Kristian Bonnici argues that it was the king’s masterly use of PR that brought legendary status to the self-proclaimed hero of Qadesh.
Every respected discipline has a founding father: the father of History is Herodotus; the father of Political Science is Machiavelli, and Imhotep and Hippocrates are the founding fathers of Medicine. ‘Public Relations’, the process of influencing public opinion, has yet to find a father. Edward Bernays, who is considered by some as the father of PR, was born in 1891, but he is far too late to claim this title; the use of PR goes back to ancient times, with Rameses II (1279-1213 BC) showing himself to be a PR master.

In Rameses’ reign the Hittites, a regional power whose military technology surpassed that of Egypt, posed a security threat for the Egyptians. Rameses as the top ‘Senior Executive PR’ did not shy away from communicating his intentions regarding the Hittites to his public. He assembled a huge army, and marched off to reinforce Egypt’s superiority, returning to Egypt in pomp and claiming victory.

External PR with the Hittites continued after the battle, and materialised in the first peace treaty in world history (see above right). The treaty represents a model for international relations among states even today, so much so, that a copy of this treaty can be found at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

**Internal Communications**

Back at home, the best way for an Egyptian king to present himself as a hero was to embark on a building programme (see below), and the Qadesh campaign became the most recorded in Egyptian history; the carvings can only have been carried after a great deal of central plan-
The façade of the temple built at Abu Simbel by Rameses II for his Great Royal Wife, Nefertari. Photo: RBP.

The Temple of 'The Hearing Ear' at the rear of the Karnak temple complex, established by Rameses II as a place where ordinary people, not allowed within the precincts of the main temple of Amun, could present their petitions.

The Ramesseum, Rameses' mortuary temple on the West Bank at Luxor. Photos: JPP.

ning, preparation and layout design. At Luxor, Rameses built a new entrance to claim this temple as his own. At Karnak, Egypt's most important temple, all the pharaohs of the New Kingdom had built monuments but Rameses outdid them all, ordering work of awesome proportions.

Seitel (2006) argues that two kinds of 'evidence' will persuade: facts and emotions. At Abu Simbel (see above) Rameses illustrates both his defence of his people against the Hittites, and his emotional connection to his Great Royal Wife Nefertari; he appears as a patriotic figure but also as a human being. Through reputation management, Ramesses combined the images of love and fear, the perfect ingredients to govern according to Machiavelli in his book The Prince. Rameses II was feared externally and loved internally.

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Good PR is a two-way communication between an organisation and its public. As most Egyptians were illiterate at this time, and possibly unaware of domestic and foreign politics, the king would have used proclamations and personal appearances as part of his PR campaign, to keep his people informed about his victories and allow them to praise his greatness. Rameses did not only talk at his public but also listened; a statue of him (now in Munich, Germany) has four ears at its back symbolising that the pharaoh was willing to hear petitions. Almost like a suggestion box, this would have allowed the chief 'PR Practitioner' - Rameses II - and his team of scribes at the Ramesseum to evaluate communications and see if opinion has been influenced.

As was customary for pharaohs, Rameses II built a mortuary temple for himself: the Ramesseum (see below), and here, too, PR took centre stage. Rameses' image was carefully crafted to make him larger than life, and he achieved a status
far beyond that achieved by his predeces-sors. Through good internal and external public relations, Rameses II achieved the goal of effective public relations: “to har-monise internal and external relationships so that an organisation can enjoy not only the goodwill of all of its publics but also stability and long life” (Seitel 2006). Egypt still benefits today from the excellent reputation Rameses nurtured. Tourists flock to see his temples all year round. Rameses’ legacy endured well after his reign, so much so that nine suc-cessive Pharaohs would take his name. In his lifetime he became a living legend, and was much admired by later dynas-ties. Much later he was of course the inspiration for Percy Bysshe Shelley’s famous poem Ozymandias. If the goal of reputation management is to promote an organisation’s reputation in perpetuity, then Rameses ‘the Great’ has surely achieved this, and deserves to be known as the Father of PR.

Kristian Bonnici
Deputy High Commissioner, Malta High Commission in Australia, M.A. in Diplomatic Studies, B.A. Hons. in International Relations, and CIPR Diploma.

Further Reading
James T.G.H., (2002), Ramesses the Great, Friedman.

ABOVE
The fallen colossus of Rameses at the Ramesseum described in Shelley’s poem Ozymandias.

BELOW LEFT
The feet of the Ozymandias statue.

BELOW RIGHT
Rameses’ name appears on monuments throughout Egypt. Here it has been carved on a column in the mortuary temple erected in the Middle Kingdom by Pharaoh Mentuhotep II Nebhepetra.

Photos: JPP.