

### **FOREWORD: COMMUNICARE PRISA COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE**

*“We at PRISA are thankful to the editor-in-chief Prof. Sonja Verwey, guest editor Prof. Mariekie Burger and the editorial team for affording researchers the opportunity to publish their work. To all the authors, thank you for sharing your work with the rest of the public relations professional” (Adele Paulsen, PRISA CEO).*

Public relations in South Africa is a mature discipline marked by critical reflection on the theory and praxis of achievements, identifying areas in need of further investigation and development in order to increase opportunities of building relationships between organisations and their environments through communication. During the past 60 years both the theory of praxis of public relations in South Africa developed in line with international trends by drawing mostly on American thinking. More recently the field migrated towards critically engaging also with European thinking, and most recently with thinking emanating from other regions of the world. In the past, textbooks and local research often echoed international public relations paradigms with minimum local application. The current resurfacing of the decolonisation narrative underlined the importance of reflecting on the appropriateness of foreign thinking for this particular locale. In recent years greater attention has been given to developing a South African body of knowledge that firstly challenges public relations approaches from elsewhere, and secondly, developing locally applicable theory and praxis by working towards a multi-disciplinarity. Amongst these the following attempts are noteworthy: Research projects investigating the roles of public relations practitioners (Le Roux, 2013; Steyn, 2009); the professionalisation of the industry and the perceptions held by public relations practitioners of the profession (Niemann-Struwig & Meintjes, 2007; Roodt, 2010; Venter, 2010). Further, the Pretoria School of Thought introduced a scientific worldview of strategic communication management to public relations (De Beer, Steyn & Rensburg, 2013), and Verwey (2015) explored the paradigmatic challenges and the need for reflection on personal assumptions, transcending different boundaries and multiple-disciplinary thinking. Issues of credibility, ethical practice, collaboration and appropriate curricula offered by the wide variety of South African educational institutions still form part of the agenda.

Commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Public Relations Institute of South Africa (PRISA), this special issue continues to further the impetus towards a Southern African body of knowledge for public relations. This issue of *Communicare* is testimony to renewed efforts to create various platforms for collaboration and the sharing of ideas and knowledge within the South

African context. The complex issue of brand ownership and the co-creation of a brand in an online environment is investigated by Maritha Pritchard, DelaRey van der Waldt and Pieter Conradie. They explore response strategies of organisations when seeking to maintain emotional resonant brand reputations after being targeted by user-generated brand parodies. In their article, Lucrezia de Lange and Dalmé Mulder extend current research on leadership communication within an organisation and further the trajectory, exploring effectiveness and effectivity. Yaeesh Yasseen, Mahdiyyah Moola-Yasseen and Nirupa Padia offer an attribution theory perspective of impression management practices in the chairman's statement in South African annual reports. Sonja Verwey, René Benecke and Clarissa Muir raise questions regarding the education of future public relations professionals by drawing on theories of purpose and practice. In her article, Marlene Wiggill offers a relationship management perspective regarding retaining blood donors.

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