



Making a Difference

THERE IS A GROWING DEMAND FOR RECOGNISED PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS
IN PR AND COMMUNICATION

In today's competitive business environment, it is no longer enough to have good products and services, excellent corporate governance and laudable corporate social responsibility projects. A key element of entrepreneurial success is Public Relations. It is not by chance that there is a growing demand for the academic aspect of PR, says Chartered Trainer and CIPR Accredited Practitioner Marcos Komodromos, who lectures at the University of Nicosia and is CIPR Course Leader for Cyprus, Greece and Romania at Intercollege Globaltraining. He told **Gold** about two CIPR courses of study and the relevant diplomas awarded to successful candidates.

Gold: Tell us about the CIPR and the collaboration with Intercollege Globaltraining.

Marcos Komodromos: The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) was established in 1948 and it is the largest body in the UK Public Relations sector with over 10,000 members around the world. Since 2006, the CIPR has been represented in Cyprus, Greece and Romania by Intercollege Globaltraining, which offers two professional study courses leading to the Diploma in Public Relations and the Diploma in Internal Communication.

Gold: And these courses are aimed at what kind of people?

M.K.: They are for professionals already working in PR, marketing, advertising, human resources and management. They are also aimed at people who have not yet obtained a diploma in PR but wish to underpin and increase their professional and personal development in the field. More specifically, through practical PR examples and case studies, students are taught to develop their PR planning and communications management skills.

Gold: Why should anyone wish to obtain a professional CIPR qualification?

M.K.: Financial and economic instability has forced many organisations to reduce their advertising budgets and develop Public Relations programmes. More and more professionals, politicians and executives are investing in their public image and profile. Through its two courses, Intercollege Globaltraining equips participants with the strategic PR and internal communication skills they require. Moreover, the job market wants people with a sound knowledge of the profession.

Gold: What does the CIPR Diploma in Public Relations cover?

M.K.: It consists of three research and planning projects spread over 50 hours of teaching time and the three units are completed within 9-12 months. The main components of the theoretical part cover issues pertaining to PR, management function, theoretical approaches, corporate social responsibility, stakeholder theory and more.

Gold: What are the key aspects of the CIPR Diploma in Internal Communication?

M.K.: The CIPR Diploma in Internal Communication includes a research project and takes 21 teaching hours, spread over 6 months. The main components of the theoretical part cover issues of internal communication, culture, organisational change and planning strategy.

Gold: To what extent are CIPR diplomas recognised in Cyprus and abroad?

M.K.: The prospects for those with a CIPR Diploma are huge. They are already recognized in many countries by private companies and

Gold: How important are these diplomas in terms of professional development?

M.K.: Both courses help participants to broaden their knowledge of issues concerning strategy, management, internal communication and professional image development. I consider a professional qualification to be essential to any PR professional wishing to have a career in the sector. The objective of the CIPR Diploma course of study is to provide students with both theory and practical experience.

Gold: What are the criteria for the scholarships offered by Intercollege Globaltraining?

M.K.: We offer a scholarship for each course of Study. For the CIPR Diploma in PR it is worth €2,750 and for the CIPR Diploma in Internal Communication it is worth €1,000. The scholarship for the CIPR Diploma in PR covers tuition fees too. Applicants need to meet the entrance requirements for the courses

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various organisations. More specifically, they are considered the equivalent of a Master's degree by a number of UK universities including Manchester Metropolitan University, Queen Margaret University College in Edinburgh, Leeds Metropolitan University and others. As for Cyprus, Greece and Romania, many organisations have already begun to ask for the diplomas which they consider an essential qualification for every PR and communications professional.

Gold: What are the registration requirements for these courses?

M.K.: The selection process requires that participants have four years' work experience in PR, marketing, advertising and management, or they hold any other academic qualification relevant to the sector. For those who are interested but have no connection with PR we hold an intensive 14-hour seminar that they can attend in order to be eligible to follow the courses.

as mentioned earlier. They will then be judged on an essay written on one of three topics provided. The applications and essays will be evaluated within seven days by Intercollege Globaltraining's CIPR Diploma teaching staff and the winner's name will be published in IN Business magazine in November.

Gold: Do you believe that there is a genuine interest in lifelong learning in the PR and communication sector?

M.K.: Yes. There is considerable interest in lifelong learning and the response to our courses has been considerable, which is a very positive thing, particularly these days when free time is limited and the financial crisis does not leave much room for such 'luxuries'. Professionals with an interest in attending our courses need to know that in addition to obtaining a professional qualification, they will also be in a better position to aim at greater career development. **G**