

# Public Relations in The Netherlands

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## Part 1: Background information

**Official Name:** The Netherlands (also called Holland)

**Capital City:** Amsterdam



**Major Cities:** Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, Eindhoven, Tilburg, Groningen, Almere, Breda, Nijmegen, Apeldoorn, Enschede, Haarlem, Arnhem, Zaanstad, 's-Hertogenbosch, Amersfoort, Haarlemmermeer, Maastricht, and Dordrecht.

**Official Language:** Dutch

**Type of Government:** Constitutional monarchy

**Location:** Western Europe

**Currency:** Euro

## Culture

The Netherlands is a small country in northwest Europe, part of the European Union and one of its founding members. It borders with Germany on the east, Belgium on the south and the North Sea on the west.

It is a monarchy with a queen as its symbolic head of state, governed by the prime minister as head of government and commander-in-chief. The government is divided into two chambers, with the first chamber primarily supervising and the second chamber acting as the executive body of the government.

The Netherlands has a high Individualism ranking which is indicative of a society with more individualistic attitudes and relatively loose bonds with others. The populace is more self-reliant and looks out for themselves and their close family members.

This individuality is an integral part of the daily lives of the population and must be considered when traveling and doing business in their country. Privacy is considered the cultural norm and attempts at personal ingratiation may be rebuffed.

Due to the importance of the individual within the society, individual pride and respect are highly held values and degrading a person is not well received, accepted, or appreciated.

Also, a moderate level of Uncertainty Avoidance indicates a cultural tendency to minimize or reduce the level of uncertainty within the population by enacting rules, laws, policies, and regulations to cover most any and all situations or circumstances.

The Netherlands has a low Masculinity rating. This indicates a low level of differentiation and discrimination between genders. In this culture, females are treated more as equals to males in all aspects of society.

There is no predominant religion practiced in this country. However, the largest portion of the population identifies itself as Atheist. The next highest practicing group are Catholics, followed by Christians and Muslims.

### **Education**

Tertiary education is divided into two types of universities: the research universities, or universiteiten, and the universities of professional education (UPE), or hogescholen. The first puts a heavy emphasis on research and analytical thinking and the second concentrates more on projects and practical thinking. However, they both confer undergraduate degrees — after three years at research universities and after four years at UPEs. Depending on the study, graduates from UPEs can transfer and work toward a master's degree at a research university if there is a contract between the two or when the requirements state so. Otherwise, UPE graduates have to do a so-called connection year before the master's degree, or do a masters at the UPE.

In comparison with the United States, the study of public relations is not available as a single study but rather embedded in most communications studies. Furthermore, journalism curricula sometime offer public relations as a major or minor.

In addition, extracurricular activities, such as student organizations, in the Netherlands are not as popular as in the United States.

### **The Studies**

Research shows that the study of public relations in the Netherlands is embedded in several studies, at the university, polytechnic, undergraduate and graduate levels. The following exist:

Polytechnic:

- Journalism — Christelijke Hogeschool Windesheim, Hogeschool InHolland, Hogeschool Utrecht
- Communication — Christelijke Hogeschool Windesheim, Haagse Hogeschool, Hogeschool van Amsterdam, Hogeschool InHolland, Hogeschool Rotterdam, Hogeschool Utrecht, Hogeschool Zeeland, Hogeschool Leiden, Hogeschool Arnhem en Nijmegen, Avans Hogeschool

University, undergraduate and graduate level:

- Communication Science — Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit
- Communication and Information Science — Universiteit van Tilburg, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, Universiteit Utrecht, Vrije Universiteit

Below is a list with contact information for all polytechnics and universities mentioned above:

- Christelijke Hogeschool Windesheim - [info@windesheim.nl](mailto:info@windesheim.nl)
- Hogeschool InHolland - [info@inholland.nl](mailto:info@inholland.nl)
- Hogeschool Utrecht - [info@hu.nl](mailto:info@hu.nl)
- Haagse Hogeschool - [studie-informatie@hhs.nl](mailto:studie-informatie@hhs.nl)
- Hogeschool van Amsterdam - [studievoorlichting@hva.nl](mailto:studievoorlichting@hva.nl)
- Hogeschool Rotterdam - [studievoorlichting@hro.nl](mailto:studievoorlichting@hro.nl)
- Hogeschool Zeeland - [info@hz.nl](mailto:info@hz.nl)
- Hogeschool Leiden - [info@hsleiden.nl](mailto:info@hsleiden.nl)
- Hogeschool Arnhem en Nijmegen - [info@han.nl](mailto:info@han.nl)
- Avans Hogeschool - [cic@avans.nl](mailto:cic@avans.nl)

## **Part 2: Overview of the public relations industry**

Public relations came to the Netherlands after the Second World War. In 1953 Max Beauchez started Beauchez Public Relations in The Hague, with Coca Cola as its first customer. In the years that followed, the company grew till it became one of the largest public relations companies in the Benelux.

Nowadays public relations plays an important part in the communication of a company or brand. Because of the diversity of public relations, it can be divided into separate specialized parts, which are:

- Corporate public relations, which specializes in the image of a company
- Financial public relations, also investor relations
- Public affairs, focusing on the strategic way of dealing with political changes, processes and decisions
- Marketing public relations, focusing on the public relations around existing and new brands

Crisis management and issues management also are elements of public relations.

The tasks of public relations are lobbying, influencing public opinion, organizing special events, ghostwriting, press conferences, and whispering campaigns.

Public relations is seen as an effective strategic management tool with open and honest communication between the company and its external parties.

The relationship between public relations specialists and journalists is unique. Though journalists would prefer to create an article on their own, they actually need the public relations professional to check certain facts. If both parties would come to terms with this situation, it would lead to advantages for both sides.

**Resources Used:**

<http://www.carrieretijger.nl>