifled. (M)
 25. I think only now that men may be influenced or put off by the imbalance of gender; that is, not many men are doing it, so why would I? (F)
 26. Similar answer to question 16. Girls are still (surprisingly) encouraged to follow more creative path. (F)

Q. 18. Do you think men/women (or neither) are best able to build rapport with clients? If men or women, why?

1. It depends on the client. Serious clients would generally go for men, wankers for women. (M)
2. It depends upon the gender of the client. Men and women relate differently to the opposite sex in all walks of life and this is also true in PR. However, diversity is the spice of life and I see no particular problem with the different ways that female PR practitioners relate to their clients. (M)
3. I could be either, depending on the client and the consultant. (F)
4. It depends on clients. We do a lot of mining/infrastructure/primary industry work and they still prefer to deal strategically with a male (not that it makes any difference to the level of work done). Some other industry sectors seem to prefer women ... horses for courses. (M)
5. Neither men or women are best at building rapport. It depends on the client. I don't think its gender, rather personality, that drives this. (F)
6. Women are more focused upon non verbal signs and obtaining consensus. (F)
7. Clients are usually men and they relate better to other men on a professional level. That said, women have advantages, too, such as mentioned above: they're better at getting along with all types of people. Male clients often won't take women seriously and will get on better with men. (M)
8. I think this depends entirely on the personality and interpersonal skills of the person, not the gender. (F)
9. Clients (decision makers) generally tend to be men, networking opportunities better established by men – golf days, drinks, etc the BOYS club really does still exist. (F)
10. Do not agree either gender has an advantage, but better gender balance would help ensure better client relations at all levels. (M)
11. It depends on person. I work with men and women and it comes down to their individuality. Both can bring experience and strength to client relationships - not cut and dried. (F)
12. Business is still very much a 'boys club'. (F)
13. I have seen good and poor operators of both genders. (F)
14. Building rapport has nothing to do with gender. (M)

15. Neither are better at this. It depends on the individual's personal attributes unrelated to gender. (F)
16. Most of the 'big-end' clients tend to be represented by men and men like to deal with men. (M)
17. I find this a very hard one to answer definitively; but have favoured women again on the grounds that most clients (in certain sectors) are male. Sometimes they prefer the male bonding potential of having a male PR consultant, but mostly I suspect they might prefer an attentive female client (I recognise that this answer, and some others, could easily be misinterpreted). There is of course a difference in how individuals work with different clients. I (male) was always formal and businesslike with my clients (some later became good friends, but only once they were no longer clients). Some of my female colleagues found it much easier to strike up an easy rapport with these same clients; yet other female colleagues were even more formal than me. (M)
18. Neither would be my answer. Both are equally able. Rapport is about personality not gender. (M)
19. I think it depends on the specific person. Women may be seen as the friendly nurturers, but sometimes in the business world women aren't taken as seriously as men, particularly by senior execs. (F)
20. As a young woman in the PR industry, it can be difficult building rapport and earning respect from senior male clients. However, this could be more of an age issue, than gender. (F)
21. If the consultant is an effective communicator I believe they will be able to build a strong relationship with their clients, regardless of gender. (F)
22. It depends on the individual. Some people can easily built rapport, others can't. While it can certainly be a learnt skill, some will still have an advantage because they can sell ice to the Eskimos (that is, are skilled and persuasive communicators) anyway. (F)

Q. 19. Are there any barriers that you believe could hinder a person's career in PR? Yes/no.

1. Employers may feel a job is more 'suited' to a female, and would not hire a man. (M)
2. As in some other industries, aspects relating to personal presentation, grooming, speech, etc – all things that generally can be modified or improved on by the individual if necessary. And of course skills/abilities. (F)

3. As in all careers, it is difficult to balance a family's needs with a full-on career. (F)
4. Government and corporates are still (in the main) uncomfortable working with female dominated professionals on equal footing (consider nursing etc) a 'Female' PR profession will take longer to gain acceptance. (M)
5. Personal ethics: harder to get on if you're honest. You need to be able to sink into the dark side comfortably. (M)
6. In government political interference can impede a person's PR career. (F)
7. Lack of communication skills, tact, definitely need to be a good communicator. (F)
8. Ability and lack of common sense. (F)
9. Gender does influence entry. Males are actively discriminated against at course selection and at time of employment. The main barrier to PR entry is that the education system discriminates against males entering the world of PR, through course selection process. Males are not encouraged to think of it as a choice and when they do it is made more difficult for them to be selected despite results and aptitude. (M)
10. I have heard of many young females (with uni degrees) who entered the industry with consultancies and were expected to work long hours doing all of the office's general work (little of which is genuine PR work but menial tasks such as taking the boss' dry cleaning in or getting coffees.) They were treated rudely by supervisors and more experienced colleagues. They decided to leave PR. This treatment is not at the hands of males but other females. Others have received this treatment but hang in there and move on within the industry. (F)
11. I see many students competing for junior roles, and have anecdotal evidence that women are favoured in the interview process because they often appear more assured, whereas young men can still appear gauche. They are barriers of skills and commitment. Not everyone has the stomach for a full-time PR role (and perhaps we are guilty in higher education of not fully preparing students for the pressures of real work.) (F)
12. PR tends to be full of good-looking, well-groomed people, so someone who doesn't fit that mould may find it difficult to get ahead (F)
13. Lack of understanding of the political environment in which the practitioner works - needs to understand the culture and the 'small p' politics. (M)
14. Age, gender and looks. (F)
15. If the person is not confident, a good communicator and able to adapt to suit different clients I think PR would be difficult. (F)
16. A lack of ability/aptitude for writing. Writing is such a large part of PR, if you don't have the skills, it will be very hard to succeed. (F)

17. The 'old school' PR people who have been working in the industry for years and have become set in their ways and aren't necessarily open to younger, fresher creativity. Also, the recent tendency for government to become more policy driven, which puts a number of impediments in place that can stanch the feeling that creativity and autonomy are encouraged in PR. (F)

Q. 20. Do you think there should be a balanced workforce in PR? Yes/no/doesn't matter. Why?

1. I can't see what advantage it would confer, or difference it would make ultimately. If the job is done properly doesn't matter who does it, regardless of gender or age. (M)
2. Yes. To match the balanced audience. A predominance of female PR and media practitioners leads to a bias toward women's issues and beliefs. Female beliefs should have an equal male counterweight in both the choice and analysis of issues. The genders might be equal but they still think differently on many issues. (M)
3. Those who best suit the job should get the job. (F)
4. Having a better balance may bring a greater measure of external respect for the industry if more men were in it (sad but true). (F)
5. Attempts to enforce arbitrary balances are futile. We should be attracting the best people for the job regardless of their gender, eye colour, race or shoe size. (M)
6. I think there should be a balanced workforce everywhere. (M)
7. I think like any function PR benefits from balance between creativity and a more business and structured approach to work. (F)
8. I believe there should be balanced workforce in every area that an equal amount of men and women are interested in pursuing - unhindered by stereotypes. (F)
9. The industry is so clicky that I think everybody generally works within their own networks and establishes themselves with the people they need to know in order to fulfill what they need to do - regardless of gender ... it's more individual. Generally PR people work in teams, which would include men as part of the creative development / concept team. (F)
10. The industry generally has more opportunities today for females and, as women gain more senior PR roles they tend to engage more females. A better gender balance would help ensure better client relations at all levels. If the

industry is seen to be exclusive to women it is likely to not be able to fully understand or service the needs of all client groups. (M)

11. We should simply get the best people. Do you think the engineering industry (or other male dominated industries have suffered due their gender balance? (F)
12. Gender segregation is dangerous. As the industry is so female dominated woman tend to primarily work with and around women. A male influence is needed to balance teams. (F)
13. I think the industry is best served by intelligent, articulate, strategic people, irrespective of gender. (F)
14. Some people may work better (or not) with (or without) men/women in the workplace. (F)
15. There should be balance, because half the people we communicate with are men. (M)
16. Men and women both have different qualities to offer and a mixed team creates a better dynamic. Having less men in the industry could mean less effective marketing to men, lack of men's perspective. (F)
17. Balance in any industry is preferable but I'm not sure it will change the outcomes for the client. (F)
18. Balance brings variety and different approaches to the work. (M)
19. Does balance really matter? (F)
20. Diversity is a strength. PR should represent the diversity of our society. (M)
21. We need the right person for the right job which can be any gender. (M)
22. I can't see what advantage it (balance) would confer or difference it would make ultimately. If the job is done properly doesn't matter who does it, regardless of gender or age. (M)
23. In consultancies, there is an imbalance favouring women. In corporate work there's more of a balance between the genders, but a preference for males in the senior roles. When I arrived at (Company), two years ago had 25 employees - one of them male. One of the first thing I did was look for more gender balance and we now have four male members of staff: nowhere near the balance I'd like, but there is a clear dearth of male candidates available. Where they appear to exist is the corporate finance areas. (F)

24. Personally for me it doesn't matter. I like working in a predominantly female workforce but it does have its disadvantages, too. (F)
25. Doesn't matter. (F)
26. It doesn't matter. I think as long as the people working in PR want to be working in PR and love their job it doesn't matter if it is all men or all women. (F)
27. I would like to see some more men around the office, but also I think men have a lot to offer and a slightly different perspective on things. In PR the perspectives the better. (F)
28. It would be ideal, but it doesn't matter - ultimately the most competent and confident people should be working in PR, regardless of gender. (F)
29. Men and women have different perspectives, and can offer a broader range of ideas and opportunities than only one gender or a gender biased group of PR professionals could. (F)
30. In an ideal work, it should always be the best person for the job. (F)

Q. 21. Do you think gender impacts on individual performance in PR? Yes or no. If yes, then how and why?

1. It depends upon the environment. For example as a woman I have been more effective in male-dominated work environments and less successful in women-orientated organisations and I think this is about complementing each other strengths and abilities. (F)
2. Again, it comes down to individuals not their sex. (F)
3. Different skill sets based on how people are nurtured and encouraged through their development and schooling. Different 'drives' according to how genders are nurtured (e.g. aggressive macho male stereotype versus the calmer more creative female stereotype). (F)

Q. 22. Do you think a workforce gender imbalance might have any effects/s on the PR industry? Yes or no. If yes, what effects might they be?

1. *(This response is more from a media perspective, even though the respondent works in PR).* (Imbalance) is already reflected in the greater emphasis on lifestyle issues within mainstream news and current affairs, although this is as much a result of the similarly disproportionate female employment levels in the mainstream media. There has been an increasing emphasis on women's lifestyle editorial rather than complex investigative issues. The emphasis on appearance and marketing appeal suggests that such skills (serious journalism, aka PR) are not an important criteria for employment. Market forces are presumably causing the glut of women in PR but it is interesting to observe

the subtle impact on society caused by this fundamental shift in values within the public relations industry and its associated political/media clients. (M)

2. Focus on softer/product marketing aspects of PR encourages PR houses to hire softer employees and housekeepers for event management. (M)
3. I think that the PR industry is in trouble. Serious management of organisational reputation or bottom line financial issues does not usually fall into PR but into areas like strategic business or marketing or advertising. PR is a process and is seen as promotions and events and therefore not serious elements of core business. Further marketing and advertising and multimedia are also eating into traditional PR areas so the profession is becoming fragmented. (F)
4. If the industry is seen to be exclusive to women it is likely to not be able to fully understand or service the needs of all client groups. (M)
5. Effects caused by people being concerned that it might be an issue. Is this about equality in the workplace or perception of the industry as a whole? The PR industry is already suffering a crisis of confidence – where is our place, what is our role? Whether male or female we live or die by the performance and ethics of individuals. (F)
6. Industries that are perceived as ‘female’, for example, nursing, are generally given less prestige and remuneration. (F)
7. The high proportion of women in junior roles contributes to the image of the profession being tactical in nature – not corporate or strategic. The over-proportion of men in management positions contributes to the reality that the industry is a poor promoter of relationships in the workplace. (M)
8. Less effective marketing to men, lack of men’s perspective. (F)
9. There is positive discrimination (against males) at entry level and ongoing feminisation of the industry. (M)
10. The whole world of (white collar) work is becoming feminised, but PR is the most visible example of this phenomenon. (M)

11. Low entry wages, compared to other sectors, is also a factor for males ignoring the industry and favouring marketing disciplines. Also, if more females graduate, it makes sense that more females will get jobs. Industries trying to equalise their gender balance in male-oriented industries will tend to prefer female PR professionals, which may discriminate against male applicants. This systematic preference over time will lead to industry-wide deficiencies, as I think we are now seeing. (M)
12. The feminisation of the industry is something I worry about. Look at the two most heavily feminised industries – teaching and nursing. Look at the pay rates, the conditions and the prospects in the ‘caring’ professions. I fear the public relations industry, particularly in the marketing communications space is becoming heavily feminised to the detriment of the credibility of the industry as a whole. When you only represent 50% of the population how can the intellectual property you provide be accurate, representative and the best informed. (F)
13. If the industry is seen to be exclusive to women it is likely to not be able to fully understand or service the needs of all client groups. (M)
14. Gender imbalance could affect PR. The industry is excluding males and becoming female-only and restrictive and long term there will be no room for any males, their thoughts and opinions. Diversity gives an industry strength. (M)
15. Some male clients may feel intimidated about so many women in the industry, though they shouldn’t. (F)
16. If the industry continues to be dominated by females, then the industry needs to come to terms with issues such as maternity leave, work/life balance and flexibility (portability of skills when following the career path of a partner interstate and overseas). (F)
17. If the imbalance continues, men will continue to steer clear of the industry. (M)

Q. 23 Do you think there is a difference in the way males and females work with clients? Yes or no. If so, how?

1. Men and women have expertise in different areas and can relate to clients differently. Men may be reluctant to pursue a PR career, which would result in a loss of creative talent. Women are often not able to market products/services to men effectively. (M)
2. Females are more intuitive and can usually find out or work out much better what a client actually wants. Men just tend to do what they think a client wants and keep barging on until they are told otherwise or client leaves. (M)

3. Men rely on 'old boy' network and have more time to network/socialise outside of working hours. Men become much more matey/joke a lot more with clients/ and don't take criticism as personally as women practitioners. (F)
4. Women are better communicators, and more likely to work to a goal rather than to achieve notoriety (ego trip) than men. That is, they don't care as much who gets the credit, so long as the goal is achieved. Thus, they make better advisors and strategists. I think it would be good discipline for men to learn to work in an environment where the outcome is the priority, rather than focusing on the micro stuff (that is, winning the war, rather than the battle). (F)
5. In all industry men and women work differently but I don't think that alters the outcomes for the client. (F)
6. A mixed team is likely to have a wider range of experience of different audiences to draw on (this statement applies equally to age and ethnicity as well as gender). But how many old PR consultants do you meet (that aren't the chairman)? (M)
7. Unsure of specific effects but believe there will be some. (F)
8. I think it is important to have at least a few men working within a female-dominant PR agency to give their perspective and opinions on certain topics. It could hamper a client whose product is aimed at middle-aged men, if there were 20-year-old girls working on the account. (F)
9. It may mean that we never see men influencing corporate bodies on communications issues. If women got to do things their way all the time it would be no fun and not a challenge at all. It's kind of like having a lack of male teachers in classrooms – the boys don't have role models. If there are no men in PR then this trend is likely to keep continuing, as they won't be around to mentor other men. (F)
10. I think men massage people's egos more and women like to be honest and up front, not so much ego boosting, just common sense and a need to get things done at the end of the day. Women are slightly better at relationship-building, too. (F)
11. I think PR people are expected to always have the answers, or are often simply told how things should turn out and are then expected to make that outcome happen. A lot of corporate heads don't heed PR people's expert advice or even ask for it. It is a matter of making them understand how the media works and there are always people who think they know better ... Hello! The media just doesn't work like that. Many people like to tell us how to do our job. (F)

12. When women compete with women in the workforce it can become a dangerous place to be! Gender balance (and by this I mean equality in management also!) may help to address this issue. (F)
13. Women tend to try to seek the underlying agenda or heart of a matter. Men perhaps have a more black and white view, which may give them a more straightforward perspective on a situation. Women and men also communicate differently – and this can work as both an advantage and disadvantage, depending on the client. (F)
14. I find women are more thorough, and men are more laid back. (M)

Q. 24. Are there any aspects of working in this industry that affect your ability to work with clients, other industry professionals, media, target audiences? Yes or no. What are they?

1. Being female and a young age is still an issue with old stalwarts in any area you go into, which is part of a lack of understanding and therefore not valuing the role of PR in the workplace. (F)
2. Age. (F)
3. I can't bear, sometimes, to do the rubbish that this industry requires. (M)
4. One thing not mentioned so far is the individual's tolerance of disappointment. In-house PR consultants can become demoralised by receiving a steady stream of negative calls from the media; consultants can be depressed by receiving negative responses to their (outbound) media calls. Yet it's much worse when you work for yourself: there may be no one to share the frustrations with or to share your temporary triumphs. To this extent, PR work tends to work best as a group activity. Could this be another factor that tends to suit females more than typically solitary and competitive males. (M)
5. A lack of confidence can hinder professional relationships. (F)
6. Gender bias where male management treats a female PR professional as 'the girl who does that media/PR stuff'. PR is not taken seriously, few have any idea about what our role really entails (including ridiculous hours and backbreaking effort) and essentially, we become a necessary nuisance! (F)

Q. 26. Are there any ethical issues that affect your work within the industry? Yes or no. What are they?

1. We chose not to work for industries or clients that we feel morally disinclined to do so. Aggressive, overbearing clients who show a continued lack of understanding is another aspect that affects ability to work with them. (F)
2. Occasionally you may be faced with a conflict of interest – especially if you develop a specialty in a specific field. Also, you may hear that a client is not happy but has not yet dropped its consultancy – do you approach the client and ‘poach’ them, or wait until someone else does? If you find out a client has another consultancy, so you still try to woo them or leave them alone. (F)
3. Being paid to market a product/service which you do not have faith in. (M)
4. Personal ethics: harder to get on if you’re honest. You need to be able to sink into the dark side comfortably. Honestly, I’m too honest for this industry. Spilling from the honesty issue, there’s a matter of personal pride. I sometimes have difficulty living with myself at some of the lines I have to spin. (M)
5. Politicisation of the PR process ensures that within government communications is about reinforcing government agendas and not necessarily with highlighting the disadvantages of public domain decision making. I think PR suffers the same problems that most industries in a pluralistic and most modern economy suffer and that is defining what is the message that best pertains to the public good. How is the truth or the most comprehensive vision of a decision developed so people have the knowledge they need to make the best civic decision. (F)
6. Spin doctoring that amounts to fabrication of the truth is of great ethical concern to me. PR that aims to keep the public in the dark in the light of knowledge that could save lives, protect the environment, bring down corrupt Governments, uncover health dangers is unethical and in many cases criminal. (F)
7. Ethical issues are conducting research on children, protecting their rights. (F)
8. Need to look at PRIA code of ethics and stick to them and more importantly, individual ethical and moral framework. (F)
9. Ethics are fundamental. They affect every aspect of my work. (F)
10. Whether the work we are doing for a client is ethical, do they want us to ‘spin’ a story, should I work for a client even if I believe that the work they are doing is not ethical. (F)

11. The fact that the PRIA does not 'hang out to dry' anyone who lowers the reputation of the industry by operating outside the Code of Ethics. (M)
12. Should I work for / represent company X (they may pay me well, but do I approve of their product or their labour practices?)
 - a. Is my primary objective to provide good advice to my client, or to make money out of them? (The two may be incompatible)
 - b. Should I lie, or be evasive, to protect my client or employer? If so, what will this do to my reputation as a professional.
 - c. Should I tell the emperor he has no clothes, or will the honest truth affect my career advancement? (M)
13. The need to protect an organisation will always create ethical dilemmas for practitioners. (M)
14. Privacy/confidentiality. (F)
15. Big business trying to stamp out the little guy through nefarious and underhanded tactics - sometimes the PR professional doesn't know that there is another agenda! (F)
16. My personal integrity and credibility is never for sale to an employer. While I always endeavour to show my employer in the best possible light in any situation, I would resign rather than compromise my integrity. As far as I'm concerned, any employer that expected that is not the sort of company with which I want to be associated. (F)

ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

This section contains additional analysis of material which was not canvassed as part of the formal survey, but resulted from answers provided by practitioners. Basically, these are key concepts which appeared in answers.

1. Female skills/traits

Critical to the Study is the ability to try to determine what 'makes' a PR practitioner. It was important to learn what practitioners think; for they are the ones who are the industry. Their views and the way they work shape the way the industry operates and is perceived by others – their publics. The most important aspects are the basic building blocks (skills and traits) of practitioners. From my initial attempt at trying to determine an industry profile, these are what (presumably) makes practitioners practice.

Analysis of any answer is open to the reader's interpretation. In fact one (female) participant wrote the following (after reading the summary): "I was imagining a not-too-professionally appealing headline: *Study suggests women 'fluff' better than me*, or some such horror forever locking women into the perceived 'soft' end of PR. So much of this is just so 'wrong'. The terms self-serving, stereotypical, dangerous,

unfounded, appalling, outdated come to mind. Not to mention infuriatingly ignorant!”
I wonder if she could have been more to-the-point?

I liken my comments to those of a newspaper leader writer; made after consideration of the facts and as unbiased as possible. This is purely a sociological analysis. I would hope that any future studies could incorporate more aspects of the psychological profile of practitioners – something I am not equipped to undertake.

For the purpose of this Study, skills are defined as those abilities (physical or mental) which are learned throughout, and contribute to, a person’s career. Traits are considered (either scientifically or generally) to be inherent in a person, male or female. In some instances, I had to make a value judgement whether what was being referred to was a skill or trait.

1. FEMALES SKILLS/TRAITS

| SKILLS | TRAITS |
|---|---|
| Women seem to be more professional. (F) | Women have better natural skills for undertaking PR and are more interested in it, this is because it involves large amounts of people skills, use of intuition and expression through writing. Women are naturally better at this. (M) |
| I think women are more focused upon engaging clients to develop shared concepts. (F) | Greater empathic qualities, better listeners, able to multi-task, less reliant on relationships/contacts to succeed. (F) |
| I have had some very poor communicators as communication director roles who were female. (F) | Women are aware of the issues involved and are dedicated to working through them. (F) |
| Women tend to score better in English/ Humanities subjects and tend to be better organisers than men. (F) | I think women are more sensitive to the issues, perhaps more subtle in their way of dealing with things. (F) |
| Women tend to listen and find a solution that will appeal to the client and sell the idea with a smile. (F) | Females are more intuitive and can usually find out or work out much better what a client actually wants. (M) |
| Women have shown a greater aptitude for the new wave of PR. (F) | Women (in general) tend to bullshit their way through client interviews. (M) <i>Note: difficult to categorise</i> |
| PR involves a lot of detail work, computer skills. It’s been my experience that women are a little better suited to these things. (F) | Compared to men, a greater proportion of females are disinterested in non-lifestyle news and current affairs. This is reflected in their choice and presentation of PR issues, angles or viewpoints. (M) |

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| Women are better communicators, and more likely to work to a goal rather than to achieve notoriety (ego trip) than men. That is, they don't care as much who gets the credit, so long as the goal is achieved. Thus, they make better advisors and strategists. We think longer term and will work to build a relationship rather than tell clients what to do. I think this is why advertising attracts more males (they are expected to tell the client what to do, whereas in PR we work with the client. Women also tend to rely on their ability to service the client more than men. (F) | Female high school students often have PR suggested because of basic psychometric assessment which identifies the creative/intuitive aspects of the profession as suitable for women. There has also been a strong promotion of PR as a 'celebrity' profession through the media, which seems attractive, especially to young women. (M) |
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| Women are more focused upon non-verbal signs and obtaining consensus. (F) | People say the nature of women is better suited to PR and communications. (F) |
| Women may find it much easier to relate to female clients, and in some case charm or get on very well with male clients. (F) | They're more adaptable in getting on with people, and more sensitive to clients' needs. (M) |
| Women are colleagues; men are 'mates'. (F) | I think that the essentially conciliatory, creative, coordinating, people-orientated nature of PR means that women have the natural skills for the traditional PR service roles. |
| Women tend to be better at listening and responding to client needs. (F) | Women may be better suited to a communications career in a majority of cases, because I believe research has shown women to be better at empathising with others and listening well, both critical to communications. However, this is not true in all cases. (F) |
| Tend to be more clever when choosing the way to communicate. (M) | Relate better to other women and are more likely to want to hire women; can relate to a larger range of people. (F) |

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| Have some tactical advantages: for example in dealing with journalists who in certain sectors (eg IT, automotive) remain predominantly male. (M) | Have better innate communications skills than men. (M) |
| Tend to be better at multi-tasking and are also very people-focused. (F) | Are more creative, which is an essential aspect of the industry. Women are more trusting. (M) |
| Women ask more personal questions and remember the smaller things, which mean more to the client than we think. (F) | More adaptable in getting on with people. (M) |

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| They are better at multi-tasking, creative concepts, client empathy, etc. (M) | Women are conditioned to believe PR is a right-brained industry and women are 'naturally' right-brained. I've actually heard people say, 'you can talk, you get on with people, who don't you go into PR. I've found women are actually better communicators. (F) |
| | Women are more interested in communicating than men, and PR is mainly about communicating. (F) |
| | Females are better communicators, possess stronger interpersonal skills, are more intelligent emotionally and enjoy being creative. (M) |

2. MALE SKILLS/TRAITS

| SKILLS | TRAITS |
|--|--|
| Better at networking. (M) | Tend to do what they think a client wants and keep barging on until they are told otherwise or client leaves. (M) |
| Better at translating PR processes into business language and repackaging for reputation management and sales and marketing. (F) | Will tend to try to develop 'mateship' more. (F) |
| Tend to be more instructive and thus engender confidence with their knowledge. (F) | Male clients often won't take women seriously and will get on better with men. (M) |
| Some corporates believe men are better at 'tough' strategy, hence their number in senior mining and government PR. (F) | There's a perception of PR as a 'soft' alternative in comparison to journalism. Women are aware of the issues involved and are dedicated to working through them. Many men tend to only complete 90% of the job, leaving detail to others. (F) |
| Tend to be better at the tactical level. (F) | Tend to be more direct with their clients and typically a more commercial mind. (F) |
| Far more technical expertise and generally more factual (rather than vacuous) and accurate in writing. (M) | Men in PR would be more likely to access the camaraderie angle with male executives than women would, who may have to work quite hard at convincing these same executive of their professional value. (F) |
| | Clients (decision makers) generally tend to be men, networking opportunities better established by men - golf days, drinks, etc the BOYS club really does still exist. They also seems to establish friendships. (F) |

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| | Men are mates; women are colleagues. (F) |
| | Can be more aggressive/assertive in pushing their ideas. (F) |

QUALITIES

- If the client is a woman, she is likely to be more trusting of a female rather than a male PR consultant. (M)
- Women are more adaptable in getting on with people. And that is necessary. (M)
- Everybody is different - I look for someone with integrity, honest and respect (and a degree). (F)

AGE

- In the older age groups, I feel it could be due to secretaries and PA's having moved into the PR area or given 'PR' to do as part of their original role because they have secretarial skills. (F)
- Most PR consultants and many in-house practitioners are young (20 to early 30s). Few make it into their 40s for a whole range of reasons (for women it might be work-life balance if they decide to have children. Because of biological factors, more women than men are likely to leave at this crucial stage, leaving the PR industry short of experience and talent (and leaving the plodders in charge of the show). (M)
- In my experience in Australia and internationally, males dominate the industry, especially in senior strategic positions. (M)
- Women have been winning most full-time and casual jobs for the past 10–20 years. Before women's equality in the workplace, attractive women in particular were more likely to marry and be housebound. They are now highly employable and most choose a career rather than be married at a young age. Their workplace domination is probably more noticeable in the PR industry simply because of the nature of the PR/media industry itself. (M)
- I have been rejected a number of times at interviews, as I'd rather work part time, yet I could achieve results in half the time someone more junior than me can, even if they work the extra three hours a day. (F)
- I would speculate that men in PR mostly run their own businesses or hold very senior positions which leaves the service and lower-paid positions to the women in the workforce. I also think that men in PR have re-positioned themselves as strategists or policy makers or marketing which are more mainstream and move away from perceptions of events or promotions. (F)
- It's still an industry where experience is measured by how old you are.

- Age affects my ability to work with clients. (F)
- Throw in some older more experienced women, and it (age) shouldn't make any difference. (F)

3. DRAWBACKS IN PR

- Family responsibilities. PR has some odd hours, which make it hard for mothers. (M)
- I suspect it is still the woman usually who has to drop work to attend a sick child, and this would impact on performance (although one would expect irregularly). (F)
- One thing not mentioned so far is the individual's tolerance of disappointment. In-house PR consultants can become demoralised by receiving a steady stream of negative calls from the media; consultants can be depressed by receiving negative responses to their (outbound) media calls. Yet it's much worse when you work for yourself: there may be no one to share the frustrations with or to share your temporary triumphs. (M)
- Being female and a young age. This is still an issue with old stalwarts in any area you go into, which is part of a lack of understanding and therefore not valuing the role of PR in the workplace. (F)
- As in all careers, it is difficult to balance a family's needs with a full-on career. (F)
- Age. (F)
- Sometimes the image of this profession as being spin/publicity orientated can affect how seriously you are taken when making an introduction, because most people don't 'get it'. (M)

HISTORICAL ASPECTS

- In a State of male-dominated industries (mining and agriculture) PR has been one department that females have been encouraged to populate. (F)
- The preponderance of males in very senior positions is as much an artefact of the 'old school' PR, when journalists made the move to the dark side (and most journalists were male). This seniority imbalance will progressively shift as these old 'crusties' (self included) drop off the professional twig. Government and corporates are still (in the main) uncomfortable working with

female-dominated professionals on equal footing (consider nursing etc) a 'female' PR profession will take longer to gain acceptance. (M)

- It has traditionally been an area women have been seen to excel. (F)
- It's been the case for more than 10 years throughout Australia. Same percentage when I studied at RMIT in the early 1990s. (F)
- PR has been increasingly being perceived as 'female' sector. (F)
- PR shifted from being a career progression for ex-journalists (mainly men) to a more recognised professional option in its own right with university courses attracting more women. (F)
- The whole world of (white collar) work is becoming feminised, but PR is the most visible example of this phenomenon. (M)

IMAGE and PERCEPTION OF PR

- How many old PR consultants do you meet (that aren't the chairMAN)? (M)
- PR tends to be full of good-looking, well-groomed people, so someone who doesn't fit that mould may find it difficult to get ahead. (F)
- There's been a dumbing-down of the profession. These days a pretty face counts for more than knowledge. (M)
- Women are likely to be employed in a profession that favours appearance. (M)
- People think PR is glamorous, so mostly women are attracted to this as a career path. There is also a possible employment bias within PR firms operated by women, that being their preference to work with other women rather than men who may be sexually threatening and who don't have marketing appeal based upon appearance. The emphasis in all communication is nowadays visual rather than written, and females are more attractive presenters with greater marketing appeal. People are more likely to get a job if they're an attractive woman rather than a male or an unattractive woman. Again, however, this is true in all professions. (M)
- PR is seen as 'fluff' while journalism is seen as 'tough'. (F)
- I unfortunately believe that being a physically unattractive, or poorly groomed person, and even possibly being a much older person, especially if you are female, would be a barrier to success in PR, as is probably true of most jobs. However, it's particularly important in many PR roles that are taking about reputation management and promotion of positive image there would be a reluctance to hand over your company's reputation and image management to

someone who did not take care in their own appearance. The stereotype would be that good-looking women would do better in PR. A charismatic, energetic young guy would often sit more comfortably with executives than a similar young woman. (F)

- I believe it is viewed as a ‘chicks’ field and therefore is not taken as seriously as it would if there were more men. (M)
- I think it is seen as a ‘fluffy’ role and equated more to something women would do. (F)
- The industry is so clicky that I think everybody generally works within their own networks and establishes themselves with the people they need to know in order to fulfil what they need to do, regardless of gender . . . it’s more individual. (F)

GENERAL CONCERNS

Though there was room for practitioners to express concerns about gender, some deviated from the topic to express general concerns about the industry. Their comments have been recorded here as a matter of record.

- My only concern is the amount of tripe generated by some practitioners. (M)
- An increasing emphasis on women’s lifestyle editorial rather than complex investigative issues. (M)
- There are too few good professionals and the PRIA has no real quality assurance program in place - nothing as rigorous as the law or accounting professions. Until we take ourselves seriously, other won’t. (M)
- I think the gender imbalance of females, especially the 40-something generation that heads up the PRIA or the 20-something set that heads up the Young Guns, has a negative impact of the professional reputation of the PR industry in WA as there is a perpetuation of the stereotyped ‘big-boobs, big-hair’, or ‘young buns’ ‘click’ of the same women - that do not encourage the business marketplace to see PR as a strategic professional skill. (F)
- I have heard of many young females (with uni degrees) who entered the industry with consultancies and were expected to work long hours doing all of the office’s general work (little of which is genuine PR work but menial tasks such as taking the boss’ dry cleaning in or getting coffees.) They were treated rudely by supervisors and more experienced colleagues. They decided to leave PR. This treatment is not at the hands of males but other females. Others have received this treatment but hang in there and move on within the industry. (F)

Perceived tutoring differences

1. Men are more relaxed and expect less standards from students. Women tend to expect more. (F)
2. The females tutors are more interactive. They try to get opinions from you, compared to the males, who tend to stick mostly to the facts. (M)
3. Females are more approachable and you do not need to be buddies with them. (F)
4. Probably due to stereotypes and perceived ideas from society. Women are known as being good communicators. (F)
5. The males are boring in PR lectures/tutorials (the ones I've seen). Females have conviction and passion for the industry, and it shows. (F).
6. Their approaches are always different. Males are more straight to the point, and less theoretical. (F)
7. Women include students more in the class. (F)
8. Women tend to be more creative, organised and focused on finer details – all aspects needed for success in the industry. Also, women tend to be more nurturing, which assists with developing and maintaining relationships. (F)
9. Female lecturers/tutors seem to be more interactive and participative whereas the male seem to tend to stick more to facts and figures. (M)
10. Females communicate more easily (that is, their ideas are conveyed and understood more clearly). (F)
11. I find most of the time male tutors will be very objective in handling a class (they stick to class plans better and define the key themes better). Females tutors will generally proceed with the class as a 'community' activity. (M)
12. Males are more easy-going. Women have more standards (that is, attendance at tutorials). (F)
13. Males are more direct and factual. Females integrate stories and real-life experiences. (F)
14. Males are more creative and "live" teaching. Females tend not to stop talking. (F)

15. Males tend to be straight to the point, and humorous at times. They are also more patient. Females tend to be more strict and attentive to detail, well prepared and organised with material. Although they can be moody at times. (M)
16. Males are more direct in teaching approach. (F)
17. Women are more personal and in-depth. Men concentrate more on facts. (M)
18. Females tend to be more strict in the way they teach. They follow rules and schedules. Men go on tangents, allow group discussions and have a loose schedule. (F)
19. Males tend to be more supportive and flexible. (M)
20. Females are more open, take a personal's interest and tend not to teach by the book. (F)
21. Some males concentrate on getting the work done and done well. Some females have been 'fluffy' and bad. They tended to get sidetracked. (M)
22. Female tutors have more of a willingness to elaborate on discussion topics and engage in further in-depth coverage. (M)
23. Women are more personal and nurturing. Men love their statistics. (F)
24. Female teachers seem to be more concerned and interested in the students. (F)
25. Women have more structured tutes and set goals to achieve by the end. (F)
26. Men seem more laid-back, easy-going. Women sometimes act as 'teachers' and don't treat us as equals. (F)
27. Males tend to be more direct, whereas females seem to spend more time discussing issues. (F)
28. Women are more in-depth. (F)
29. (Generally) males are more casual about the way things are done. Females are more strict and organised. But this doesn't apply to all. (F)
30. Males more understanding and mark fairer. (F).
31. Some female tutors tend to be really moody and it affects the way they teach in class; whereas male lecturers are usually neutral. (F)

32. Female tutors are generally more dedicated than males. They are also more understanding and approachable. (M)
33. Females are more polite, less arrogant and friendlier. (F)
34. There are differences in the way they present material, and their approachability. (F)
35. Male tutors tend to be more entertaining and attention-grabbing. (F)
36. Female tutors are more caring and still always show concern about students' progress, whereas males are more strict with students. (F)

Reasons for female predominance

1. Women find it easier to get into PR because most people in the industry are female. (F)
2. Women can be more sensitive. (F)
3. Women dominate because PR requires creativity and intuition. Not many guys have that, where it is second nature to females. (F)
4. Females are better listeners and communicators, whereas males prefer to be in management roles. (F)
5. Communication skills, empathy, attention to detail – all traits that women master. (F)
6. Women are more thorough and can communicate more openly. (F)
7. Women are more perceptive of other people and generally better listeners and in some cases more articulate. (F)
8. It's more of a female job because the PR industry don't do the same things. And I feel that males prefer a set job and don't like overdoing stuff, like we have to do in PR. (F)
9. Women are better at dealing with people and give greater attention to detail. (F)
10. The glamorous work-life image that is perceived through the media. For example, Eddie on Absolutely Fabulous, or something from Sex in The City. (F)
11. Certain stigmas that have been associated with the PR industry that have indicated that it is a 'woman's job'. (F)
12. I think it's more of the perception of the industry being more female oriented and that it's a lot easier for a female to get in. In addition to that, I feel that generally females tend to be more creative than males and female in general

- tend to have better interpersonal skills with people they have just met as compared to males in general. (M)
13. PR has a feminine connotation to it. It stops men from entering because they and women perceive it to be a world of entertainment, beauty, cocktail parties etc. (F)
 14. Females are more aware or pay attention to details and have a better ability to deal with major and minor tasks. (F)
 15. Marketing and PR are seen as 'girly' units as they are about communication, which is believed to be an area that females understand or are better at than men. (F)
 16. I think it's a perception, especially when people think about PR they think 'events', and it comes across to people that girls tend to be able to get more cooperation from organizations because of their looks. Bluntly put, it could be that belief that more males are the 'bigger names' in the organisational ladder, and they are more susceptible to a woman's charm. (M)
 17. People have a false perception of what PR is. Males just think it's a female course. (F)
 18. It seems fashionable to younger women, and the job is about multi-tasking, which I feel is more applicable to females. (F)
 19. It is perceived as a feminine industry/career. Males and female interests vary naturally. Women are more confident in communications. (F)
 20. PR is more creative than factual and number-crunching, which tends to attract males more. (F)
 21. A large part of PR is about communicating and networking. Traditionally this has been a role taken by females. (M)
 22. I believe that PR requires a certain level of attention to detail, and women also seem more adept at that. Women are more inclined to understand how/what the company's image should be. (F)
 23. Neither are better suited. There are many different areas in communications. I believe men would be better in some areas, and women in others. (F)
 24. The industry is female-dominant because of public perception. Females (have) added credibility and ease of communication. (F)
 25. Women are perceived as communication specialists. While that may be preconceived, it therefore means less men enter the industry. (F)
 26. PR has a 'glamorous' connotation to it (that is, cocktail parties and events) therefore women are attracted to it and men find the idea off-putting. (F)
 27. Women are better at communicating. (F)
 28. Males are more interested in other industries. (F)

29. Males are typically interested in and excel in numbers-based occupations, and females are typically more creative. (F)
30. Women dominate because they are better at communicating than men. (F)
31. There's a perception that the career is 'feminine', as opposed to civil and mechanical engineering, which is (seen as) 'masculine'. (M)
32. Perhaps journalism is more competitive and prestigious, and men prefer this environment. Women enjoy communication and 'behind-the-scenes' work, therefore PR is their preferred option. And it is more flexible. (F)
33. Women have more of a desire to work with people, are more chatty and work well with groups of people. (F)
34. Because men prefer to do commerce and science courses. (F)
35. Women are more social, mature and better communicators. (F)
36. Possibly because it's generally perceived as a good job for females – lots of working with people, etc. (F)
37. Maybe women are perceived to be better communicators – more humanistic. (F)
38. Maybe they're just more suitable. (F)
39. Women are better communicators. (F)
40. In general, females enjoy interacting with people more than men. (F)
41. Women are looking for gender equality in society. (F)
42. PR is seen as 'girly'. There's a stereotype of 'PR bitch' that perpetuates. Women want to be in this industry. (M)
43. Guys go to other institutes like TAFE, where they are able to concentrate on logical and mechanical stuff. (F)
44. Females are natural communicators and it is a modern industry in fields of interest to women (that is, creative). (F)
45. Women seem to be people-orientated and not so much inclined towards maths/science, whereas I believe men leaving school are more interested in those subjects – maybe to be seen as 'manly'. (F)
46. Women are more communications-oriented than men. (F)
47. Females are more interactive and sociable than males. (F)
48. Females have better communication/writing skills than guys in general. (F) the industry is traditionally thought of as female. Stereotypes still exist, where males should be interested more in science, etc. (F)

49. Females tend to be better at accepting challenges, and being more serious than males. PR could be considered a very challenging career. (F)
50. Females are easier to communicate with. (F)
51. Females are easier to talk with. (F)
52. Females tend to be more active socially, and therefore love communicating. PR is a communication industry. (F)
53. The dominance of women is perhaps because PR is concerned with communication, which may mean it is a more attractive career and study option for women than men. (F)
54. There might be more females simply because of genetics – girls have longer attention spans, meaning they find studying easier/more desirable? I'm not sure, and this is not based on any factual/statistical knowledge. (F)
55. Women tend to be more willing to 'upgrade' themselves. They also tend to look at the bigger picture. (M)
56. Women like being creative. (M)
57. Being a career dominated by organization and communication I feel it is a role that women have often been relegated to. (F)
58. Females are more gentle and critical toward issues. They can make friends and create good rapport with people more easily. This is not to say that males can not do so, but males' masculinity always makes it harder for others to approach and accept them. (F)
59. Women are still said to be more communicative and able to build relationships than men . . . and diplomatic. Probably we believe it. (F)
60. Women are better communicators. (F)
61. It appears women are increasingly seeking professional careers in creative fields. (M)
62. The profession is more appealing to women. Organising and event management come more naturally to women. Men do not perceive the industry and profession highly. (F)
63. Generally females are more comfortable with communicating than males. (F)
64. The trend in PR currently focuses on women's success in fashion/entertainment fields. (F)
65. It appears to be an attractive job, with diversity and creativity. There's appeal that it could take you around the world. (F)
66. PR involves many aspects that historically women have always done (organising, communications). I think this trend continues as we see more women in the workforce and drawn to PR. (F)

67. Some people still think of PR as it is portrayed in shows like 'Ab Fab'. (F)
68. It probably just reflects the fact that more women are studying than men generally, particularly at Notre Dame. (F)
69. Even on work experience this is evident. The field appeals to females more because it is creative and fun and includes creative writing, which I always thought females excelled at, compared to males. I think men tend to follow more powerful careers and positions than females. (F)
70. I think there is some gender-role confusion. Young males do not know what they are supposed to be and do not have the emotional support women have. We are currently raised to believe that women are superior to males and do not know what to do to gain acceptance and respect. (M)
71. Most males (at least that I know) choose to enter a trade after high school. (M)
72. PR is just perceived as a female industry. (F)
73. Traditionally men in Perth work in labour-related, or more male-dominant (traditional) roles. For that reason, Perth may have a perception/tradition that PR is done better by women. (M)
74. I don't think guys have as much patience and show attention to detail (suited to PR) as girls. (F)
75. Males tend to do commerce in general, and girls are more interested in the creative side, for example, PR. (F)
76. Females perceive PR to be a 'glamour' industry. (F)
77. Women are more interested in building relationships and communication, which are integral parts of PR. (F)

Suitability for PR

1. PR is probably more suited to females because of the creative or communication aspects, which women tend to be better at. (F)
2. Neither would be better. It depends on what area they go into. Some fields would be more appropriate for women. (F)
3. Both are suited. It depends on the person's character and personality, not gender. (F)
4. Women are best suited because they are understanding, patient, empathise. (F)
5. Women are more intuitive. (F)
6. Women are better suited because they are more understanding than men. (F)

7. It depends on the type of PR career. Media planning and event management may be more suited to women. (F)
8. Both would be suited. Men get to the point quickly and provide a direct, fast source of information. Women get to the point in a more roundabout way, therefore they are good for relationship-building. (F)
9. It comes down to the individual and their personality. There are certainly some women who could not do PR well. (M)
10. It depends on suitability and personal traits. (F)
11. PR is multi-disciplinary, and different people are good at different things. Gender might play a small part in determining what one person excels at but does not limit an individual's capability. (F)
12. I think women are still biologically 'programmed' to have that communication ability, whereas many men would have trouble in that area. (M)
13. It's more a case of willingness to succeed and continue in the field that's important. (F)
14. They're both capable of communicating effectively. A communications career just sounds like it's more suited to women that's why men choose not to do it. (F)
15. Women are better suited as they are easier to approach. They have a better understanding of mindsets and feelings/thoughts, and are clearer than males. (F)
16. Depending on how you look at the questions, the answers are different. In the sense of choosing to go into the industry, once again it's not the gender but the personality and interest of the individual that matters. In terms of getting a start in the industry, I think it's a lot easier for females because somehow they tend to portray a more friendly image straight from the start. (M)
17. Women are more suited because they are better at communicating. (F)
18. Women tend to exhibit more confidence in public affairs. (F)
19. Both sexes are equally suitable, as they as they have good communication skills. (F)
20. Neither is more suited. It depends on the individual. (F)
21. I think women are better suited, as they communicate better than men (where does gossip come from?) Women are more attentive to detail. (M)

22. Individual personalities are the determining factor. (F)
23. Women because they are approachable, emphatic, nurturing and chatty. (F)
24. Neither, as there are advantages and disadvantages between masculine and feminine traits. (F)
25. It depends more on an individual's personality rather than gender. (F)
26. Women usually are better at communicating. (F)
27. Women are better-suited as they are more creative, persuasive and dedicated to their career. (F)
28. Most females give a better first impression, more presentable, great smile and are warm and loving. They give out a better vibe. (F)
29. Depends on the type of person. (F)
30. Women are naturally better communicators. (F)
31. Women are better suited because they are more effective communicators. (F)
32. Depends on personality and character. (F)
33. Neither are better-suited. It's an individual thing. (M)
34. Both are equally capable. It depends on the individual. (F)
35. Women are more patient, more tough and think more about the future. (F)
36. It is better to have men and women in this career. (F)
37. Females tend to be more active socially, and therefore love communicating. PR is a communication industry. (F)
38. I think suitability is based on personality, not gender. (F)
39. Both are equally capable. (M)
40. The business world is male-dominated. Men take other men more seriously. (M)
41. As it can be a learned practice (better communication) I feel either gender can do it well. (F)

42. Females' way of thinking is different from males'. They (women) will think of a lot of pros and cons before making decisions, whereas males are usually not as careful. (F)
43. Women generally tend to (and like) talking more. (F)
44. It depends on the personality, not on gender. (F)
45. People just have a hard time taking women seriously. (F)
46. Women in our society tend to be taught to be organised and to think of all of the small things and they seem to be able to empathise with people more whereas men aren't taught to think beyond themselves and empathy (Which perhaps gets confused with sympathy) isn't encouraged in young boys. (F)
47. Neither are better-suited. I feel it's mindset, not sex, that determines suitability. (M)
48. Although men in our traditional society are respected more than women. Neither would be better-suited because you need to be a good communicator and writer to be effective in a communications career, which applies to both genders. (F)
49. They both have attributes that would contribute positively and negatively to PR. (F)
50. Women are proven better communicators. (F)
51. Audiences are both male and female and in order to appeal you need representation from both genders. (F)
52. Women are more relationship-focused. They would more often understand others' points of view. (M)
53. Women seems to be more emotive and display higher communication skills than males. (M)
54. Women are better communicators, although ultimately it comes down to the individual. (F)
55. Women are natural talkers/communicators. (F)
56. Individuals communicate differently due to personalities, and the role for communications differs. It also depends on the message/topic that is being communicated, and to whom. (M)
57. Women are more creative, better at multi-tasking and communicating. (F)

- 58. Both have different skills of equal values to offer. (F)
- 59. Workplaces would be more effective with both genders, but not necessarily 50/50. (F)
- 60. Men would be suited because they don't get emotionally involved/attached to the issues at hand. (F)
- 61. Women are better communicators and can build stronger relationships. (F)
- 62. Neither are better suited. It depends on the individual. They shouldn't be stereotyped. (F)

Influence of gender

- 1. No. It depends on personal choice. (F)
- 2. Although the industry is female, it is now being shown that the entry of men is rising. (F)
- 3. To be honest, I think gender does have an influence. It also depends on the organization. (M)
- 4. Gender would be a factor if men know the field is dominated by women then they may feel reluctant to enter it. (M)
- 5. Gender does influence entry into PR because males think PR is women's work. (F)
- 6. Gender in society is a major focus and people are taught how to act and think depending on their gender. (F)
- 7. Gender not really a factor. But it depends on the individual and what qualities and attributes they may bring to a company. Females and males are equal in that sense. (F)
- 8. Depends on the person. (F)
- 9. Both sexes are capable of excelling. (F)
- 10. Gender isn't a factor, as communication skills is the critical thing. (F)
- 11. It may be hard for males to study PR because of the number of females. They may feel alone or isolated. (F)

12. Unfortunately, perceptions of gender and a person's ability/skills are entwined. People need to recognise that skill and ability is more important than gender. In some industries it is still strictly a boys' club, and females are only good as receptionists and personal assistants. (F)
13. It depends on how they work and interact with people/publics. (F)
14. It varies. But for some jobs a male would be better suited (for example, WESTRAC or CAT) and for others a female would be better (Coles-Myer). (F)
15. You generally need a proportional representation to balance the industry. (F)
16. If you are good at what you do, and have passions, gender will not be an issue, unless it is in a field like sports or fashion. (F)
17. I don't think gender is a factor, as PR is used by both large and small companies, so it's not as competitive, and PR isn't always used at top-level management level (perceived to be a male domain to some). F
18. Most careers can be said to have gender bias. (M)
19. I think there's a gender influence, but relates to looks. Most of the time pretty women or a handsome guy will have the first opportunity for a PR job. (F)
20. There may be a stigma on males entering the industry. But this may change as male/female roles in society change. (F)
21. Gender could be a factor; particularly because of the way many people are brought up with stereotype behaviour. (F)
22. Regrettably, I think women are used more often as 'something to look at' (for example, a team of female news presenters) and this makes them more desirable in PR. (F)
23. It's all a matter of personal taste and preference. (M)
24. I think it comes down to individual aspects (for example, personality, credentials). (M)
25. I hope gender may not be a factor in influencing someone to enter PR. (F)
26. Employers are led by personal preferences. However, this does not only relate to gender but to age, and probably even haircut. (F)
27. This would depend on who is hiring the staff. A classic 'old-school' employer of a company may only trust men. I wouldn't go for a job where a man's

work would be more valued over mine (regardless of education and experience) and the dominant coalition doesn't trust my competence because of my sex. (F)

28. I might get told off for it but I believe equal opportunity legislation currently favours women. (M)
29. It seems gender may be tied in with they type of PR, that is, females have easier entry to fashion and males easier entry to corporate PR. (F)
30. I now think there will be a higher demand for males in PR. Females will still obtain jobs but I think it will be easier for males. (F)
31. Because it's obvious that women are dominant, there must be bias in employer views. However, if men are good enough, they should make it. (F)
32. Gender could be an influence on someone as to which firm they enter. If it's a male or female firm. (F)
33. I would hope gender wouldn't influence this. It would come into play if a form needed more men or women. (F)
34. The fact the PR industry is dominated by women may discourage the hiring of more women, or it may create a perception that women are better at it, prejudicing males. (M)
35. Because there are few males in PR, they may get preference. (F)
36. Women can work at an all-female company and believe they are empowering the sex and may find a job this way. However, men don't have the opportunity on not competing against women in a male-only company. (F)
37. Whoever is best for the job will generally get it, regardless of gender. (F)
38. Some organizations prefer men or women. Some PR may be better-suited to a certain gender. (F)
39. It is an influence in that sometimes it depends on appearance. (F)
40. It wouldn't have an influence unless he or she was unbelievably good looking. (F)
41. Females are more likely to be employed if they are the point of contact for the business, or employed to be in the public eye, or dealing with high-profile people. (F)

Rapport

1. Both would equally build rapport. It depends on the communication skills of the person. (F)
2. Because women have a more nurturing side to them and empathise with people. They remember dates, i.e. sending gift baskets to clients for an occasion. (F)
3. For PR issues, often women are more understanding and sensitive to the issues. (F)
4. One sex would not be better than the other. Everyone has their own way of expressing rapport. It comes down to personality. (F)
5. Women would be better as they have usually larger social circles than males, as they are better at maintaining friendships through contact, etc., whereas males are not as inclined to do so. Women are more sensitive to relationships. (F)
6. Women would be better due to public perception on different views on different professions. (F)
7. Men are more protective towards client confidentiality and have better success at networking. (M)
8. To a large extent this would depend on the interaction between a client and a PR person. It's an individual thing. (M)
9. Neither would be better at it. Men have charm and charisma, too. (F)
10. Females have a tendency to notice superficial details that fuel conversation; hence build better rapport. (F)
11. Men would be better as they are less shy. (F)
12. Females are good at forming friendships and talking general 'chit-chat'. (F)
13. I think men may be better, only because in the corporate world men tend to be looked up to. They are seen as the more confident and in charge. (F)
14. Both are equally capable. (M)
15. Men probably would be better suited as they can more easily relate to other men in a male-dominated society. (M)
16. Men might be best at building rapport, as they can be less intimidating. (F)

17. Women can sometimes adapt better than men in a situation, however on face value men are accepted quickly and perceived to be better at managing and communicating (no emotion involved). (F)
18. Women are more personal, can relate more easily to people of any gender and age. (F)
19. This may depend on the industry they are working in. For example in fashion PR women would probably be better, while in sport men would be better. (M)
20. Women are good at building relationships. It's in our nature. (F)
21. Men would probably most able to build rapport with male clients, and women with female clients. (F)
22. Females are better because they are natural talkers. (F)
23. Men would be better because they can separate their emotions from business. (F)
24. Women would be better because of their communication skills and ability to develop an emotional connection. (F)
25. A well-presented person, male or female, will get on well. (M)

Barriers

1. An unwillingness to create something different may hinder your career. (F)
2. Lack of awareness of a changing media environment. (F)
3. Prior experience is always vital, but graduates without this advantage may find it hard to establish themselves, or may take long(er). (F)
4. Lack of experience, skills, confidence and knowledge. (F)
5. In Perth there's not a big enough market for PR practitioners. (F)
6. The small market in Perth means less opportunities. (F)
7. Lack of jobs and competitiveness of industry. (F)
8. Limited amount of jobs make it hard to gain experience. (F)
9. The limited amount of job available in the industry. (F)

10. Perth doesn't have as many options for employment in PR as there are in the eastern States. (F)
11. Number of job places may affect my career, making it difficult to find a job. (F)
12. Amount of people seeking a job in PR with the same qualification. (F)
13. Too many (PR) people, not enough jobs. (M)
14. Barriers are the huge amounts of people graduating and wanting the same jobs. (F)
15. Too many females. (F)
16. Although there are lots of women in the industry, their numbers in management are few. (F)
17. A barrier could be my age and my foreign background. (F)
18. My age. (F)
19. Age. (F)
20. Age might be against me at 41. (M)
21. Lack of experience, small and competitive industry in Perth. (F)
22. Limited experience. Lack of networking. (F)
23. Working with so many women usually leads to a 'bitchy' work environment. (F)
24. The competitiveness of the industry and the fact that many jobs are available only through a network of contacts. (F)
25. The rising interest in PR may make it difficult to get a job. (F)
26. Female employers. Not enough high-profile positions. (F)
27. There are too many people studying this Degree, and not enough jobs. (F)
28. Women do not have the 'balls' to stand up and work hard for the high-profile positions. (F)
29. Competition. (F)

30. Competition (F)
31. Competition. There are so many graduates all competing in a small area (Perth). (F)
32. The limitation for PR in Perth is the small population. This can only be overcome by moving to a more populated city or specialising in a certain aspect of PR. (M)
33. There's only a small number of jobs in Perth, compared to the eastern States. (M)
34. The large number of enrolments in universities will lead to an 'over-supply' in the industry. (M)

Wage difference

1. Ironical, considering women dominant. (F)
2. It sucks. What a crock. (F)
3. Great for me, but should be an even playing field. (M)
4. Because there's so few men in the industry, they have become a 'commodity'. (F)
5. There are less men in PR so this may make them more highly-valued. (M)
6. I believe men are paid more because they currently have higher positions within organisations. That is more to do with 'length of service' rather than having to do with their sex. This should invert within a decade as the women who are entering the field recently match them for time in the profession. (M)
7. This (imbalance) will continue to be the case, until the next generation of managers who do not think so traditionally come into play. Men usually have less inhibition and are able to promote themselves on a regular basis, whereas women tend to promote the team as opposed to individual work. Women are, generally-speaking, more emotive. (F)
8. Maybe men tend to assume higher positions and are therefore paid more. (F)
9. Not surprising. Men usually get paid more than women in other occupations. (M)
10. Men probably fill more management positions. (F)
11. Earnings should be based on an individual's performance. (F)

12. It's ridiculous that gender affects pay rates when the same job is being done. (F)
13. A patriarchal society base is to blame. (F)
14. If they have the same qualifications, they should be paid the same. (F)
15. We (still) live in a patriarchal society. It needs to change. (F)
16. Males may be in higher-paying positions (management). There's a general tendency for men to be paid more in all industries. (F)
17. This is so unfair. But PR isn't the only industry where this is a problem. (F)
18. I think it is still typical of most professions for women to be paid less than men on average. And it's ridiculous. (F)
19. It's the same old story. It's a boys' club. Older generations of men don't respect women or their work. It's getting better with my generation, I think. (F)
20. The wage differential is surprising. (M)
21. Salary discrimination is bad, but I expected it to be so. (M)
22. I'm hoping I might be able to change the imbalance. (F)
23. Males have the power in society. (F)
24. It's not fair and I can't believe it's still the case these days. (F)
25. It is unfair. (F)
26. It's shitty. (F)
27. That should be revised. (F)
28. I should change courses. (F)

Technician role

1. Women would be hired as these things are (stereotypical) duties. (M)
2. I feel this is more to do with women dominating the lower, cadet style, positions within the industry, rather than having to do with their sex. (F)

Perception/thoughts on PR, then and now (from second survey)

1. PR to me was initially all about the glitz and glamour of meeting people and to 'get' around. Also, the interpersonal relations skills that will be strengthened during the course of studies. (M)
2. I imagined a significant amount of creative (possibly manipulative) writing. PR seems to be more solidified in its approaches. (M)
3. I first thought it was about drinks and parties. Now I know it's about communication. (M)
4. I first thought it's about your relation with the publics. Now I think it's all about writing. (M)
5. My thoughts of PR has always been the same. Just that now my interest within PR is more defined. (M)
6. I didn't know much about it when I started. Now I love it – it's creative and exciting. (F)
7. I thought it was glamorous work, mostly events management; like Samantha Jones' character from the TV show Sex in the City. Now I think it's less glamorous, with a focus on media relations and creating perceptions. (F)
8. I thought PR was about liaising with the media and other companies, and managing events. Now I realize there's a lot more to it. (F)
9. I think a lot of students think it is a lot of events management and glamorous, rather than ethically-driven. (F)
10. I originally thought PR was about selling companies/organizations through 'wheeling and dealing', with different sources to create networks. I now seems to believe that it is more about image, branding and perception. (F)
11. I used to think of PR as a lot of interpersonal skills, as you meet a lot of kinds of people, and there would be a lot of social functions. After studying PR, there is a lot of thinking and writing. (F)
12. At first my view was PR was a fast-paced industry, requiring a lot of networking. Now I see it involves a lot of writing and networking. You must be organized. (F)
13. I thought it was lots of communication with people from all walks of life, and now I think you really only deal with the same people (for example, business-minded). (F)
14. I think PR is a lot more writing than I thought, and perhaps more difficult. (F)

15. PR means you have to be detailed [sic] and organised. (F)
16. I didn't know too much about PT. I just looked into it and it sounded fun. Now I know it's fun, but there's much more writing involved than I initially thought. (F)
17. There is more publicity/promotion/events management focus, rather than strategies/theory. And it's hard work. (F)
18. PR is about communication of the business to the outside world, and support to the firm's marketing department. (M)
19. I thought PR would be about going to parties, getting dressed up, working with good-looking people, like on the TV. But it's much more detailed, logical and hard work. Nothing like the perception whatever. (F)
20. I thought of Absolutely Fabulous initially. Now I know it's not as glamorous, and much more professional. (F)
21. My perception was that in PR I would have to be interested in the world in general, especially in people. Now I realize it's much more in-depth than I expected. But the same, in general. (F)
22. PR is a very people-oriented field and is all about providing and image of something to the public. I still feel this way. However, PR is more strategic and theory than I thought it would be. (F)
23. PR is about managing a company's reputation, smartly and positively. It provides a link from the company to its various publics to present (the) profession in a socially-responsible manner. (F)
24. I thought I was more about spin-doctoring, and it was purely to control the image of a company: nothing more than that. But now I think there's a lot more to it than that. (F)
25. I always thought PR would be an interesting field, with constantly-challenging and stimulating situations. And I still see the industry as being like that. (M)
26. I thought PR was about providing ideas and information at a senior corporate level, as well as playing a lot of golf. I now know it's a bloody hard-working industry. (M)
27. Initially I thought it was based around spin-doctoring, public speaking and selling and image. Now I tend to think it's more about selling an image to the public. (M)

28. Most of what I thought about PR came from television and film, showing that it was glamorous. Now I see it's so much more than that, and less glamorous: sometimes never. (F)
29. I thought PR as about parties and events planning. I didn't really know about the technical and research components (F).
30. I thought it would be creative. Now it's boring and repetitive. (F)
31. Used to think it was all about events, parties and organizing people. Now it's more liaising with clients, organizing problems with corporations/media. (F)
32. Most students would think it's about being social and glamorous. I've realised that PR is about your ability to coordinate the communication channels for your organisation in order to create and sustain a positive image in public. (F)
33. I thought PR as an industry that promoted events, or publicise a company. Nothing has changed. (F)
34. I thought PR was about organizing the company's functions and public speaking. PR is about communicating to the public about the goodwill of the company. (F)
35. I thought PR was more flexible and about spin, whereas now I realize how structured it is. (F)
36. It's not just cocktail parties. It's work. (M)
37. It's not like *Sex in The City*. It's real work. (F)
38. I believe that students begin to study PR because of their perceptions, but once in the course they find these ideas change. (F)
39. I always view PR as an influential medium, an industry capable of making a difference. After studying PR I now know this to be true. However, I also know the importance of ethical behaviour in making sure this is true, and that PR can make a difference in the wrong way. (F)
40. I thought PR was for a 'people person'. There are more aspects to PR than I thought. (F)
41. The I thought spin, publicity, propaganda, marketing, events management. Now, ethical communication and persuasion, mutual objectives, humanizing corporate organizations through aligning organization goals with public expectations. (F)

42. I knew it was a job that involves the media and big companies. Now I am aware all companies can have a PR officer, and that all forms of PR are thought-invoking. (M)
43. I thought PR was about relating to 'publics'. Now I think it is much more sinister and complex (propaganda, etc). (M)
44. A creative job but still about spin. No I know there is a strong focus on ethics, but I am still unsure as to how true this is in the real work environment. (M)
45. I thought it was glamorous. But I am much more informed now and much more interested. (M)
46. It's more technical than just organising events. I didn't realise the level of PR for crises, etc. (F)
47. I thought PR was about spin and cover-ups. Now I think it's about communication and is an essential part of most organizations. (F)
48. Many people I know have gone in with misconceptions that PR is similar to practical media studies, or that the course will involve more practical work (writing, etc). (F)
49. I used to think PR was about portraying the image/the face of a company. Also for self-gratification of looking good. Now, PR has an important role to play in an organization, and it's logic isn't fuzzy. (F)
50. I thought it seemed a little glamorous, based on instincts, not books. Now it's more based on theory than I realized. (F)
51. I thought PR was when you represent an organization and help them organize their management. Now I think it's something where it is spin, and includes marketing, reports, advertising, cleaning up any mess that is created, and also building the image of the organization. (F)
52. Then: all about spin, and my perceptions formed the assumptions of PR. Now: from the positive perspective PR is the base to relationships between organisations and the public, and they are sometimes stereotyped by people. (F)
53. I thought it would be very simple: about spokespeople. But now I think it's broad. (M)
54. I've always thought PR is about building image only. I now think of PR not just about building image, but also to manage and anticipate future issues and conflicts. (F)

This industry focus group took place in the boardroom of Scarborough Surf Life Saving Club on Monday 5 December, from 5.30pm to 6.45pm. Participants were informed that the session would be videotaped and voice-recorded. Identities would be anonymous. Originally six practitioners indicated they would attend. However, one had to withdraw for family reasons, and the other (a male) got the days mixed up (does this say something about women being better organisers?). There were four mostly senior female practitioners present. HF is currently undertaking a PhD, lectures at ECU and has managed the communications department of large WA Government Departments; RW is a media relations specialist for a government agency; HL has worked for several government departments and was working in an international promotions role at the time; HM has several years' PR experience and is working for a quasi-government research/charitable organisation with a staff of 300. (A copy of the session, movie and MP3 are included on CD).

HF: Is it being linked to a particular timeframe (chronological order). There are links to the development of PR as a tertiary sector subject. I suppose my first question: is there imbalance? PR is still very unclear. There's PR and advertising, PR and marketing, communications PR, social reform PR. There's so many elements that there still is a lack of clarity as to what constitutes pure PR. I observe that with the corporates their PR teams are mostly men and can come from law or engineering and they look as though they communicate well, you know the business well and they move across into PR without having any of those skills we would consider PR skills. In government it's different. Here's an overwhelming predominance of women. But there's other factors that favour women in government. They have family-friendly policies, and the hours are more flexible. In small business I see men who will start there and go move across into marketing. I see in the literature one of the fundamental issues is that they're still justifying what PR is. It's almost a defence why PR should be legitimate source of power.

HL: People out there find us (PR) a bit confusing. One of those disciplines people don't understand, and that's why we always battle. People want it to do more marketing. Yes, there are more men in the corporates. Consultancies are more dominated by women.

HF: If the consultancies are ostensibly women, what does that say about selling communications services into the large companies and how much value they place on it. If they are actually putting PR in an operational model, and not strategic. We say be strategic, manage relationships, yet our core output is about being operational (this media release, this brochure, this event). It goes back to people not understanding that they want something that's about forward planning but their ability to understand what PR does is based on this 'thing' newspaper, or this coverage. It just about being on TV or in the newspaper. Another observation is that it's very much about politics. You can say I want PR to be strategic, and I want you to manage my reputation in the future, yet you have ministers that are completely reactive because they are going to take a hit politically. You be strategic, and then one hit and the whole thing goes to hell. I think that genuine politicisation of government tends to filter down to PR in

particular because it's about reputation. It poses some real challenges about how strategic we can be. With the large corporates you can actually plan, because it's tied to a business outcome, rather than a political outcome.

RW: For me (I entered it because) it was about writing. I guess I fell into it accidentally.

HF: I was a journalist and we moved back to Perth, so I had to find something related, and PR uses writing. I really enjoy writing and crafting things. I like planning things and working on future projections.

HM: I was working as a waitress at the Hilton. The PR team used to come in, and it all used to look very glamorous. I used to listen to their conversations and it sounded interesting. But I was attracted to the glamour, and it was quite glamorous in those days. But of course the culture has changed now. From there I did my TEE and later a PR degree, which I didn't really know a lot about. But in terms of my skills, I was good at English and the non-scientific, mathematical, things. In terms of my skills I thought I'd be good at that (PR). It was all new then. My class was one of the first to go through ECU. Even at that time it was very female-dominated. It never occurred to me that it would be a female-dominated industry. If you were to compare it to advertising and marketing, I would think the skills involved and needed are more female in PR, for me in terms of the hard sell that's involved in marketing and advertising, compared to the softer sell that's possibly involved in PR. In terms of the people I've worked with, the guys tend to go more into marketing and management, whereas the girls go into writing and media roles.

HF: All my students (at ECU) think it's about glamour and parties. But that's all you want to do when you're 20. One of them wanted to be a Paris Hilton. It's a maturation things though. As you mature and you realise what is involved, your view quickly change.

HL: The fact that people go into it because of that (glamour), is not something that bothers me, but it's a fact and that's the perception, and I find that is a hindrance when you want to build a serious career. But getting back to women in PR, I think they certainly tend be better multi-communicators and better at the subtleties of observation within communication. I think it's one element. I wouldn't say they're more nurturing, although do those things even fit with PR. I do believe that in that communication and listening area, and being able to pick up the subtleties of interpersonal communication and the dynamics, which goes wider to the political dynamics of what's going on, there's probably an edge there. But I don't know whether that would be a motivator for men not to go into PR.

HF: I've met some really hard-arsed female PR practitioners. There's no nurturing going on there. I think it comes back to a construct of power. Maybe it's a chicken-and-egg thing. If you think of an organisation that you require women to build relationships to influence and manage media, you need a particular skills set that may be exclusive to the hard-arsed approach that you need. The more senior you are the more hard-arsed you have to be, because you have to change other senior people who

have been doing things a certain way for so long; so you become a change agent. You have to be quite forceful. So your skill set changes from a mid-level PR practitioner, which is about relationships and doing all the nice things, and you're everybody's mate at the mid-level. But once you step up to a more leadership role you've actually got to be clear on what you're delivering on. And that becomes about power, which depends on how much power your CEO is prepared to give you. And that changes it again. I actually see quite masculine traits in really senior female PR practitioners. It's a power issue, rather than a gender issue.

HL: Whether you would look at other women in senior management and how much of those types of qualities they've needed to get there. But there's a perception of you holding parties, but (in effect) you are really in a corporate policing role. We were talking about more women in consultancies. Many women have started them, or gone to work for them, mainly because they are more flexible, and cater more for a family lifestyle. There would be a heavier need (reason) for women there.

HM: I appreciate your point about the senior women being hard-nosed. But in terms of the essential core of what PR is, I'm not sure if they fit in to that. They're moved away from that. Their staff would have it. As their role has progressed into a leadership they would develop masculine or leadership qualities.

HF: We actually have to define PR. People run around saying strategic PR, which is a different skill set to operational PR. But operational PR is what I have observed that most people think is PR.

HL: The whole thing about being strategic is another 'crap line' that needs great investigation.

HM: Being strategic would be ideal. When you're in your normal routine, you don't have time to do strategic things. In NFP we don't have the budget for outsourcing, so your dealing with the available resources.

RW: It's a matter of perception. Where I work, I'm in the media room and there's three men and one woman (me), while in PR and that's all women with one men. So we're viewed as the hard-arsed people because we say 'no'. PR does the magazine and does the corporate parties. That perception is encouraged there, too. I see no evidence of where it's not discouraged

HL: I find that disconcerting not from the fact that people won't be motivated to get into it, but that there's a negative stereotype being perpetuated. If people think all you do is parties it makes it hard to be perceived as serious. Things like the Young Guns foster the perception of 'young buns'. The promotion they did had shots of them with girls with champagne in one hand and mobiles in the other. That's really negative and a hurdle the rest of us have to get over. Maybe it's funny if you're coming through the ranks.

HF: I think there's a danger of viewing it just through gender. One of my assumptions about masculine behaviour is that men are more expedient than women. Women will

work at things and try to make it work. And they will labour and work over things to produce a more optimal outcome, while guys will just come in and say, 'nah, it's not working, gone'. So by being really expedient, and PR is fraught with this endless relationship-building, often for a momentary win that become nothing as you move on to the next (political) goal. Blokes get their gratification from their power hits and from having obvious wins. They will move forward, and if you're in a fluffy field, where you fluff around, where it changes on the basis of personality, where your boundaries are not consistent they will bail. And they're not even going to be attracted to it in the first place. Guys like expediency, they like boundaries and they like power. That's what motivates them.

RW: That's why they're attracted to the media room. They're got no conscience.

HF: Don't talk to me about building relationships. And the political environment can change. I mean, they think 'what a waste'?

RW: It also might have a lot to do with the product you're promoting. BHP for example is a more masculine industry, whereas at DCD they're hardly any men at all.

HF: That's positioning. You've got to look at it what is the role of PR. In government it's about telling people what you're doing. It's often an unpalatable message across government and that is intrinsically an unhappy message and you never win with it. Do men want to do that?

HL: You (could) think how often have you had a male partner, and they tell you about an incident at work or family or friend where they've given some news to someone and they're taken it really badly. And you ask him: 'well, what did you say?' They tell you 'oh, you're sacked'. It's like whether you pick a mother or father to deliver bad news to a child. In most cases, compassion and empathy is where females definitely have more skills. Possibly it's the reason why so many women have risen in these positions. There's the age-old thought that women can do more things at once. I don't know whether those sort of multi-skilling roles are attractive to men.

HM: I also think it's interesting in the way PR is perceived in television. For example, in *Ab Fab*. There have been other sitcoms. They've all been females in these roles. I'd like to see where that sits.

HL: Where I am now, we have run Rally Australia, but there has been this plethora of blondes. It's great experience to come in and work at this event. But I wonder if once you've done all those operational promotional roles, writing, brochures and launches and, and you want to go higher do you suddenly want to give it away when you realise it's like that.

HF: Once you've passed a certain level, your job satisfaction reduces because the very thing that draws you to it is no longer part of your core business.

HL: It's common in a lot of businesses that people start out doing something they love. You start out doing something you love, the business grows and you end up doing accounting and management.

HM: I've now got myself into a management position, but moving away from what I originally did, but in a bid to make my role more interesting and challenging.

HF: It's a classic organisational misunderstanding of PR is seen as a process, separate and apart from whatever it is your selling. An organisation can say they want you to be strategic and do all these things, but you are actually a process: sit down and write that media release, sit down and develop that event, produce that web-site. Of course it's a collaborative process with the person that's got the content. So you can't actually be a content-free PR person, and yet because of the systemisation of PR that's what you're forced into. So you have PR process separate from your core content, your business content, and I think if you just stay in your PR process without engaging with your content and trying to get greater depth with that it does become boring.

HM: PR is such a formula. After I had been doing it for 10 years, it just becomes basic, like using the 10-point plan. Here's your template, just fill in the blanks. Or someone else can just complete it and send it off. It become such an easy job.

RW: It (PR) just becomes mainstream and not special, and not rewardable with promotion, which discourages men from going for it. I think a of women in their 30s they think I'm going to have kids anyway, so they don't strive to go into another career. Men think: 'well, I've got another 20 or 30 years of working, I should transfer my skills into something else. Women may think it's all too bloody hard and I'll have kids.

HM: That's a good point. I admit that there's been a few times I've thought if I get pregnant, I'll work from home. So it really does suit that female thought process in that regard.

HL: It's not the easy way out, but it does enable you to work say two days a week, and fit in kids. A lot of (government) PR units are set up, depending on the resources, the structure is that the career path is set out with the skill sets not being very flexible. You usually have to go through the media role, then progress. The career paths tend to make you go sideways.

HF: And why isn't there more blokes in government? I think it flows from the degree of complexity. If my supposition about masculine behaviour is true . . . men think: 'I've got to handle the minister, the DG, executive directors, staff and I've got multiple issues. Who would do that?' Women are more inclined to do that sort of thing successfully. A bloke would get impatient with that.

HM: I think men are more attracted to the corporate and consultancies. I thought in consultancies it was even, and most of the bosses have been men.

HL: I've been struck by the propensity of government to outsource. I think it might be connected to males in the industry. You'd go to PRIA functions and it would be all the old boys. I'm wondering if the men who has those senior PR roles before, like a CEO or advisor, and who had all the corporate knowledge, whether now it's not valued as much because we can outsource the expertise. And now you have women who are managers who are far more operational and hands-on. I can remember working with chaps who had a more advisory role, which is something I do not see those female managers doing now.

HF: And if you do that type of role; people question what you are doing. It's not like you're doing something visible. The climate of the government is that you have to produce something, like a magazine.

HM: I've worked in organisation where you do the day-to-day things, and suddenly the organisation is in the news, so they call in the men to handle the crisis. They don't view it as a PR role because the PR team didn't do it.

RW: I wonder if that resulted from when these men who were in senior roles and they got PR confused with promotion and they hired all these dolly birds for motor shows. Maybe that's where it started. They thought promotion and PR were the same.

HM: I can remember you had to be careful when you were applying for jobs, because you could end up with a topless bar job because it was regarded as public relations. Again, there's a perception problem.

HL: I think there's still a problem with the way the industry promotes itself. There are some negatives which have come out of women being involved with the PRIA. There's that female mafia perception. [All commented briefly on the low membership].

HF: Their (PRIA's) biggest problem appears to be the struggle between national and state and payment of fees, and what goes where. The profession's changing and the PRIA is not keeping up. Other associations become more professionalised. They have mandated education standards. So it's difficult (for the PRIA) to establish legitimacy. Professional codes are so strict in other professions. It was critical for your career to attend. There's nothing compelling PR practitioners to attend these things.

HM: When I attend PRIA functions, I saw it as just an opportunity to exchange business cards with fellow members.

HL: It gets quite repetitive sometimes.

H: There's been a shift in the last seven years in terms of PR in WA. For a long time they decided they needed corporate communicators, or generalists who could do a bit of everything. But with this government there's been such an emphasis on handling the media. That's because the main local paper (and we're a one-paper town) has such an inordinate amount of power. Because of that it shifts the power of how you construct a PR team. In the east there's a variety of ways you can segment yourself.

But in WA if you get a bad rap in the West you're done. People run around and they're saying 'it's terrible'. You've got to completely respond and you try to tell them it will blow over by tomorrow. Because of that incredible micro-focus on one newspaper it means PR teams all over the State have to adjust. And there's been this increasing and obvious focus on people with issues management skills and people who have strong media contacts, or can build them quickly. You can be a great writer or strategist, or whatever. But it comes down to 'is the West going to do us over today?'

RW: I used to work in an office and there was one guy who we used to say because he had a dick he would get ahead.

HF: Reverse discrimination, where you have one bloke among a bunch of women.

HL: Women are often other women's worst enemy. If you're shafted at work, very often it's by a woman. There's a lot of female management stresses. I know someone who points to arguing with men and calling each other names and it's forgotten the next day. But women will not forget that. It can be quite toxic.

HF: I think in this regards it needs a look at culturalisation of men and women.

HL: It would be interesting to see what similarities there are in the UK and the US.

HF: In my five years in the US, I found PR very much a profession, and that's related to the number of schools teaching it. It's taken very seriously. It's anchored to anthropology and sociology. In the US the approach is more pragmatic. Mass Comms includes PR, advertising and journalism. But here we separate things. Marketing says it's the over-arching discipline. And they sit in different schools.

HM: Maybe we should look at the way the universities sell the subject and structure it.

EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY

The student focus group at Edith Cowan University was held in a lecture theatre, from 7.45 pm to 8.30pm. It consisted of 10 fourth-year PR students (eight female and two male) and was observed by tutor, Mr Vince Hughes, MBA. There was a mix of students, with two from Norway (1M, 1F), one from India (M), two from China (F) and one (F) from Hong Kong. For responses, students are identified by number (from left to right, and by gender (M or F). The format was to put forward results of earlier surveys and to ask students to respond to the results. All students were informed their identities would remain anonymous and that participation was voluntary.

Importance of balance in PR

- I think it's good (to have balance). You get more points of view and different angles. It makes opinions more diverse and makes people look at things differently. (F4)
- It depends on the individual. (F8)
- Family circumstances. Most of the time women work part time, quit their jobs. (F4)

Reasons for doing PR

- Women are more likely to stop work to have children. There's a gap when you might start your profession, then you have five or 10 years to raise your children, then you have to start at a lower level to restart your career. Whereas men have had career continuity, so the women have to play catch-up. (F8)

Creativity

- Is it that boys don't choose PR because they just think it's a woman's job? (F4)
- When I was thinking of doing PR I was thinking of business, and I thought 'be sensible and do business'. And then I looked at the units and said 'no, you'll fail miserably, those units are not interesting to me'. So (and this may be sexist) men they want to get into management the business/financial side might interest them more than women, who want to have that slight creative ability so they're getting into PR. (F9)
- I agree with that. I was thinking that maybe men work better in a hierarchical structure (like business). Because PR is more creative and you need to be flexible, I think women can be more flexible and creative. (F8)
- The structure thing of the financial side. Men seem to like that structure, so it appeals to them more to do business. (F9)

- I agree with all that. But by the same token, marketing and advertising have a lot of men in it and that's creative. I don't know if the creativity argument is strong here. (F10)
- I think it's the image of PR. If I were a guy I would probably choose something more manly, not 'serious', because I take PR very seriously. I think the reputation of PR is pretty feminine. For a guy maybe it doesn't sound too cool. (F4)
- I think it depends on the industry as well. If I am a company and have to hire a PR person because women are better-looking and it is better for a company when a woman talks, because society sees women as more persuasive and gentle. I think women are better at talking. They are talking all the time. You can't stop them. (M5).
- The way women persuade: maybe they can read things better. Many people read things as black and white, and it's fair to say that most men see things as black and white. A woman's way of persuasion might be a little more subtle than a man who will stand there and just say 'you will believe what I am saying'. A woman, on the other hand, will say 'well, I really understand but here's another suggestion'. Maybe it's just a subtle communication difference that helps in PR. (F9)
- Maybe it's about multi-skilling. We've heard that men are apparently only able to do one thing at a time. Probably in PR because we have to do some many things, that's why women are suited. (F7)
- I think it's more about cultures and location sometime. In Asian culture you find men in the industry because men dominate over there. (M1)
- In Hong Kong and China women do most of the PR work. I think most of the PR workers are less energetic than men. Men are stronger so it's better for women do an in-house [read office] job. (W5)
- Women are more interested in people. (W2)

Society

- What about the aspect, that its about the way society has brought us up. A child is 15, 16 and looking at their future. Maybe girls look at their careers a little less seriously than boys at that stage, and maybe that's why boys would want to go into the business/management aspect because they know they can get higher. We learn it's hard in PR for women to get into top-level management. Maybe it's the way we're raised. Boys think 'I've got to raise my family for the next 45 years and I have to get a good job', so they opt for the better-paying path. (W9)

Teaching of PR

- Two schools of thought about the way PR is taught. One in the business stream, the other in the creative stream. I've had strong interest in that and I still haven't come to a conclusion on how to handle it. (Hughes).
- Marketing is creative, and that's in the business school. (F4)
- HR resource management has an element of PR to it, yet it's in business schools. Especially with corporate communication. But a lot more men will go into HR rather than PR. (W10)

Gender imbalance

- Okay for us, if we're the majority. (F10)
- Maybe sometimes it's what societies want. The men in management maybe just want girls in the PR department. (M1)

[Student F4 was concerned there was a problem with the industry because this subject was being studied. It was pointed out that I didn't think there was a problem with the industry; rather just that I wanted to know why this phenomenon is occurring. It was pointed out that some scholars perceive there to be a problem in that too many women can lead to a "ghettoisation" of PR].

Ethics

- With women being in PR I thought about men and their attitude in other industries; like corruption. It seems to be more men involved in that (way). Would men perhaps not act as professional or ethically as women in PR? (F8)
- Sounds awful saying it but maybe women are more likely to be sympathetic to other peoples' points of views. (F9)

Gender roles in PR

- I've been doing some work in a consultancy and I've noticed about 80 per cent of women, and all the men do the work for the mining companies, or energy (where the money is). But all the women do the launches and events and that kind of thing. And they're not getting paid more. (F10)
- Notice Condoleeza Rice in a PR role. Are females sometimes used in these front-lines roles to soften the hard news? (Hughes)
- I know a lot of guys that can be just as persuasive as women; so maybe is it just a certain type of person that is attracted to PR. (F4)

Traits

- I was thinking that you could go to that notion that females the idea of women and sex; that females can be more persuasive through using their charm. (F9)
- Some jury studies say good-looking men who have been charged with an offence have a better chance of getting off than if you're ugly. If you read that into PR, so maybe if you're good looking are you more persuasive. (Hughes)
- It's like in Amsterdam; people feel more compassion for pretty whores than ugly looking whores. (F4)
- Maybe it's about our society and culture. (F8)

INTERVIEW 1, PH, 21 NOVEMBER

PH is one of Perth's leading PR professionals, and is general manager of one of the three largest companies. He has worked in media and PR for 20 years, first as a newspaper journalist for 13 years. The company employs eight men and 27 women.

Over the years I've seen the direction of PR very much slanted by the media's perception of what PR is. The media projects PR as being about events, celebrities, the glamour of the industry. They are just aspects of PR.

The girls in PR are all coming from university, that's undoubtedly why there are so many now working in the industry. I look at one of our young ladies, here. She got into PR through radio, where she was doing behind-the-scenes stuff, music section, doing promotions in the cars. In the end she said 'no, I don't want to do that; I want to do something more substantial'.

Our company used to be more evenly balanced. Back in 96-97 there were about the same numbers of each sex. Then from 1998 to 2000 it very much picked up and ran with female employees. There were more females coming out of uni, but blokes were wanting much higher salary packages.

"We've always had two guys at the top of the company, as MD and GM, with the exception of recently when we have appointed a woman GM. If you look at the top 15 companies in the Business List, there are a number of companies with females at the top. (However, those companies were all started by women).

[There were some pertinent comments made on women taking breaks from employment when having families. From 17-20 mins].

Women are very good communicators (in general), they have an ability to articulate information in a manner that is often easily understood and coherent. As such they actually have the starting point for being a PR practitioner. Journalism, I find, is a very hard and factual industry, in most instances. In general news you've just got to write the facts. You might get into feature or health writing. I think women just get fed up with writing the hard nuts and bolts. A lot of the women we have had find PR a panacea. I like writing, I like dealing with publics, I like handling sort out issues and handling accounts. So, what can provide me with that type of ongoing career? They see PR, they look at it (and we have several former female journalists). And why? Because they are excellent communicators; they are good at telling a story, they are good at writing, they actually enjoy writing. And writing is the critical aspect, whether male or female, which takes people down a potential career in PR.

Then they get into what should I do. Should I be a copywriter, a brochure-writer? But they don't go down that path because it's about the sell, or has too much fluff. PR offers them a halfway point, in that it can be halfway there.

In general, when it comes to strategy, I wouldn't be going to my senior women over my senior men. Sorry. Tactically, of my top five or six, only two are women. In some cases it just gets down to experience. In a general PR sense, the two women would be part of the senior team, but if we had a really major crisis, say with an oil company (for whom we have a female account manager). Why? Because our backgrounds in government and issues just mean that the men here can provide the best solutions.

The reality is that the human body clock for women kicks in between 30 and 40. If they are in a stable relationship, the women are more than likely to go off and have a family. But we are now encouraging these women to come back. We want to make it easier for them to resume their careers.

There are some instances where clients (mostly in the corporate sector, particularly in mining and resources) prefer to work with men. It's just that those industries are traditionally male-dominated. Their culture is just that way. Some meetings I've walked into a mining-related client meeting with a female colleague, and the comment has been that I've brought along my personal assistant. Would you be able to make us a coffee? And it's been made in a demeaning sense. They only talk to me and have eye contact with me. They just don't want to know her. And there are other anecdotal stories where clients have said 'you don't need to bring her next time; she wouldn't understand our business'.

I don't bemoan the fact that the industry is predominantly women. I think it would be good if we could attract more men in to the industry. I believe that in the WA market there is a lack of good corporate-orientated young male practitioners. The majority of those that come through are female, and if someone could answer me why is it more difficult for females to pick up the 'corporate' reins of an account, I'd love to hear it. I could actually develop an education package that could be slotted into the universities. It just seems to me that the young guys have a better understanding of business. That's probably a slight on female practitioners, but it's not meant to be. It's just that when they come through, it is a significant effort to get them thinking about corporate reins, particularly investor relations. Things like profit, triple bottom line and such, mean nothing to them.

I could walk into a university and ask who wants to work in entertainment or tourism and the hands would shoot up. And I could ask who wants to work in investor relations, and no hands would go up. Then I'd ask who wants to earn \$100K in eight to 10 years? The hands would go up. Of those, who would want to work in investor relations, and the hands would drop. So I'd walk out and say none of you are going to earn much.

INTERVIEW 2, IW, 22 NOVEMBER

IW is a male practitioner with 30 years experience in communications (12 in Perth). He has a BBus (Communications) and Grad Dip Marketing. He heads a semi-government organisation which has one of the State's largest PR budgets. The organisation turns over more than \$200m a year. He also works closely with external PR consultancies.

(About 10-12 years ago) PR might have been seen as a soft and attractive profession. PR didn't have a lot of the hard-nosed stuff, such as issues management. There was a lot of events management. If you encountered a female PR operative in those days (and they may have come out of journalism) they probably had a reasonable understanding of the media. But these days everyone is a reporter. Everyone's got a camera on their phone. I think having that capacity: to want to part of a pleasant profession with career opportunities, but allowing women to develop their profession.

I think there are things around the edge around PR that leads them to think it's a pleasant profession.

I think PR about 15 years ago was media relations; getting the company story across, putting corporate views out. PR has grown in line with the growth of the media.

Up until 15 months ago, I dealt with for more than three years a company that had never had a male practitioner. In some respects I felt that was objectionable. You had to have no penis and be blonde and you'd get on in the industry (and an e-mail from a friend of mine who runs a consultancy interstate tackles this point). He calls some of these females in the industry "grimbo". I thought that was an interesting observation.

There's a whole lot of blondes out there in black dresses who are very good at functions, but when they come to write press releases create 'lobsters' (with a whole lot of shit at the head). They just can't nail it in the first three paragraphs.

Really, I don't have a simple answer as to why there are more women in this industry. As far as our account is concerned (and apparently this is the biggest). There are some places that if you didn't have a penis you'd never get a job there.

Sometimes you have to look how education works. That's probably where the answer lies.

I think physiologically and mentally (left-brain, right-brain) there are differences in the way males and females work, and their approach to things. But some of the planning women do are better than men; particularly event management. They have that attention to detail (such as colour) and I don't mean that to be sexist. But things like that can add value to an event. I think in the area of community relations they're good at that, because sometimes it's better to put a women in front of "CAVES" (Citizens Against Everything). They have a softer negotiation skill and can find the middle ground.

Dare I say it, but in the public sector there is strong evidence that certain women can evolve and develop power bases, and will have amazing pulling power with a CEO, where a bloke mightn't have; given that there's an 80 per cent chance the CEO will be male.

It's a bit like human resources, where there's a very similar trend, where HR specialists tend to be female.

INTERVIEW 3, AH, 30 NOVEMBER 2005

AH part-owns of one of Perth's top three PR firms, employing 21 people, including nine in PR (eight women and one male – him). Originally a TV journalist, he has been in PR for 13 years, including a stint for the British Government. He has worked in Perth for the past seven years, ever since he started his current business.

The PR profession is a very loose profession. Unlike engineering you don't have to be part of a national body. Therefore it's going to be harder for it to make any conscious decision, if people think there's a problem, to address the imbalance.

I think it does matter if there are a lack of men coming through. I think that any industry that gets unbalanced is doing itself a disservice, like in engineering, because you need all types of viewpoints. And men and women do communicate differently. Women are naturally better communicators, but sometimes you need a male communications approach to communicating, writing or speaking, because their approach often more robust. So I think it (imbalance) is actually an issue. The trouble is whether you can see it as an issue. It's not in our firm. But for the profession as a whole I think it is an issue.

There's no doubt guys are naturally attracted to technical subjects. That's the case in our company, where it's evident that we have more women applying for the PR and design jobs, yet for the web side of things, which is mostly technical, we attract males, which are the predominant group. The guys have vacated the design space and left it to women, and the women occupy the PR space. The other big problem, which you can already see in universities, is that most of the kids are foreign students and don't have the capacity to work in our industry. If the unis go down this track they will just produce people that are only of use to their own countries.

I think women are certainly generally more empathetic than males, and that certainly helps in PR. One of the other areas that women excel in is that they are better organisers. Most of them when they try tell us why they want to be in PR they name event management as the reason. Either they have an interest in organising things, or they have an interest in parties. That's fine. Either interest is valid, but they're in it for their organisational ability. It's one of the reasons women thrive. They are good documenters and they are thorough. Because in a consultancy people need to be

thorough. I take their organisational skills as being high on the list on why they want to be in the profession.

It's easier to train a guy on how the business, or a client's businesses operate. On the other hand, it's much easier to train a woman to build a relationship with clients. At the end of the day, which is more important? As I'm the guy who has to understand how the business runs, then I place an emphasis on relationship-building. Also, if they don't understand something, women will ask a question, and males generally don't do that. I guess it is similar to guys taking up engineering skills.

As for characteristics of PR people, there can be very aggressive females and some males who are at the opposite end of the spectrum. The people who are good at PR are usually somewhere in the centre. The good males have some of the feminine characteristics: the ability to build relationships, have empathy, communicate clearly. The very good women also have some of the necessary robustness to be tough and use in negotiations, and some of the slight aggression you need to have to work with the media. It's a hybrid type of person.

I think women enter PR because they probably have an inkling of what PR is about when they apply (that's PR is a spin-off of marketing, for example). If they've heard of it's because it's been connected to fashion, or parties. That doesn't matter, but at least something has led them into the profession. Guys don't get that because they're not interested in that type of stuff. They don't think "oh, good, it's about organising things: I'll go into that". So they don't have anything nudging them towards the profession. I also think the organising aspect is important. Women are good organisers and they know it. Even in their teenage years, women are organising things, whether it's the school ball, or their friend's party, sister's wedding. Therefore they're very attracted by the notion of event management. I just don't have any theories on why men are attracted; just that they're not.

If you wanted to draw males into the profession, you would have to study what other professions do. They start in the schools. By the time you get to uni, the decision has been made. You have to start off in the schools, explaining what it is and enticing the right sort of guy into the profession. Guys will quickly sort out if they're interested. But there's probably a raft of guys out there who could potentially do quite well, but are foundering around with no knowledge of PR. Oddly enough, in WA we are better placed than anywhere else to demonstrate we have a role for males. Unlike Sydney and Melbourne, which has the 'fluffy' stuff PR like fashion and entertainment, the reality is most Perth PR is business. I think that's one of the hardest things for women when they leave university here, because in order to do PR they see they have to go into 'serious' business, not fluff, so they have to understand mining companies and so on. At the end of the day, you have to find out what might appeal to guys. Whether it's saying, 'look, I spend a lot of my time on mine sites and dealing with heavy industry'. Something has to be said to them.

INTERVIEW 4 KS, 6 DECEMBER 2005

KS is one of Perth's most senior and respected practitioners and academics. Only recently retired, he is now an Adjunct Professor in PR. Originally from a radio and newspaper journalism background (eight years), he has 44 years' PR experience, for consultancies, multi-nationals and governments (in Australia and Indonesia).

PR was born out of journalism. Back in 1962 the face of PR was all male. Journalists were very anti-women. To be a woman journalist, there was true glass ceiling. They never rose above a B-grade. Their highest aspiration was to be women's editor. There was an 'old school', sort of Victorian-Edwardian hangover that maintained this anti-female culture. Senior women journalists were bemoaning [sic] the fact they couldn't get the same opportunities as men.

PR has always been about information 'in' as much as information 'out'. It was often the information you gathered that was most important. And the best collectors of information were journalists. So the PR companies recruited the best journalists, but only male. You wouldn't have head-hunted a woman. The ABC was a bit of an exception, and did not discriminate.

I was managing Eric White and Associates in Perth when I came back from Jakarta in 1981 and I employed a woman to run one of our major accounts. Jim Griffin, who had been the manager, and was now a director, said 'I don't know about that client accepting a woman'. But she was a great success.

Among the first women were Jan Barry and Marie-Louise Sinclair.

Jan Barry also became the State manager. Theoretically there were no barriers, but it didn't happen because of the culture. We respected our colleagues and they were getting the same pay, at a time when many women were not getting equal pay. But at the same time their perception was they couldn't get the top jobs, except in 'women's writing', which is what we'd now call lifestyle stuff. And the lifestyle stuff is still mainly the women's preserve. This, of course makes them valuable in PR, because that's where the modern marketing style of PR find its outlet. I believe the type of PR has changed. We were employed much more strategically. As I said, in obtaining information. I can remember at one stage having not written a release in two years. I just finding out information. It was more what we'd now call public affairs.

As to why women are entering PR, it's really a mystery to me. I would say PR is perceived as a glamour industry. This, I think, does have implications as to why women enter it.

I made a transition from public affairs to marketing PR by way of advertising in 1968. I joined Ogilvy and Mather who had just arrived in Australia. They had senior women in advertising running major accounts and it worked. They were mainly food and service-type accounts. But they all had PR aspects to them. It was what we now call IMC. To me that is the major part of PR today and that's where women are fitting in.

It's the lifestyle aspects of PR that is emphasised. The exception is government, which appears to employ a lot of women.

Education has certainly helped women break the glass ceiling, simply because the men didn't think they had to.

If we start to generalise, we can have a problem. I think the male desire to be in control is stronger than the women's desire to be in control. It's about power. I think that in PR, power is what drives the men, I'm pretty sure, but it's not apparent in the lower echelons. These days men don't get attracted to PR because it's not as certain as other things they can now do. PR's power (in government) never has been 'fully there' when it comes to exerting influence. There was time when the PRIA looked down at government PR people because they considered them more journalistically-oriented. They wouldn't admit them as members.

INTERVIEW 5, DAN EDELMAN, 8 FEBRUARY 2006

Dan Edelman could well be regarded as one of the world's pre-eminent practitioners. His New York-based practice has offices in several countries, including Australia. He was interviewed by phone.

Almost every service industry now has a high proportion of women. They've come into the workforce in numbers unseen. It's a remarkable development and is particularly obvious in occupations such as legal, accounting and communications..

PR certainly has disproportionate numbers. It's sometimes said there are not enough women in leadership roles. But that's not always true, particularly when it comes to PR. We have company presidents in five countries, including Italy, Brazil, Spain and Australia, plus in many capital city offices. Women's salaries are also much higher now, so it's inaccurate to say they do not get the same opportunities in PR.

Women can handle anything. They're not limited in what they can tackle; certainly not from their perspective. However, they tend to be more numerous in health and consumer product industry PR. The crisis and financial management side of things still seems to be the men's domain.

Maybe men have more choices. There are now a lot of women doctors.

With regard to having more men in PR, I don't think it's something you can force, because then you wouldn't have enough staff. It does come down to the best person for the job.

As far as the numbers go, I think it's as high as we can go (with women).

PR is more appealing to people now, and women certainly can compete equally.

INTERVIEW 6, MR, 22 MARCH 2006

MR is a male practitioner with a degree in journalism. He worked for six months in journalism (country paper) and then switched to PR. He has two years' experience and is working for a WA Government Department.

Maybe blokes see PR as being a bit airy-fairy. Maybe men are a bit more forthright, and because PR is a bit fuzzy they shy away from it. It's probably a male thing.

You've definitely got to be confident; to be able to pick up the phone and talk to people. You're out there.

Because I'm working alongside an industry that's traditionally male-dominant, I see that a lot of older men don't like being told by women (particularly younger ones) how they should do things (from a PR aspect).

In journalism it isn't really good money, so that could be a reason why some men will do PR. I thought I would just keep doing journalism as a freelancer, on the side.

There's certainly more job security in PR than journalism, and more room to move up and quicker than in journalism.

I can't see blokes doing events. It's too much about keeping everyone on side. Too much crap. Probably women have more patience and are able to deal with unhappy clients, and they are probably more thorough.

INTERVIEW 7: JW, 22 MARCH 2006

JW majored in PR and has been working in the industry for 10 years. He currently works for a Perth consultancy.

The trend of more women has certainly been noticeable. Even when I studied there could be 20 in the class, and only three men. It was a common joke that there were so few men doing it. However, there was never any stigma about the males doing it.

I think it's good to have a better balance in the industry, and of course, at university.

But it's hard to say why this (imbalance) has happened. Women might be more aware of attention to detail and also with the design of various communication materials. They take more pride in presentation and appearance, and I don't think most males think that way. Those things are important in PR.

Women can probably handle more than two or three things at once. I think there's been a bit written about that.

There could be a perception that PR is soft and fluffy. But there's all sort of PR, from issues to promotions in bikinis. There seems to be confusion out there. Maybe it's a female thing that they just grasp the many facets and can adapt to them.

PR is a job that is flexible, and you can work at it for two or three days a week. That would suit women better. Men, I think, would prefer to work fulltime. Maybe that's a traditional thing. Certainly if women have children, PR would suit them in that regard.

You have to have a strong personality in PR. You have to be able to pick up the phone and talk to anybody, and deal with all sorts of people in many industries.

Maybe PR is not seen as serious. It's hard to know. It's often portrayed as spin. A lot of journalists see PR people as 'spin doctors'. Maybe, women can handle challenges from journalists [better than men].

Maybe there's just not enough substance for men in PR.

INTERVIEW 9: MB, 28 July 2006

MB is a (male) senior lecturer in communication theory at the University of Technology, Sydney. The interview took place by phone. It was prompted late in the study by a colleague who mentioned that MB had asked about the study and had some 'theories'.

I have only just recently been exposed to this (increasing number of women in PR). At a recent course I conducted for the PRIA there were only 12 women. So I asked them why there were no men, and they replied that they “were much cheaper than men”. They went on to explain that at the top end of town, in financial PR, however, most, if not all the practitioners were men. But I don’t know if that was just “gender-talk”. I have no evidence to back it up.

The rest is really just my thought process which flowed from that. In New South Wales we have an extremely high UAI (Universities Admissions Index) score to enter communications courses – PR and journalism. It’s 96 per cent, and we attract the top four per cent of the State’s students, who happen to be women. So you look at the HSC (Higher School certificate) there is a female dominance at the top.

I think that also PR has changed in recent years from being not so much about persuasion, but now it’s more project management. We don’t so much have to try to convince organisations to run material, because 60 per cent of the news is PR-driven anyway.

Like I said, I’ve only just encountered the issue and haven’t given it much thought.

INTERVIEW 1: LS, 24 NOVEMBER 2005

Lisa is a 27-year-old third-year student, who has also worked for several years in other areas, and briefly on PR internships. She was completing a double major in PR and marketing, and is considering doing honours.

I found the male students to be quite determined. Their work is quite good and they really apply themselves. Maybe they're more determined because they feel they have to prove themselves among the women. The majority of the guys I know get good marks, so they must work hard.

Males in PR seem to be a little bit more sensitive than other male students in other disciplines. They are more organised and methodical. The majority of them, I guess, seem to have more feminine characteristics. You can talk to them more easily than some of the other male students. They possibly don't fit in with what might be termed the general male culture.

They're very creative, with innovative ideas and very helpful, when I've done group work with them. I haven't had to ask for their work. They're quite organised. But they're not quite as helpful as females.

I started many years ago doing secretarial and PA work, which involved a lot of organisational tasks. And there was a lot of interaction with the marketing department. I also did a few units of PR at TAFE and realised what I had been doing was PR. I went travelling and when I was away I realised this is what I wanted to do.

PR is an easy subject if you just want to pass. You'll never fail. But there's quite a lot work in getting a high distinction.

The stereotypical PR person needs to be organised, methodical, a very good communicator and network easily. That implies an outgoing person, which men are more likely to be, as they don't have the inhibitions that women have, and they don't think too far whether they're hurting someone else, or saying something they shouldn't be. So they're not that sensitive, in general. But it depends on the person. I just think those qualities are needed for a PR person to be successful, and women generally have them more than men.

Listening is important. A PR person ends up running their little department and they have to listen to the other external departments, so if you're not listening you're not going to be sending out the right message. [*Do you think the male or female students have better listening skills. Perhaps?*]

Event organising seems to be quite popular at uni. It comes up every time in what students are interested in.

The men I know are doing very well. They are in consultancies and government. I would think men have the edge in (obtaining work) PR. Because there are so few of them and they are a lot more fun to have in a department. I imagine, though, that the level of how serious person is determined by the culture of the organisation.

INTERVIEW 2: JB, 3 December 2005

JB is a 19-year-old second-year male student majoring in PR and multi-media. He will study in the US in the first semester 2006, before competing his degree.

I was the only male in my tute of 25 this semester. In lectures it's dominated "majorly" by females. You look around and you might see 10 guys among 50 or 60 females. So I did think at some stage why there were so many females. You kind of keep a bit more quiet when there's 24 females. When there's so many you don't want to get on the wrong side of them. I've only worked with females this year, so it's difficult for me to measure other males.

I don't think they treat you differently. In group work you can still put your point across. But I guess like it's like any group; there's good and bad. But I could always get my point across. Maybe you feel a little intimidated sometimes because of the overwhelming number of females. So I tend to just sit back and watch them. I don't think any of the other guys have any problems with being among so many females. We all tend to get along well with people. I know my mate can talk to someone and in 30 seconds he has them laughing.

I don't think you could go far in PR if you were shy. As for common traits, we get along with people well, make friends easily. I think also we weren't really sure what we wanted to do when we left school. PR is something where you get to interact with people, which I wanted to do. I also didn't like the fact that I might be stuck in front of a computer screen doing multi-media for the rest of my working life, so that's why I took a PR option as well and I can see which one I prefer. I didn't choose advertising because there are a lot of guys in it, so I thought that if I chose PR I would have a better chance because there weren't many guys in it. With advertising I always pictured it as sitting at a desk and trying to think of ideas. With PR I thought it would be more interactive and I could get out of the office a bit more.

I think being creative is important in PR. Maybe the fact that I do multi media and that my mate plays an instrument indicates we are creative. I think the kind of males we are is a real mix. One of my mates can be a bit feminine, but the other guy is laid back, a surfer and smokes a bit. I guess I'm in the middle. The females are also a mix, some are assertive, some are chatty, others quiet. I think the ones that makes their voice heard are the ones that will do well in PR.

To be honest, one of the things that has turned me off PR is that it seems ambiguous compared to marketing and advertising. It's hard to measure PR, and you don't know if the work you are doing is working or not. If you're doing marketing and advertising you have a better gauge. Sometimes you feel as though you've been studying for two

years and don't know if you've done anything. I think this is one of the big issues we come across. Everyone likes to measure things at the end of the day to see how they're going. Males like that sense of competition and they try to beat other individuals, so they like to be measured. That's where it's frustrating because PR is hard to measure. We have sat down and talked about it. And it just seems you never know where you're at with it.

When I was the only guy in a group I was constantly trying to get them to do things my way. I found a lot of their writing was a lot more flowery. I guess if you're trying to make things positive for the client they could do it. But I found myself better at organising or managing things in the group situation. Maybe they were better at the creativity, and I was better at managing. Maybe that comes back to the view that men lean towards more business-related subjects. I found many of their ideas didn't have much value in that they would only fix one part of the jigsaw, when they should have been looking at fixing the whole problem.

I found generally the girls were more comfortable with me. They tended to get on each others' nerves. Maybe it was just the novelty of having a male in the group. In places I've worked, where there were males and females, the atmosphere is better than when it's all males. It tended to get boring sometimes, because you tend to talk about the same things all the time.

INTERVIEW 3: EP, 7 DECEMBER 2005

EP is a mature-age female student who completed three years of a teaching degree. She is now in the final year of a Communication Degree at Murdoch University.

I think because of the lack of prestige given to the profession it's sort of seen as women's work. It's difficult to define. I thought I'd like to do PR after having my children and I'd met some people who had done events (which is not just what PR is). Before I started doing PR, people would say 'what does it mean you do?' And I just couldn't verbalise what a PR person did. I remember that most of the males that asked me, they would say it's like 'party-planning' or advertising. They seemed to think it was a really pathetic thing to do. Maybe that's why men aren't drawn to it. It's not a stigma, but really just the idea of what PR is. I think they think it's standing on the corner doing surveys, like in marketing.

At the end of PR campaign, you don't really come out with figures, hard-and-fast results. It's just what worked and what didn't. A lot of it is feedback. I sort of think it's a social thing: that society regards it as a female profession. Talking to a lot of students, most of the ones I worked with are using it (PR) as a component for other things. They use it as an elective, or part of another degree, say in journalism or marketing. I think that social idea of PR really affects what people think.

I think movies like *Wag The Dog*, show how manipulative it can be influences how PR is seen, although that's from an American perspective. But they make it sound ugly, with people manipulating things. I think that's what people think PR is

(manipulating things). Even I get sceptical. We had a lecture from someone who works for the Premier's Department. And they coordinate things like what colour of tie the Premier is wearing: even if he shouldn't wear a tie. There are things like they pick and choose who will and who won't be interviewed. So that's all manipulation.

I would never have looked for media releases on a web-site before I started doing PR. I guess I didn't grow up with that, unlike the younger students. This makes me wonder if the public actually look up things like that.

Many of the male students at Murdoch in the Communications course aren't doing PR; they are doing journalism. The males did have a different approach. They tended to come from a marketing or political perspective. I always feel that men do marketing and women do PR for some reason. It is just my perception. I think I like the whole communication aspect of PR. I'm 'big' [sic] in trying to find ways of trying to communicate well. It's important that when we send out messages, we get the right one across and that we're not manipulating things.

I like writing because it gives you the time to create a good coherent message.

There's a mix of people doing PR. There are the outgoing ones, but there are also the quiet achievers. They tend to get quite passionate about some of the work we had to present.

I think writing is the most important component of doing PR. Presentation is also important because people "read" things visually. By that I mean that we take in images more quickly than just reading words. Then I think organisational ability is important. I would probably be happy just writing media releases, because I enjoy writing.

A lot of the men in PR are ex-journalists, and they're not viewed as a PR person. They're given a title that eliminates the fact they are doing PR. Generally, men that do PR often give it a title so it doesn't look like they're doing PR. I've always thought of it as a profession that women do, like nursing. I wouldn't think of women becoming marketers. I don't think they do it consciously. It's just that they have this ideas that there are certain roles men do, and some that women do. It's like when they enrol, at uni someone says: 'what are you doing?' And they get the reply that 'oh, that's for girls'.

I guess people do not really know much about PR. When you go to a high school careers night, every boy wants to be a pilot or girls want to be dressmakers or nurses. We are making choices at earlier ages, and really no one really knows about PR. So how will they make an informed choice?

Because there's this whole idea of women having to look after the children, simply because women "have" them. It like there's this debate about male and female roles, which might never disappear. We've gone through three waves of feminism, but we're back to where we started. There's the idea of men being linear thinkers, and

women being better at multi-skilling. We stereotype PR. It's similar to thinking all men that do party-planning are gay. But are they?

I have young girls in my unit, and we were talking about feminism and what rights they have. They didn't realise that in many occupations women still get paid less than men. They just thought all that [EEO] was in place.

INTERVIEW 4: SW, 16 DECEMBER 2005

SW is a recently-graduated female with a PR Degree and working in events management. She is about to commence a Masters Degree in media studies.

The women PR people I deal with through events I think feel that they more marketing-aligned. The men are more serious and aligned with business-development. I wouldn't say the men are overtly masculine, but neither are they 'wimpy' or 'girly'.

I think probably PR people need a quite 'forward' trait, of being able to step up and take on a leadership role or make decisions. Maybe you need to be able to have an element of risk-taking. Just being very definite about what you're doing. And yes, I'd agree with all those general things that you need to be a people-person, and I would agree with that, because you do need to have a way with people, of making them comfortable.

I hate going to a function and having to network. It feels very false, I suppose you just 'schmooze' people. I guess I'm not someone who can make small talk. I suppose that's a character trait.

I'd say that probably the nature of PR being "behind-the-scenes" industry probably means that when practitioners are recognised it is probably projected as fluff and bubble, and not actually what they do behind the scenes. It just comes out at functions. That's where I think the fluff and bubble impression comes from.

I wonder if people choose PR without knowing what it is? For me I thought I would do something in management and work in hospitality. But I quite like writing, so I could be good at journalism. I did one unit of journalism, and thought it's okay. But I don't want to do this as a living. No one could give me an answer of what PR was. They sort of said it was like marketing, but more strategic. So I did the unit, enjoyed it and kept going.

For me I was trying to find a match in the area I was working in, and that's probably different to a lot of uni students. I know a lot of students say they choose a subject because they want to be a journalism, or a film-maker. You don't actually do PR to do PR. You get a skill base and then you go and apply it. It's not like a lawyer or doctor: once you finish you are a doctor or a lawyer.

When I started uni a lot of people were doing a bachelor of arts. You don't really get anything at the end of it. To a certain degree I think communications has replaced the

BA. The skills are more relevant, but don't set you in any one direction, and I think that appeals to a lot of students.

INTERVIEW 5: ZM, 11 JANUARY 2006

ZM is a male second-year student who is disillusioned with PR and is switching to marketing/advertising.

I also have a class with first-year students, and there's two out of 20 students being male. My classmate has noticed a difference as well. For the most part we are ignored in class. It's almost as though we're shoved in the corner. He is very placid, and quiet. Unusually, he's not really that outgoing, which is definitely a trait of the girls. They are very out there, very loud.

There's a definite issue with it (being ignored). I've experienced not being taken seriously by teachers. It's the same with my mate. Mostly female teachers. Maybe that's got something to do with it.

I think PR is perceived as a con industry. Speaking to people who don't know much about it, they think it's about telling people what they don't want to hear. I went to PRIA night (student challenge). If there were journalists there. It was just a "bitchy" night. They would talk to one person, then criticise them when they walk away. I think the whole point of the industry is to be honest, and these people are not doing that, and that's among their own.

The internship proved to me what I had started to think about the industry. I'd say that it true that the industry isn't very black and white. When I was doing my internship, I'd be there and ask them: 'exactly what do you do? What's involved?' They were connecting A to B, jumping up in the air and saying they were brilliant. It's very grey. And that's why I'm switching to advertising/marketing, because PR is not very definite. You don't exactly know what your role is.

The teaching is different. I was taught PR is part of marketing, and some places teach the opposite: that marketing is part of PR. I think it's taught differently everywhere. They need a consistent standard across the country, at least in the way of what it's supposed to be.

I think females would have a different method of teaching from males, though I can't tell because I don't have any male teachers. But I'd say most of them have been very wishy-washy. It was like they were unsure of what they were teaching.

I think that anyone that hasn't done PR would see it a female-dominated industry. And that's a turn-off for guys, I think.

One of the differences between advertising and PR is that they both put a positive spin, and leave out the negative. But you pay for advertising.

I still think PR is a new industry. People say it's been around for ages, but it's only trying to take on a modern approach now. It seems PR has taken over a lot of marketing and advertising roles, branding, events management and journalism. They stick themselves in the middle and say 'we can do everything'. In my internship the company said it was doing advertising and marketing. What gives PR the right to do marketing things? No one in marketing does PR things.

I think one of the main skill to have in PR is to be able to say something without saying anything, and I think women are pretty good at that. That does make it [PR] fuzzy. I think that's a motherly instinct (every woman has a chance to be a mother) and it's ingrained in females. Of course guys can have that ability, but it's more apparent in females.

Sometimes people are more comfortable talking to a [PR] women if there's an issue to deal with. It could come down to that nature thing, in that woman is caring and sensitive.

I think there's also an aspect of how the media portrays PR. I've often mentioned that I'm doing PR and people refer to Eddie in *Absolutely Fabulous*.

It's a very pretentious industry. When you go to a [PR] function, it's all put on. People just have their hand in each other's pockets. Even one of my teachers said she same thing.

It's [PR] not here or there. That whole schmoozing up to people, and buttering them up, I think that's a load of shit. Maybe it doesn't equate to what I've been taught: that you have to be honest. So I dislike the industry immensely.

A big issue is when you try to find out what PR is. They don't tell you much. Maybe if they tell you more at the start it might correct the problem of so few guys doing it. Then again, it might work the other way. But I wouldn't have been able to say what it was when I started. But then, I can't tell you what it is after two years.

INTERVIEW 6: FM, 16 DECEMBER 2005

FM is a female and former primary-school teacher now doing a Grad. Dip. She has some work experience in PR.

I'm sure none of the younger students wouldn't want to work in NFP. They all like fashion, and music. But then again, they're young and that's just natural.

My main opinion about PR is that when you go through school nobody knows about PR. I imagine most people think of it being advertising. I suppose it's also that conditional perspective that a lot of people have that men need to go out and get a job with a career that pays well, but women can be a bit more 'airy fairy' about their careers. I can just get a job I like, have kids when I like, then go back and work part-

time. Maybe males are looking for higher paid jobs, but PR tends to be more middle management. Maybe it's a money thing and males just do a business degree which will get them further.

Maybe it is the traditional ways that men and women think. I thought that the units in PR were more interesting than business units. With units like accountancy, I just think I would have failed. I just feel the need to communicate, and that's what PR is.

Women are very much into pleasing the boss, as opposed to breaking 'out of the mould' a bit. Maybe men breaking out of the mould is more acceptable. A guy may be able to present a radical idea better, simply because he's male.

I think that a lot of women are more interested in talking through situations. With job satisfaction, men like to prove with figures they have succeeded, whereas women like to know the internal and external environments are working well. They just may have different approaches.

The higher people go up in pay, the more hours they are expected to do. Maybe women know that predominantly they will be the main child carer, so they gravitate towards PR, which you are not always expected to work long hours.

Looking at the males at uni, they are quite fit and attractive (not that I'm interested). Maybe they consider it a similar line to advertising, which may be a little more cutthroat than PR, and they may think 'I might have a more glamorous life'.

If you want to get into TV you have to have certain look, be a certain age. There was one young guy and he was good looking with a deep voice. The journalism tutor was mesmerised by his voice; so he was 'in there', as far as the tutor thought. Who cares about his skills? I made a judgment about someone. She was really scruffy, and it turned out she was doing journalism, and PR was just a side unit. But I had made a judgement based on appearance. It's not that you have to be the best-looking person, but you have to look professional.

Maybe females feel more capable of getting a personal relationships going quickly, whereas males may feel on guard or not wanting to look like a sleaze. A man, especially being friendly to a woman, may come across as bad, whereas a female being friendly to a man is somehow more professional-looking. So maybe it's safe to have females in that [PR] position.

When you're trying to put forward an idea to senior management. Maybe men can be a little more aggressive, but in fact [because they are in PR] are not accepted readily by management. Females may be a bit more submissive and can take a different tack, whereas the men would get fed up more easily knowing their idea will not be accepted, so they'll just give up. Maybe if there were men in the industry it's going to promote the whole industry. Management will be including PR in the mix more often. On the other hand, there also needs to be more women in the top end of business.

I am such a typical 'girl'. I was more inclined towards social sciences and English. But I have a sister who is so scientifically-minded.

One good thing for PR was with Tom Baddley [ABC TV newsreader] going to PR. That's good for the public to see someone move from serious news to the Western Force [WA-based Super 14 rugby union team]. Maybe that's a good rap for PR. I didn't know PR existed when I was younger; so how do people find out about it [PR]? I know in Year Nine I started to learn about advertising. You know that it's a job, but PR wasn't. It's portrayed as airy-fairy, I suppose.

One thing I have discovered is that I enjoy writing, whether it's media releases or brochures. Not that I would want to do journalism. I don't actually think if I knew PR existed when I was 17 I would have done it, though.

INTERVIEW 7: SD, 6 FEBRUARY 2006

SD is a third-year male PR student, who worked in a junior role for a WA government department, before being told to go to university. The interview was conducted by phone.

At one stage there were just two guys in one [PR] class, so, yes, I've noticed there is a situation with the low numbers of males.

A PR degree always seems to have had a female-type work tag attached to it. In Perth the PR industry is small and a lot of the males really don't seem to get a look-in..

It's not a 'hard-core' career. It's so broad, and it means so many things. It's not specific. It's not like being a doctor or an engineer. I like the idea of having a specialised titles, but with PR you just don't get that. I guess that PR is not a career on its own: it tends to be consumed by other aspects of a business, such as marketing.

I think males can equally have what is generally regarded to be female characteristics, such as nurturing and ability to organise and listen. But females also have the ability to be up-front. Some of them are extremely up-front. But it's no good to be a freight train.

I've heard the UN had asked the Australian Government to help push more women into management positions; so maybe there's a push to have females in PR management, and that might be coming at the cost of males. I think whoever is the best person for the job should get it.

Maybe females are just more attracted to PR than males. Perhaps there's a social stigma for men if they don't do the traditional male subjects and occupations. I come from a family that always been tradesmen, and most people from my home town worked in trades. But I always liked music and art. There was the whole entertainment thing of being vibrant has something with me doing PR, I imagine.

I've heard some people talking that there's a perception in PR that you are always only a spokesperson for whoever you work for, and that you never really get involved with driving the business. So that could be a disincentive for males not doing PR. I guess it gets back to me thinking that it's an inadequate subject.

The sheer number of people doing this course is huge, but the imbalance is bound to have some effects. I guess that may or may not work in my favour. On one hand, it might mean that because there are so many females, employers might not look favourably on a male. But it also might make males more valuable. The saturation of female might mean that males are seen as less capable among so many females.

But any saturated industry is not healthy. Diversity is something which is bad, and is sorely lacking at university. I hope someone goes on to point out the pitfalls.

INTERVIEW 8: LEIGH, 15 APRIL 2006

Leigh is a 20-year-old male third year PR student.

I'm just as keen on PR now as when I started. I haven't particularly been deterred by the number of females, although it was evident they are the majority.

I never noticed any talk about it being unusual that I was doing PR. There may have been some comments but nothing dramatic. Such comments would have been made in reference to the large number of female students, as opposed to singling out me as an individual. Among students we mostly joked about it. There was no serious discussion. Of course there were comments from people outside uni, mostly along the lines of PR about being a bullshit artist.

I don't think the number of women in PR will work against males. It may work to their benefit in that it could make their work more evident, and give them a greater reputation, as men will be more easily identified, being a minority. I think that being a male might actually help. There may be benefits as firms seek greater gender balance.

As regards the type of skills PR people need, obviously good communication skills and creativity for some jobs. I like to think I have those skills, and that I have a friendly nature and I'm easy to talk with.

The males in my classes certainly aren't stereotyped, based on the males studying PR in my classes.

As to why more women study PR, I think verbal communication is seen as a 'woman's domain': that there's a general feeling women are better communicators.

Annex O – Record of meetings and e-mails with supervisor/s

| | |
|--|----|
| Meetings with supervisor/s (Rockhampton) | 1 |
| Tele. conferences with Prof. Knight | 1 |
| Telephone interviews | 9 |
| Internet conference (Skype) | 1 |
| E-mails to Prof. Knight | 38 |
| E-mails from Prof. Alan Knight | 25 |
| E-mails to Kate Ames | 9 |
| E-mails from Kate Ames | 10 |
| Phone conversations with Kates Ames | 3 |

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Annex Q – Recordings of focus groups and interviews
(Focus groups as QuickTime movies, interviews as MP3s)