

Statement by the Institute of Public Relations Malaysia on the professionalisation of the Profession.

The Institute of Public Relations Malaysia subscribes to the concept of legislating the PR profession along the lines of legislated professions such as the lawyers, accountants, architects and company secretaries, to close the existing legitimacy gap where PR is currently not perceived as a profession.

The proposed Malaysian PR Profession Act will act as a catalyst towards legitimising the PR profession in Malaysia. At present there exists different methodology of PR practice among MNCs, GLCs, SMEs, the Government, NGOs and other entities which require integration into a comprehensive bench-mark that will address the demands of industry.

The body of PR knowledge has grown exponentially, but the practice and ethical challenges have not kept in tandem with the demands on corporate governance, disclosure, professional conduct and national interest.

Public Relations, as it is currently and generally practiced in Malaysia, has not capitalised on PR's strategic "counselor-advisor" role and is still dependant on its out-dated technician-based and press-agentry roles. There is much to be done to rally industry players to act in concert to educate the market, the decision makers and the public on the value of PR and the effective contribution of PR to all sectors of the economy.

After more than 50 years of PR practice in Malaysia, there is no registry of PR practitioners operating in the country. With the 'critical mass' it allows for a more systematic industry growth, supported by best practice standards and well-trained practitioners in a mandatory accreditation mechanism as do other professions.

Contrary to some opinions, this proposed Act of 'professionalising the practice' does not infringe on the government's policy of service liberalisation. The Act, magnanimous in its contents, has factored in the presence of foreign expert PR practitioners in the transfer of knowledge and skills, when they register with the Institute of Public Relations Malaysia. Everyone benefits from the shared learnings in issues of intercultural communications and a sensitisation to local cultural practices.

We want to re-iterate IPRM's role, where we are committed to:

- Enhance the professional interests of our members so that they can deliver their work performance better
- Advocate, for the industry benefit, high level of skills; knowledge; competency; standards of practice and professional conduct
- Encourage the research and development of Public Relations practice
- Promote understanding on the meaningful contribution of PR in advancing ethical communication, that can result in enhancing the performance of all sectors of the economy
- Act as the authority for the purpose of consultation in matters of the PR discipline and industry that concerns public and professional interest, representing the interests of our members and the PR profession.

For further information:

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