Certificate in Principles of Public Relations Examination Third Edition

Study Guide

for the Certificate in Principles of Public Relations Examination

A Preparation Tool for Candidates

Functioning as part of the Public Relations Society of America

www.praccreditation.org

Acknowledgements

Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) members have developed this study guide to help candidates prepare for the Certificate in Principles of Public Relations Examination. The Certificate, launched by the Universal Accreditation Board in 2013, provides third-party validation of what entry-level candidates know about public relations and helps managers differentiate applicants entering the workforce. The Examination resulted from five years of research and development led by Jay Rayburn, Ph.D., APR, CPRC, Fellow PRSA, of Florida State University and involved multiple subject-matter experts in public relations. Examination items assess basic knowledge of public relations principles, with particular emphasis on the four-step process of public relations and on ethics. The Examination has been thoroughly tested for validity. Successful completion of the Examination demonstrates a significant degree of knowledge of public relations principles and ethics.

Feedback on this study guide is always welcome. This edition has incorporated suggestions from previous Examination candidates. Please send comments to accred@prsa.org.

About the Universal Accreditation Board

The Universal Accreditation Board is a credentialing agency for members of eight public relations professional organizations and public affairs practitioners in the Department of Defense. The board is composed of a diverse group of public relations practitioners, public relations educators and military public affairs personnel who oversee the Accreditation program. It includes three credentials: Accredited in Public Relations (APR), Accredited in Public Relations and Military Communication (APR+M) and the Certificate in Principles of Public Relations.

Contents

Introduction

We are glad you are preparing to earn the Certificate in Principles of Public Relations. We're sure that you will find the experience fascinating and rewarding. Taking the Certificate Examination will give you a valuable head start toward becoming Accredited in Public Relations (APR) when you become eligible to sit for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations.

About the Examination

Development of the Examination for the Certificate in Principles of Public Relations has involved scores of volunteers, thousands of hours, world-class research, consulting and test development companies, and five years of focused work. The Examination is the product of a thorough scientific process that has been grounded in state-of-the-art best practices in professional testing.

Each question on the Examination has gone through rigorous development, sourcing and pre-testing. A subject-matter expert who was trained by a test development specialist to write test questions developed each item you will encounter. All questions were tied to a reference in the public relations body of knowledge, peer reviewed and then revised by the author. Each question was then edited for readability and clarity by a professional test editor; reviewed by a professional psychometrician; and reviewed, revised or rejected by a national panel of experts that included many of the leading authors, academicians and practitioners in our industry.

What's on the Examination

The Examination tests eight groupings of knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs). The chart below indicates the percentage of the Examination that is devoted to each category. Detailed descriptions of the subsets of each KSA grouping are given in the following chapters.

KSA Group	% of the Examination
Researching, Planning, Implementing and Evaluating Programs	25%
Communication Models and Theories	15%
Media Relations	15%
Ethics and Law	12%
Using Information Technology Efficiently	12%
Business Literacy	10%
History and Current Issues in Public Relations	6%
Crisis Communication Management	5%

Your Results

The Universal Accreditation Board will notify you about whether you passed or failed the Examination. You will receive a Certificate in Principles of Public Relations if you are successful. Please note that you may not use initials after your name to indicate that you earned this Certificate, but you are strongly encouraged to put information about the Certificate on your resume and to highlight this accomplishment as you approach potential employers.

Questions, Concerns, Schedule Problems?

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the Examination for the Certificate in Principles of Public Relations are available at www.praccreditation.org/resources/documents/Certificate-Principles-PR-FAQ.pdf.

If you find that you cannot participate in the Examination after you have scheduled your appointment with a Prometric testing site, you may reschedule. You must rearrange the test time, however, **at least two full business days before your initially scheduled appointment**. You may *not* reschedule via the Web but must do so by calling 1-(800) 853-6775. You will be asked for your confirmation number, so be sure to have it available.

The fee you have paid for the Examination will not be refunded if you fail to complete the Examination for any reason. Your fee may not be transferred to any other testing cycle or to any other person.

If you have questions or concerns about your Examination participation, please contact Kathy Mulvihill, senior manager of the Accreditation Program, c/o PRSA, 120 Wall Street, 21 Fl, New York, NY 10005, telephone: (212) 460-1436.

Readings

The Universal Accreditation Board suggests that candidates for the Certificate in Principles of Public Relations review contents of at least one general text and one or more of the specialized texts from the Short Bookshelf of Texts below. In some sections of this study guide you will find references to resources not on the recommended bookshelf. These references are intended to encourage you to explore the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) further.

Short Bookshelf of Texts

- **AP Stylebook current edition**

  *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law (*current edition). New York: The Associated Press.

- **EPR 11th edition or current**

  Broom, G. M., & Sha, B-L (2013). *Cutlip and Center's Effective Public Relations* (11th or current ed*.).* Upper Saddle River, N.J: Pearson Education.

- **Primer of PR**

  Stacks, D. W. (2002). *Primer of Public Relations Research.* New York: Guilford Press.

- **Strategies and Tactics 11th edition or current**

  Wilcox, D. L., Cameron, G. T., & Reber, B. H. (2015). *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics (*11th or current ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education.

- **Strategic Planning 3rd edition or current**

  Smith, R. D. (2009). *Strategic Planning for Public Relations* (3rd or current ed.). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.

References by KSA

The following references from the Short Bookshelf correspond to sections of this study guide and to the knowledge, skills and abilities the Certificate Examination will test. Please note that some chapters address several areas of KSAs.

Definitions of Public Relations (Practice, Function, Roles)

- EPR 11th, chapters 1 and 2
- Primer of PR, chapter 2
- Strategies and Tactics, chapters 1 and 4

Research, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation

- EPR 11th, chapters 11, 12, 13 and 14
- Primer of PR, Part II: Informal Research Methodology; Part III: Formal Research Methodology
- Strategies and Tactics, chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8
- Strategic Planning, all content, a step-by-step planning process for public relations professionals

Communication Models and Theories

- EPR 11th, chapters 7, 8 and 12
- Strategies and Tactics, chapters 7, 9 and 11
- Strategic Planning, Step 6: Using Effective Communication

Media Relations

- AP Stylebook, Sports Guidelines and Style, Business Guidelines, and Guide to Punctuation sections
- EPR 11th, chapters 10 and 16 (Facilitating Media Relations)
- Strategies and Tactics, chapters 3 (Ethical Dealings With News Media), 11, 13, 14, 15 and 16
- Strategic Planning, Step 6: Using Effective Communication; Step 7: Choosing Communication Tactics

Ethics and Law

- AP Stylebook, Briefing on Media Law section
- EPR 11th, chapters 5 and 6
- Primer of PR, chapter 3
- Strategies and Tactics, chapters 3, 9 (The Ethics of Persuasion) and 12

Using Information Technology Efficiently

- EPR 11th, chapters 4 (Digital Age and Globalization), 6 (The Internet) and 10 (New Media, New Challenges)
- Primer of PR, chapter 10 (Design Considerations, Survey Type: Internet)
- Strategies and Tactics, chapters 2 (Public Relations Enters the Digital Age), 11, 13 and 15

Business Literacy

- AP Stylebook, Business Guidelines section
- EPR 11th, chapters 6 (Financial Public Relations, Securities Trading and Fraud) and 15 (Corporate Financial Relations)
- Strategies and Tactics, chapters 12 (Regulations by Government Agencies, Liability for Sponsored Events, Attorney/Public Relations Relationship) and 17 (Investor Relations)

History of and Current Issues in Public Relations

- EPR 11th, chapters 1, 4 and 7
- Strategies and Tactics, chapter 2

Crisis Communication Management

- EPR 11th, chapters 11 (Defining Public Relations Problems), 12 (Anticipating Disasters and Crises, Establishing an Information Center) and 13
- Strategies and Tactics, chapter 10

Tips and What to Expect

Prepare to Succeed

We recommend that you prepare yourself earnestly and adequately to be *successful* in the Examination. The Examination is designed to test your knowledge of the principles of public relations practice. Questions often present brief scenarios that require you to apply public relations principles to select a correct response. Therefore, you'll be more comfortable and at ease if you have "done your homework" and become familiar with basic concepts and knowledge that senior practitioners say entry-level public relations people should know.

Tips for Preparation

1. Familiarize yourself with the **knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs)**. These KSAs are your outline of what is tested on the Examination for the Certificate in Principles of Public Relations.
2. Pay attention to the percentage listed for each KSA. For example, researching, planning, implementing and evaluating programs account for 25 percent of the Examination while history is 6 percent. So 25 percent of the questions relate to research, planning, implementing and/or evaluating, but only 6 percent involve history. Use the KSAs and these percentages to guide your preparation.
3. Note that many questions on the Examination for the Certificate in Principles of Public Relations are posed as brief situations or scenarios. All questions are multiple-choice.
4. Refer to the Short Bookshelf of Recommended Texts (p. 7), and use the information provided in this study guide.
5. Review the PRSA Code of Ethics. Use exercises and case studies in this study guide and on PRSA's code of ethics page.
6. If you have questions, ask your professor or PRSSA Professional Adviser. You may contact Kathy Mulvihill (kathy.mulvihill@prsa.org), Accreditation program senior manager at PRSA, for guidance about others who can assist you.

What to Expect at the Prometric Testing Center

Examination Length

You will have two hours (including 15 minutes of recommended practice/tutorial time before you start the Examination) to complete the Examination for the Certificate in Principles of Public Relations. Use all the time allotted to make certain you are answering all questions posed.

Examination Questions

The Examination includes about 100 questions. Question order is random and changes from candidate to candidate as well as testing site to testing site. Many questions are presented as brief scenarios. The number of questions on each subject reflects the percentages listed with the KSAs. In other words, more questions focus on Ethics and Law (12 percent) than on Crisis Communication Management (5 percent).

Admission to the Examination Area

Arrive at the Prometric Testing Center at least 30 minutes before your scheduled Examination time. If you arrive 30 minutes or more after your scheduled Examination time, you will be considered a nonrefundable no-show. Be prepared to show two current forms of identification. One must be a valid government-issued photo identification document, such as a driver's license or passport. A second identification document could be your student ID. One document must show your signature. Your name on both identification documents must match the name on the Authorization to Test (ATT) letter you received from the Accreditation Manager. You cannot take the test without the required identification. Some Prometric sites now give you the option of providing biometric identification in the form of an electronic fingerprint that will be deleted as soon as you complete the test. The purpose is to speed your exit and re-entry if you take a break.

Missed Appointment

Your fee cannot be refunded if you miss your appointment or do not have proper identification.

Dress

Wear comfortable, layered clothing. Test center temperatures may vary. Because Prometric has many locations all over the country, other physical differences are possible.

Taking the Examination

Upon check-in, you will be required to leave all personal items in a locker. You can't take anything in or out of the testing area. You will be given scratch paper and pencil or an erasable board and marker for use during the Examination. Prometric will collect these items from you when you finish. While you're taking the test, you can make notes, write down ideas you don't want to forget or list questions you've answered but want to double-check later if you have time. These questions may be in addition to those that you flag electronically.

Prometric meets testing needs for numerous organizations nationwide. Others in the room when you take the Examination for the Certificate in Principles of Public Relations are probably not taking this test. Expect to be in a room filled with computer stations and other people at work. If the Prometric manager hands you a calculator when you check in, say no thank you and hand it back because you won't need it.

All Prometric sites employ continuous video surveillance technology for security. The footage can be reviewed in cases where a security breach or candidate misconduct may be a concern.

Tips for Taking a Computer-Based Examination

1. The only computer skill you need to take this test is the ability to move a computer mouse (pointing device) and to click on a box. If you prefer, you can take the test by using keyboard commands.
2. The computer-based Examination is multiple-choice.
3. You do not have to select a final answer for every question as you come to it. The computer will let you electronically flag those questions that you want to return to later.
4. Some questions require more than one response. Questions with multiple answers will clearly state how many responses you need to select. Read carefully. The Examination includes no trick questions.
5. The computer will not let you move on to the next question until you have selected the appropriate number of responses to the item on the screen or have flagged the question.
6. You receive no credit for partial correctness. If two responses are called for and you check one that is correct and one that is not, the question will be scored as 100 percent incorrect.
7. Don't fight the question. Mentally disagreeing with either the question or the possible answers serves no purpose. This kind of internal conflict will use up valuable time and energy. Recognize that these questions were developed by professionals, were peer-reviewed and are based on the public relations body of knowledge.
8. You will take a step-by-step tutorial before starting the Examination. The tutorial will show you how to use the computer and answer the questions. Relax, and take your time becoming comfortable with the computer. The tutorial generally takes about 15 minutes. This time is included in the period you have to complete the Examination.

9. The tutorial will teach you how to navigate through the Examination and how to flag questions to return to later.
10. Throughout the Examination, the computer screen will display how much time you have left so that you can pace yourself. When your time is up, the screen will display a message telling you that the Examination is over. If you finish earlier, you may leave.

Public Relations: A Management Function

This chapter presents definitions and general information about public relations. This material provides background information but does not address specific knowledge, skills and abilities on the Examination.

What Is Public Relations?

"Public relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends." (EPR 11th, p. 5).

How Does Public Relations Earn Public Understanding and Acceptance?

Public relations forms, builds and maintains relationships between an organization and publics by finding common interests. Failures usually stem from communication breakdowns.

What Is the Social Significance of the Practice of Public Relations?

American business gave birth to public relations as it is practiced today. Growth and trends in business created the conditions for the public relations profession to develop.

Typical 12 Functions of Public Relations

Competencies

1. Trusted counsel — Advise and anticipate.
2. Internal communication — Engage employees and build trust.
3. Media relations — Develop public trust and support by working through journalists and bloggers.
4. Community relations — Establish public trust and support by working with community groups.
5. External communication to customers/stakeholders/investors — Build public trust and support.

Public Relations Four-Step Process

6. Research
7. Plan
8. Implement, execute and communicate
9. Evaluate

Other

10. Publicity and special events
11. Issues management
12. Crisis communication

Definitions

Advertising: Paid communication; information placed in a communication delivery vehicle by an identified sponsor that pays for time or space. Advertising is a controlled method of delivering messages and gaining media placement.

Brand: A product, service or concept that is publicly distinguished from other products, services or concepts so that it can be easily communicated and usually marketed. A brand name is the name of the distinctive product, service or concept.

Branding: The process of creating and/or disseminating the brand name. Branding can be applied to the entire corporate identity as well as to individual product and service names.

Community relations: An area of public relations with responsibilities for building relationships with constituent publics such as schools, charities, clubs and activist interests of the neighborhoods or metropolitan area(s) where an organization operates. Community relations involves dealing and communicating with citizens and groups within an organization's operating area.

Controlled communication channels: Communication channels, media and tools that are under direct control of the sender. Examples include paid advertising, newsletters, brochures, some types of emails, organizational websites and blogs, leaflets, organizational broadcasts and podcasts, intranets, teleconferences and videoconferences, meetings, speeches, and position papers.

Counseling: Advising management concerning policies, relations and communications.

Crisis communication: Protecting and defending an individual, company or organization facing a public challenge to its reputation. These challenges can involve legal, ethical or financial standing. **See Crisis Communication Management in this study guide**.

Employee relations: Activities designed to build sound relationships between an organization and its employees. Employee relations is a critical element in fostering positive attitudes and behavior of employees as ambassadors for the organization.

Financial relations: An aspect of public relations responsible for building relationships with investor publics including shareholders/stockholders, potential investors, financial analysts, the financial markets (such as the stock exchanges and commodities exchanges), and the Securities and Exchange Commission. Also known as investor relations or shareholder relations.

Goodwill: An accounting term for the value of a business' intangible assets. The goodwill amount equals the difference between the value of a company's net tangible assets (total assets minus total liabilities) and the company's market value. The asset is closely related to reputation. International Financial Reporting Standards require businesses to calculate goodwill value annually to determine how it has changed. The public relations management function may be responsible for protecting and enhancing goodwill.

Government relations: An aspect of relationship building between an organization and government at local, state, and/or national levels, especially involving flow of information to and from legislative and regulatory bodies. The goal often is to influence public policy decisions compatible with the organization's interests. Government relations involves dealing and communicating with legislatures and government agencies on behalf of an organization. **Also see Public affairs and Lobbying**.

Grassroots organizing: An activist practice for creating social change among average people. Grassroots organizing is based on the power of the people to take collective action on their behalf. This public relations technique is often used to sway public opinion and move legislators to action. "Grasstops" organizing uses the same strategy but involves community influencers.

Issues management: The proactive process of anticipating, identifying, evaluating and responding to public policy issues that affect organizations and their publics now and in the future.

Lobbying: The specialized area of public relations that builds and maintains relations with a government or its officials for the primary purpose of influencing legislation and regulation. **Also see Government relations and Public affairs**.

Marketing: The management function that identifies human needs and wants, offers products and services to satisfy those demands, and causes transactions that deliver products and services in exchange for something of value to the provider. Targets customers.

Marketing communications: A combination of activities designed to sell a product, service or idea. These activities can include advertising, collateral materials, interactive communications, publicity, promotion, direct mail, trade shows and special events.

Media relations: Mutually beneficial associations between publicists or public relations professionals and journalists as a condition for reaching audiences with messages of news or features of interest (publicity). The function includes both seeking publicity for an organization and responding to queries from journalists about the organization. Maintaining up-to-date lists of media contacts and a knowledge of media audience interests are critical to media relations. **Also see Press agentry and Publicity**.

Multicultural relations/workplace diversity: Relating to people in various cultural groups. Understanding multicultural and workplace diversity continues to increase in importance. Diversity in the workplace continues to provide challenges and opportunities to public relations practitioners and other managers by affecting messaging, perceptions of ideas, and services. Multicultural considerations may include issues of household composition, ages, sex, ethnic and religious backgrounds, language, technology fluency and health status or disabilities.

Press agentry: Creating newsworthy stories and events to attract media attention and gain public notice (although not all this attention may be positive). **Also see Media relations, Promotion and Publicity**.

Proactive public relations: Taking the initiative to develop and apply public relations plans to achieve measurable results toward set goals and objectives. **Also see Reactive public relations**.

Promotion: Activities designed to win publicity or attention, especially the staging of special events to generate media coverage. Promotional activities are designed to create and stimulate interest in a person, product, organization or cause. **Also see Media relations, Press agentry and Publicity**.

Propaganda: Messages specifically designed to shape perceptions or motivate actions that an organization wants. The word was coined in the 17th century by the Roman Catholic Church and originally meant "writing to propagate the faith." The word took on negative connotations in the 20th century and is usually associated with lies, deceit and misinformation.

Propaganda devices:

- Glittering generalities (broad statements)
- Name calling (Vilify opponents.)
- Transfer (guilt by association)
- Bandwagon (Everybody's doing it.)
- Plain folks (anti-elitism)
- Testimonials (Cite a celebrity, an authority figure or "plain folks" to endorse a cause.)
- Card stacking (one-sided arguments)

Public affairs: A specialized area of public relations that builds and maintains mutually beneficial governmental and local community relations. Also applies to public relations practices by the military and governmental agencies because of the 1913 Gillett Amendment. **Also see Lobbying and Government relations**.

Public information: Information open to or belonging to the public. In government agencies, nonprofit organizations or colleges and universities, the task of disseminating information from the organization to the public. The process is usually done through mass or social media. **Also see Media relations**.

Publicity: Information from an outside source that is used by news organizations because it has news value. Publicity is an uncontrolled method of placing messages because the source does not pay the media for placement and cannot guarantee if or how the material will be used. **Also see Media relations, Press agentry and Promotion**.

Reactive public relations: Response to crises and putting out fires defensively rather than initiating programs. Reactive public relations is practiced in various degrees. Some situations require implementation of an organization's crisis plan. **Also see Proactive public relations**.

Reputation management: Systematic actions and messages designed to influence what people in key publics think about an organization. Reputation management has long been a function of public relations and is often a priority in crisis management. The increased use of the Internet and related social networks has given added urgency to the practice. The immediate and anonymous nature of the Web increases the risk of communications that can damage an organization's reputation. Online reputation management is a growing specialized segment of public relations.

Special events: Stimulating an interest in a person, product or organization by means of a focused "happening." Activities designed to interact with publics and listen to them.

Uncontrolled communications channels: Uncontrolled communications channels refer to the message-delivery methods that are not under direct control of the company, organization or sender of messages. These channels include newspapers and magazines, radio and television, external websites, externally produced blogs and social media commentary, and externally developed news stories.

Research, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation (RPIE)

RPIE questions account for 25 percent of the Certificate Examination questions. Specific KSAs for these topics are:

- **Research (concepts):** Understands and can apply primary and secondary, formal and informal, quantitative and qualitative methods. Understands a premise and research plan. Decides on the population and sampling techniques. Designs instruments, etc.
- **Research (applied):** Uses a variety of research tools to gather information about the employer or client, industry and relevant issues. Seeks to learn about stakeholders' understanding of the product, organization and issues.
- **Stakeholder analysis:** Identifies institutions, groups or individuals who have an interest in or are affected by some part of the program. Assesses interest of influential institutions, groups and individuals.
- **Diversity:** Identifies and respects a range of differences among target audiences. Researches and addresses the cultural preferences of target audiences. Understands culturally and linguistically appropriate strategies and tactics.
- **Analytical skills:** Objectively interprets data. Applies research findings.
- **Audience identification and communication:** Identifies appropriate audiences and the opinions, beliefs, attitudes, cultures and values of each. Prioritizes and properly sequences communications to the different audiences.
- **Planning and implementation:** Understands public relations programs based on research methodology or approaches that address the following components: Research, Goals, Planning, Execution, Monitoring and Evaluation.
- **Evaluation of programs**: Determines if goals and objectives of public relations program were met and the extent to which the results or outcomes of public relations programs have been accomplished.

Successful public relations programs require proactive, strategic planning. This planning includes measurable objectives, is grounded in research and is evaluated for return on investment. Because strategic planning is such a critical requirement for the public relations profession, questions on the RPIE process make up the largest portion of the Examination. By knowing this process and having the skills and abilities to apply it to the work that you do every day, you can greatly increase your chances of success on the Examination and in your professional life.

Quick Self-Assessment

- Look at Grunig's four models of public relations on p. 60.
- Work through case studies in this study guide and write a plan from the perspective of a strategist using a two-way symmetrical model.
- Review the stages and levels for evaluating public relations programs in the text(s) you have selected from the Short Bookshelf of Recommended Texts (Readings on p. 7.) Practice writing plans that have both measurable objectives and a measurable impact on opinions and behavior.

If you are confident of your ability in this assessment, review the glossary and test your judgment against the case studies provided in this study guide.

If you're not confident about your understanding of how to perform work according to the RPIE process, let your Certificate Examination preparation help change the way you might practice public relations. The result may help bring more success in your future career.

The Four-Step Process

Different organizations and different authors use different acronyms: **RACE** (Research and planning, Action, Communication, Evaluation), **ROPE** (Research, Objectives, Programming, Evaluation), or **RPIE** (Research, Planning, Implementation, Evaluation). The Certificate in Principles of Public Relations uses RPIE. Whatever you call it, public relations planning addresses these four topics:

- Research/analysis of the situation
- Planning, goal/objective setting
- Implementation/execution/communication
- Evaluation

Tip: Start at the beginning. **Don't rush to solutions or jump into tactics before you have done adequate research, determined key publics and set measurable objectives**.

Step 1: Research

Research is the systematic gathering of information to describe and understand a situation, check assumptions about publics and perceptions and check the public relations consequences. Research helps define the problem and publics.

- WHO do we want to reach?
- WHAT do we want them to DO?
- WHAT messages do we want to communicate to each public that will:
  - Increase knowledge?
  - Change opinions?
  - Encourage desired behavior?

Research Terms

- Primary or secondary
- Formal or informal
- Qualitative or quantitative
- Scientific method

Research Considerations (Know advantages, disadvantages and appropriate application for each.)

- What decision will be made from research results, and what information is required to support the decision?
- What resources are available for information gathering?
- What other parts of your organization — or other organizations — have already done research you could use?
- Does sample selection give you an accurate assessment of your target population?
- How big is your sample and universe/survey population?
- How will you collect data — survey, telephone, mail-in, online?
- How much time do you have?
- How scientific do you need to be; what level of confidence do you need to have in the data?

- What questions will you ask?
- Will the results be used internally only, or will results be made public?
- How will you tabulate answers?

Step 2: Planning (goals, audiences, objectives, strategies and tactics)

Tip: This five planning method will give you a framework for any PR situation. Even if you lack direct experience in public relations practice, these five points can help you look past what you don't know and effectively apply the knowledge, skills and abilities you have learned.

Goals: Goals are longer-term, broad, global and future statements of "being." Goals may include how an organization is uniquely distinguished in the minds of its key publics.

Example: To become the recognized leader in our industry and foster continuing public support.

Publics: Publics are groups of people tied together by some common element. Public relations planners need to define clearly the groups with which they need to foster mutually beneficial relationships. Objectives need to say which public a public relations strategy is designed to reach.

Objectives: Objectives focus on the shorter term. Objectives (1) define WHAT opinion, attitude or behavior you want to achieve from specific publics, (2) specify how much change you want to achieve from each public, and (3) tell by when you want to achieve that change. Objectives should be SMART:

- Specific (both action to be taken and public involved)
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Results (outcome) oriented (or relevant)
- Time-specific

Objectives establish standards for assessing the success of your public relations efforts. Objectives come in three general types:

- **Output objectives** measure activities, e.g., issue 10 news releases during the month or post three tweets per day. Outputs can help monitor your work but have no direct value in measuring the effectiveness of a campaign.
- **Process objectives** call for you to "inform" or "educate" publics.
- **Outcome objectives** specify changes in awareness, opinions, behavior or support. (For example, "increase downloads of our product coupon by 25 percent from October levels by Dec. 31.") Outcome objectives require high-level strategic thinking. "Differentiate between measuring public relations 'outputs,' generally short-term and surface (e.g., amount of news coverage, number of blog posts) and measuring public relations 'outcomes,' usually more far-reaching and carrying greater impact (changing awareness, attitudes and even behavior)" (Seital, 2001, 145).

Strategies: Strategies provide the road map to your objectives. (Communication strategies target publics for change. Action strategies focus on organizations' internal changes.)

- Strategies describe HOW to reach your objectives.
- Strategies include "enlist community influentials to …," "accelerate involvement with …," "position the company as …" or "for strategic partnerships with … ."

Tactics/tools: Tactics are specific elements of a strategy or tools for accomplishing a strategy.

- Examples include meetings, publications, product tie-ins, community events, news releases, online information dissemination and social networks.

- Activities are details of tactics: six meetings, four publications, three blog posts and one tweet per day. Activities have dates; indicate who is in charge and what attendance or outcome is expected.

Step 3: Implementation: Executing the plan and communicating

- Actions the organization is taking as part of the plan.
- Messages sent through each communication channel.
- Number of people reached in each key public.
- Monitoring results of actions and messages while keeping track of campaign milestones.

Step 4: Evaluation

- Measure effectiveness of the program against objectives.
- Identify ways to improve, and develop recommendations for the future.
- Adjust the plan, materials, messages and activities before going forward.
- Collect data and record information for use in research phase of next program.

How the Four-Step Process Is Assessed on the Examination

The Examination's scenario questions require you to apply your knowledge, skills and abilities and your understanding of the four-step process to arrive at the most appropriate answer. Here are questions to consider as you prepare for the Examination:

Research

- Can you identify and select the research approach, methodologies and information-gathering needs that support planning decisions?
- Can you differentiate research methodologies: primary, secondary; formal, informal; qualitative, quantitative?
- Do you know how to apply definitions, examples and characteristics of different types of research?
- Do you understand time and budget constraints for various methodologies?
- Are you familiar with sample size? Costs, characteristics and delivery methods can help you identify the most appropriate research methodology for a particular situation. *Example*: If an issue requires information from legislators or CEOs, a survey is not the best tool. By knowing the characteristics or disadvantages of surveys, you know that personal interviews may be your most valid research method.

Planning

- **Publics:** Are you able to identify and prioritize publics and segments of those publics? For instance, employees are a public; management is a segment of the employee public. Some publics are more important than others. Can you select the most important public from a brief scenario? Do you know why this public is important?
    - Public relations practitioners have no such thing as "the general public." Our total audience is composed of groups of publics with whom we can interact.
    - In determining the most important publics, ask whether the public can help your organization achieve its goals and objectives, hinder your organization in achieving its goals and objectives or hurt your organization in some way.
- **Goals, objectives, strategies, tactics:** Can you differentiate among these four terms?

  Example: Given a well-written objective, two very strong strategies or tactics, and a weaker or poorly written objective, would you be able to select the most appropriate objective?

  Example objectives:

  a. *Weak*: Enhance our public image.

  b. *Stronger*: Improve recall of 10 important facts about our organization — from three to five — among key media representatives by June 1 of next year.

  c. *Weak*: Improve media relations.

  d. *Stronger*: Increase positive coverage on 10 key issues from 60 percent to 70 percent by the end of the year.

  Example strategies: Strategies include use of social media, media relations, public engagement, employee engagement, third-party endorsement and opinion leaders' interactions. Strategies may call for celebrating success among early adopters, positioning the organization or its products, correcting or clarifying positions, fostering viral online communication or delivering specific information to certain decision makers. *Examples of what is not a strategy*: Scheduling a news conference, sending a newsletter, hosting a meeting (or series of meetings), writing a news release or planning a special event. These are tactics.

Messages and spokespersons: After reading a very brief scenario, could you identify the most appropriate message and spokesperson? This level of knowledge can be developed in two ways: 1) professional experience and 2) studying others, e.g., case studies in textbooks or the trade press. The following principles guide our professional judgment in message development and identification of a spokesperson:

- Public relations' responsibility to act in the public interest.
- Ethical values of honesty, accuracy, fairness and full disclosure.
- Ethical responsibility to our client or employer.
- Organizational mission, values, goals and objectives.
- Plans or program objectives to influence awareness, opinions or actions.
- Desire to build mutually beneficial relationships.
- Spokesperson's credibility, prestige and likeability among key publics.
- The needs, interests, values and concerns of key publics.
- Key publics' perceptions of risks and threats.

Tactics and tools: After considering a range of options, could you determine the most appropriate use of tactics? Could you identify those that should be included in a plan? Criteria to consider in evaluating tactics include:

- Available time and resources.
- Ability to reach and influence key publics to achieve desired objectives.
- Compliance with ethical and legal guidelines.
- Return on investment.
- Multiple methods and multiple touch points to reinforce consistent messages.

Budget: Do you understand budgeting? Do you know what to include in a budget, e.g., staff time, materials and out-of-pocket expenses such as printing, postage, Web design and website hosting?

Evaluation

Are you able to judge appropriate uses of evaluation? Can you link evaluation to specific publics and objectives?

- Evaluation of success is only as good as the quality of the objectives.
- Every objective should include a statement of how its accomplishment will be measured — both criteria and tools.
- Outputs, outtakes and outcomes are different. Outputs and outtakes are measures of execution and strategy. Outcomes are measures of achieving objectives.
- Measurement should be included in the plan and budget. (Otherwise, assessments won't be done.)

Adapted from Texas Public Relations Association Jumpstart, 2006.

Additional Resources

Broom, G. M., & Sha, B-L. (2013). *Cutlip and Center's effective public relations* (11th ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education. (See chapters 11, 12, 13, 14.)

Lukaszewski, J. E. (2007, September). Gaining and maintaining public consent: Building community relationships and overcoming opposition. *Public Relations Tactics*. Retrieved June 17, 2010, from http://e911.com/monos/articles/Tactics-Gaining-&-Maintaining-Public-Consent-09-07.pdf.

Lukaszewski, J. E. (2007). *Gaining Public Consent: How to build community relationships and overcome opposition* (January/February 2008). All rights reserved. Reproduced with permission of the author. Retrieved June 17, 2010, from http://e911.com/monos/articles/California-Builde-Gaining-Public-Consent-January-2008.pdf.

Lukaszewski, J. E. (1991). *Managing Fear: Taking the risk out of risk communications*. Presented before the Edison Electric Institute, Washington, D.C., Oct. 25, 1991. Retrieved June 17, 2010, from http://e911.com/speeches/08%20-%20Speech,%20Vital%20Speeches%20of%20the%20Day,%20Managing%20Fear,%2002-01-92.pdf.

Newsom, D., & Haynes, J. (2011). *Public relations writing: Form & style* (9th ed.) Boston, Mass.: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. (See chapter 5, The Public Relations Planning Process.)

Smith, R. D. (2009). *Strategic planning for public relations* (3rd ed.). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum. (See Phase 2 on Strategy.)

Writing a Public Relations Plan

Tip: These 10 steps for writing a plan follow the research phase. Begin here after you decide, based on your research, what you want to accomplish, and identify what you want to correct, prevent or preserve.

1. Overall Goals for Public Relations

- Limit goals. Identify no more than three to five. One may be enough.
- Make public relations goals consistent with management goals and mission.
- Think in terms of end results, not process alone.

2. Target Audiences or Publics

- Identify groups or subgroups with which you need to communicate (talk *and* listen).
- Consider the following:
  - Who needs to know or understand?
  - Who needs to be involved?
  - Whose advice or support do you need?
  - Who will be affected? Who has something to gain or lose?

3. Objectives for Those Audiences

- Think in terms of the awareness, opinion or action you desire — not the process [tactics you will use] but the end result.
- Articulate objectives with verbs that reflect changes in awareness, opinion or behavior: Recognize, acknowledge, know (awareness); favor, accept, oppose, think (opinion); and purchase, participate, endorse, discard, write, visit (behavior).
- Phrase objectives in terms of specific results you desire and what you think is possible.
- Each objective should cite a public, outcome, attainment level (%) and time frame. (*Example*: To have 65 percent of employees in a car pool or ride-share program at the end of six months.)
- The same objective may fit a number of publics, but strategies may need to be different.
- Consider what position you want to occupy in the mind of your key publics. How should the organization, product, issue or cause be known or perceived by each public, and how will that position be distinct?

4. Strategies

- The military definition of strategy is the science and art of employing political, economic, psychological and military forces to support policies or achieve goals; to meet the enemy under advantageous conditions.
- In public relations planning, strategy explains ***how*** you will approach the challenge of working toward your objectives. On what can you build or take advantage in your situation? What devices will you employ?
- Your strategy may describe the diplomacy, psychology, philosophy, themes and appeals you will use or the message you will convey.
- Strategies may describe how you will work with community groups.
- You probably will have several strategies for an objective.
- Some strategies may serve several objectives.

- Vehicles or channels you will use to communicate can appear here or in tactics or activities.
- Examples of strategies include media-relations campaigns, gaining third-party endorsements and public-engagement efforts.

5. Tactics

- Tactics are specific ways you will use your resources to carry out your strategy and work toward objectives.
- You can have several tactics per strategy.
- Some plans stop with tactics and omit detail of activities.

6. Activities

- Include specific activities required under your tactics to carry out strategies.
- Informal plans often jump from objectives to activities.
- Vehicles or channels you will use to communicate can appear here.

7. Evaluation

- How will you determine if you are reaching objectives?
- How will you monitor feedback?
- What will you measure or observe, and how will you do that?

8. Materials

- What do you need to implement/execute tactics?

9. Budget

- Include staff time, volunteer energy and out-of-pocket costs (expenses for transportation, images, materials and fabrication).

10. Timetable and Task List

- Who does what when? Work backward from deadline or forward from start date.

Courtesy of Ferne G. Bonomi, APR, Fellow PRSA.

Budgeting: Additional Tips

Budgeting must be considered in all aspects of public relations planning, whether the practitioner works for a corporation, agency, nonprofit, government entity or other organization. Without proper budget planning, even the best plans will fail. EPR 11th (p. 275) says budgeting in public relations is an art and a science. Many practitioners are not familiar enough with general budgeting procedures, and relatively few have a related background in business. EPR 11th lists three important budgeting guidelines: know prices of items (whether products or services), communicate the overall budget related to costs leading to results, and use a spreadsheet and similar software to plan and manage the program (p. 277).

➔Exercise: Build Confidence in Your Knowledge, Skills and Abilities in Research

Find something in the news that involves an organization — a small business, large corporation, government entity or nonprofit. The situation can be a challenge, a problem, a solution, an event — whatever is making news.

1. **Put yourself** in the shoes of the public relations professional for that organization.
2. **List** half a dozen publics you should consider from the perspective of this role.
3. **Select** two publics that seem to be the most significant.

4. **Think** about what you in your public relations capacity for the organization might want from the two publics. Think in terms of awareness, opinion or action. Consider verbs such as be aware of, favor, oppose, endorse, buy, discard or others that fit the situation.
5. **Consider** what information you need before you start to plan toward your desired results. Apply what you know about research.
6. **Think of three** research activities that will provide useful information for planning. Classify each of the methods you think of as formal or informal. Remember, formal uses scientific method, informal is everything else.
   For each activity, write down the following:
   - **Method:** Develop a statement for the method such as informal interviews, focus groups (informal), formal telephone survey or informal content analysis. (***Tip*:** If you have trouble putting labels on your methods, review one of your textbooks. Can you identify research activities by name?)
   - **Source:** Where is your information coming from? Employees? Customers? Local newspapers? Websites? Social networks?
   - **Rationale:** Write a one-sentence statement of why you are going to do what you are doing and what you want to determine. (***Tip*:** A rationale is generally a good way to present research activities in a plan or report.)

   ***Note*:** Other parts of the organization may have existing data that were gathered for other reasons. You may be able to use that information in your planning. Seek out that information.

If you can, have a public relations professional or your academic adviser review your research plan. See if he or she agrees with you on terminology and whether your proposed activities will be fruitful.

Courtesy of Ferne G. Bonomi, APR, Fellow PRSA.

➔Exercise: Build Confidence in Your Knowledge, Skills and Abilities in Research

Case Study: Planned Parenthood

Situation: You are a loaned executive to Planned Parenthood of your state. You are working in the capital city where the organization has its offices and operates a clinic. The time is an anniversary of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* U.S. Supreme Court decision that established a woman's right to legal abortion.

An ultra-conservative afternoon talk show host on a high-powered (50,000-watt) AM radio station in the state capital broadcasts an interview purportedly with Margaret Sanger, who founded the organization that became Planned Parenthood. The station's signal could be heard all across the state and in parts of several neighboring states. The talk show host says his "guest" favors eugenics and makes her out as a racist.

Eugenics is a philosophy of improving humanity through "selective breeding." This philosophy was popular in the early 1900s. (Adolf Hitler's programs to eliminate Jews during World War II wiped out support for eugenics in this country.)

Margaret Sanger has been dead since 1966, but this point was not mentioned during the radio talk show. In the early 1900s, Sanger was a birth control pioneer who fought to remove the legal barriers to information about contraception. She spent most of her career working for legal and public acceptance of contraception and family planning. The quotes from Sanger on the radio broadcast were authentic and were her views during her lifetime.

(*Note*: This story is true. A broadcast personality in a Midwest city actually did such a broadcast.)

Exercise: What research will you recommend to assess the damage and any need for action?

Courtesy of Ferne G. Bonomi, APR, Fellow PRSA.

➔Exercise: Build Confidence in Your Knowledge, Skills and Abilities in Defining the Problem, Research and Identifying Audiences

Case Study: HIV/AIDS Activism and Nurses' Residence

Situation: You are the public relations director of a nonprofit hospital in a competitive market in a midsize city in a metro area of 350,000 people. The time is sweeps week for broadcast media. One of the market's television stations is running a series on HIV/AIDS in the community. Recent segments have covered:

- The need for a confidential clinic.
- Homelessness related to HIV/AIDS.
- How people living with HIV/AIDS suffer from being outcasts.
- How understanding has increased in some circles but prejudice remains in many.

The case of a hemophiliac who acquired HIV/AIDS through transfusion at the university hospital has been reported in the series. The university and its teaching hospital are located elsewhere in the state.

At a staff meeting this morning, you learn that petitions are circulating in the community and online to request that your hospital convert its former nurses' residence into a clinic and residential shelter for HIV/AIDS patients. Your hospital no longer maintains a school of nursing. The three-story brick building has been used for miscellaneous administrative purposes since nurses' training was phased out. The residence is connected to the hospital by a skywalk. The former residence does not have facilities for food service or laundry. Nurses always ate at the hospital, and the hospital handled their laundry. The residence and hospital are served by common systems for hot water, steam heat, ventilating and sewer. The building predates central air conditioning.

The human resources director reports that the business agent for kitchen and laundry workers, who are represented by a union, has already contacted the human resources department about this proposal and suggested that grievances will result, at the very least, and a strike could ensue.

Your director of volunteers expresses concerns about the reaction to the proposal of volunteers who now handle many peripheral hospital duties.

Your physical plant supervisor, who lives in the neighborhood, says neighbors are already apprehensive about the possibility of HIV/AIDS patients in their vicinity.

Your hospital's five-year strategic plan, which was recently updated, has no mention of developing an HIV/AIDS specialty.

Exercise:

Define the problem.

1. What research will you perform to assess this situation?
2. Identify five important publics to consider in your plan.
   (***Note***: Not all important publics are mentioned in this case study.)

Courtesy of Ferne G. Bonomi, APR, Fellow PRSA.

➔Exercise: Build Confidence in Your Knowledge, Skills and Abilities in Developing Objectives and Strategies

Situation: Go back to the exercise involving a situation in the news exercise earlier in this section (p. 46), and pick up where you stopped.

1. **List** a half-dozen publics you should consider from the perspective of the public relations director for the organization involved.

2. **Select** two publics that seem to be the most significant. Choose at least one where money comes into play — customers, investors, contributors, vendors, dues-paying members.
3. **Think** about what you in your public relations capacity for the organization might want from these two publics.
4. **Think** in terms of awareness, opinion or action — the end result you want.
5. **Consider** verbs such as be aware of, favor, oppose, endorse, buy, discard or others that fit the situation. Use such verbs to write objectives for each public.
6. Now, consider your **strategy** or strategies for working toward your end result for each public. You may have one or more strategies for each public; you may have strategies that fit both of them.

   Tip*:** Your objective or end result is the "what" in your thinking. The objective is ***what you hope to accomplish with the selected public. Your strategy is the ***how***. How can you reach the objective effectively, efficiently, on someone else's nickel, by using someone else's credibility and bypassing barriers to communication? Military parallels may help here. Your objective might be to defeat the enemy at a site you're approaching. Your strategy might be to attack under cover of darkness, circle around behind the enemy to cut off reinforcements, create a diversion to distract attention or any number of other clever maneuvers. Try to come up with clever ideas you can use to gain an advantage.

   Caution: Do not think in terms of specifics and details — things you would do to carry out your plan. These elements are tactics, which are subdivisions of a strategy and must link to the strategy. Don't rush into planning tactics. Back up one step and identify the broader strategy — the approach you are envisioning that will help you move faster, conserve your resources, avoid waste and stay on target. For most of us, tactics come quickly to mind. We jump right to them. In the planning stage, we may have tactics in search of a strategy. Take the time to identify your strategy. It may be hidden in your list of tactics. Strategy is important for many reasons. When you need to justify your plan to supervisors or clients, laying out your strategy or strategies is a basic step.

Share your notes with a fellow student, public relations professional or your academic adviser. Ask him or her if the difference between what and how is apparent. ***Note*:** Theoretic implementation is difficult. Develop your knowledge, skills and abilities in this area so that you can choose the best or most appropriate strategies from a brief scenario. Also be prepared to evaluate your outcomes. You may want to work through the order of implementation for strategies and tactics for these last two exercises. Then continue through the evaluation to determine if your planning had the results you and your leadership team expected.

For implementation strategies, tactics and tools, think about what you will do as a public relations professional. Apply your knowledge, skills and abilities to these scenarios and to the planning process. Also, refer to one of the texts on the Short Bookshelf of Recommended Texts (p. 7), and review the case studies and plans provided at the end of this study guide.

Courtesy of Ferne G. Bonomi, APR, Fellow PRSA.

Plan Formats and Styles

Public relations plans come in many formats. Two are commonly seen: **a grid format** or a **paragraph format.** These formats are presented as suggestions only. If your planning style is different, use it. Just be sure you address all four parts of the process.

You may want to use these formats to work through case studies presented in this study guide. Practice in writing plans will develop your knowledge, skills and abilities in public relations. This experience will help you more easily process information and situations.

Paragraph Style Plan

1. Problem — (one to three sentences)
2. Situation analysis — Summary of research findings, opportunities and concerns
3. Goals — (overarching)

For the remainder of the plan, repeat these items for each public:

4. Public
5. Objectives (both long-term and short-term)
6. Communication strategy
7. Messages
8. Tactics/tools
9. Budget (A budget summary is common at the end of a plan.)
10. Staffing/responsibility
11. Timeline
12. Evaluation
13. Summary documents
    - Budget
    - Materials list
    - Task list and timetable

Courtesy of Minnesota PRSA, APR Study Session Handout, 1999.

Grid Style Plan

(*Note*: Tables should be expanded as needed for additional details.)

Problem
Situation/Analysis
Goals

Repeat below for each public.

Public:

Objectives:

1. State specific objective for this audience.

Communication strategy	Messages	Tactics/tools	Budget	Staff/ responsibility	Timetable	Evaluation
1. **2.** **3.**						

Courtesy of Minnesota PRSA, APR Study Session Handout, 1999.

Research Methodologies

➔Exercise: Advantages, Disadvantages and Applications

Take notes from your readings on this chart. Completing it in your own words will help you develop a stronger understanding of research concepts. Once you have completed it, check your chart against the answer key that follows.

Method	Formal	Informal	Primary	Secondary	Advantages	Disadvantages
Focus groups						
Intercept interviews						
Telephone surveys (based on random sampling)						
Mail survey						
Online/email survey						
Content analysis						
Communications audit						
In-depth interviews						
Phone interviews						
Complaint/reviews						
Tracking calls, purchases, hits, actions, placements						
Observations, visits, field reports						
Advisory panels						

Method	Formal	Informal	Primary	Secondary	Advantages	Disadvantages
Community forums						
Media analysis						
Research databases (such as Lexis/Nexis), literature review						
Fact finding						
Historical research						
Internet/social media research						

Answer Key: Advantages, Disadvantages, Applications

Method	Formal	Informal	Primary	Secondary	Advantages	Disadvantages
Focus groups		X	X		Speed. Efficient for qualitative data gathering. Ability to explore associations, relationships, reactions. Can use supporting materials. Allows respondents to react to one another. Provides the possibility of learning completely new information.	High cost. Low external validity. Requires multiple sessions for reliability (at least two). Difficult to interpret. Can't generalize from results. Limited content domain. Information obtained is subjective. Results cannot be charted and graphed. Management may not accept results as well as executives might accept survey data. Good results depend heavily upon experience and objectivity of person conducting the focus groups.
Intercept interviews		X	X		Ability to target a geographic location or demographic group. Ability to clarify or probe responses. Can use supporting materials.	Limited in length and scope.
Telephone surveys based on random sampling	X		X		Speed of administration. Ability to clarify, probe. No geographic limitations. No sampling limitations. Accepted as industry standard.	Requires professional phone bank. Cost. Limited in length and scope. Caller ID allows respondents to screen calls and reduce response rate. Not good for rankings, paired comparisons, evaluation of messages. Possible skew in favor of older respondents because many younger people don't have landlines. Random-digit dialing can't reach cell numbers.
Mail survey	X		X		Can be internally administered. No cost differences based on geography. Can use rankings, comparisons. Can do message evaluations. Can be included in existing communication tools. Convenient for respondent.	Slow to completion. Considerable time/labor commitment for data entry. Limited control over who completes. Little ability to clarify question wording, meanings. Limited ability to use filter questions. Sample limitations. Cost can be high if response rates are low. Often yields very low response.

Method	Formal	Informal	Primary	Secondary	Advantages	Disadvantages
Online/ email survey	X	X	X		Speed of data collection, lower cost of administration. Excellent tool for known populations with access to technology. Can combine data collection methods and gain advantages over telephone and mail methods. Can disaggregate results easily for analysis.	Best with known populations. Requires access to technologies. May be difficult to generalize to larger groups or populations. Requires disciplined administration and ability to randomly sample from within universe to qualify as formal research; most often is informal.
Content analysis	X	X	X		Can apply same scientific sampling methods used in social surveys to establish reliability and validity. Relatively low cost. Easy to replicate, extend over time, sources. Measure latent content characteristics and manifest content characteristics. Can be combined with other research methods.	Requires careful definition of units of measurement, units of observation and attributes coded. Labor intensive, or use of specialized software. Value often limited to comparative descriptions or profiles.
Commun-ications audit		X	X		Assesses PR activities' alignment with organization goals. Can provide comprehensive evaluation of communication tools used to support many plans and programs. Provides independent evaluation of PR plans.	Can be costly. Requires thorough definition and planning to do well. Labor intensive. Combines all disadvantages of focus groups, personal interviews and content analysis.
In-depth interviews		X	X		All the advantages of telephone and mail survey methods. Ability to collect unobtrusive information. Extensive use of supporting materials. Complex probes. Validation of respondent identity (best method for highly paid professionals and busy people).	Very expensive. Potential safety risk for interviewer. Difficult to monitor for quality. Requires highly trained interviewers. Slow to complete. Geographic limitations. Access limitations. Interviewer effects may become significant.
Phone interviews		X	X		All the advantages of telephone and mail survey methods. Ability to collect unobtrusive information. Extensive use of supporting materials. Complex probes. Validation of respondent identity. No geographic limitations. Can be completed more quickly than in-person interviews.	Expensive. Difficult to monitor for quality. Requires highly trained interviewers. Access limitations. Interviewer effects may become significant.
Complaint reviews		X	X		May provide direct measure of impact objectives. Provides early warning of emerging issues. May provide baseline data of attitudes and perceptions. Provides foundation for formal research.	Limited ability to project onto greater population. Validity reliant on accuracy/completeness of collection process.

Method	Formal	Informal	Primary	Secondary	Advantages	Disadvantages
Tracking calls, purchases, hits, actions, placements		X	X		May provide direct measure of impact objectives. Provides early warning of emerging issues. Collects information on performance of campaign. May measure effects on attitudes, behaviors and perceptions.	Limited ability to project onto greater population. Should be combined with other research methods.
Observa-tions or visits, field reports		X	X		Ability to probe for insight. Easily/quickly accessible. Provides foundation for formal research.	Limited ability to project onto greater population. Geographic limitations. Low inter-rater reliability.
Advisory panels		X	X		Ability to probe for insight. Easily/quickly accessible. Provides foundation for formal research.	Limited ability to project onto greater population.
Community forums		X	X		Ability to probe for insight. Provides foundation for formal research.	Difficult to assemble representative sample. Limited ability to project onto greater population. Requires highly skilled facilitator.
Media analysis		X	X		Identifies appropriate budget and media strategies. Identifies what media opportunities exist. Comparison of how competitors are spending media resources.	Check for completeness, accuracy. Assessment limited to output objectives not impact objectives.
Research databases (such as Lexis/ Nexis), literature review	X			X	More efficient (time and money) than primary research methods. Advantages of credibility, standardization and longitudinal stability.	Requires access to databases. Can yield large quantities of data to review.
Fact finding	X			X	Directly answers questions. Contributes to insights. Provides foundations for primary research.	Needs to be evaluated for completeness, accuracy, quality.
Historical research		X		X	Directly answers questions. Contributes to insights. Provides foundations for primary research.	Needs to be evaluated for completeness, accuracy, quality. May be time consuming (especially for pre-2000 public records).
Internet/ social media research	X	X		X	Directly answers questions. Contributes to insights. Provides foundations for primary research.	Needs to be evaluated for completeness, accuracy, quality.

Adapted from Minnesota PRSA, APR Study Session on Research presented by Professor Albert Tims, University of Minnesota.

Content Analysis

What Is Content Analysis?

Content analysis is the objective, systematic and quantitative description and evaluation of manifest content in print, online or broadcast media material. In content analysis, we attempt to objectively code and describe the content of communication to identify messages that publics have received, or look for trends that public relations efforts should address. Content analysis involves selecting a unit of analysis, defining categories, sampling and coding.

Ways to Use Content Analysis

- To describe and evaluate the contents of a message
- To compare messages delivered by different media, such as television or social networks versus newspapers
- To study trends or changes in content of a medium over time
- To analyze international differences in communication content

Based on information from Ferne G. Bonomi, APR, Fellow PRSA, and Henry Milam, Ph.D., APR.

Survey Research

What Is Survey Research?

Survey research is a quantitative method that uses a series of written, verbal or online questions to sample a desired "universe" — a population or group of people. The important part of this method is developing questions that address your research objective without threatening the people you are surveying. Surveys can be mailed, emailed, telephoned, asked in person or completed online. The techniques used for these different survey formats vary widely.

Survey Advantages

- Planned correctly, a survey makes participation easy.
- People participating can remain anonymous.
- The same questions can be asked in several ways to double-check the response for accuracy.
- You can place questions in a sequence that will help get answers for even disturbing subject matter.
- Survey answers can be quantified and analyzed by a computer and tabulated rapidly in multiple ways.
- You can pre-distribute a product and follow up with a survey.
- Surveys can be used in a variety of forms: in-person interviews, written documents, telephone questionnaires or online forms.

Survey Disadvantages

- People surveyed may not answer all questions.
- People who respond may not be part of the universe you intended to sample.
- If you ask open-ended questions, tabulating will be labor- and time-intensive. Statistical analysis will be difficult.
- People can easily give habitual responses.
- People don't necessarily respond to questionnaires.

- Costs to mail a survey, provide return postage and offer incentives for completing the questionnaire can be expensive.
- People won't write a lot.
- People can and do lie.
- If open-ended questions are not specific enough, answers will be too broad.
- You can't test knowledge with mailed surveys.

Determine the Best Survey Method

- Use **personal interviewing** for complex situations that require extensive explanation or context. Use personal interviewing for subjects who are difficult to access or sensitive. Personal interviewing ensures the greatest control over data collection. But personal interviewing is the most expensive approach and is used less frequently than many other methods.
- Use a **telephone survey** for basic, well-defined opinions.
- **Mail surveys** are the most effective for well-defined concepts and specific, limited answers. Mail surveys rarely produce high response rates, and response sources are often hard to determine.
- **Web or online surveys** are easy to distribute, convenient for respondents, provide immediate electronic tabulation of responses and cost little to produce. Disadvantages include challenges securing email addresses, low delivery rates because of spam filters, low response rates because of email overload, a generally impersonal process, and ease of deleting the survey invitation or leaving a partially completed questionnaire with a mouse click.

How Should You Ask Your Questions?

- **Open-ended questions** allow respondents to answer in their own words but present problems of interpretation and analysis.
- **Multiple-choice questions** give a respondent several options. Be sure to include an "other" category.
- **Yes and no questions** serve as good, qualifying questions to make sure the respondent has the characteristics of the group you want to test.
- **Ranking answers** that put items into a top-to-bottom order are useful.
- **Opinion measurement** or "agree" or "disagree" questions can be used. Often these questions are offered on a multipoint continuum known as a Likert Scale.
- **Verbal/numbered scale questions** in a Likert Scale are best for determining intensity of feeling about a subject.

  Examples: One method is strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree; or circle a number on a five-point or seven-point scale where one end is "strongly agree" or "strongly approve" and the other end is "strongly disagree" or "strongly disapprove." Other terms can be used with the scale, of course.

Sample Size

How Many to Survey?

Formulas for determining sample size are complex, but the calculations have all been done for you. Results are shown in the charts below.

Types of Samples

- **Census:** A 100 percent sample. Identify all people in your universe and give each one an opportunity to respond. Censuses are especially useful with small and well-defined populations. If your universe numbers less than 300, consider a census.
- **Probability samples:** A systematic sample drawn in such a way that the probability of being chosen is equal or is known. A random sample is a good example. In a random sample, all members of the survey population have an equal chance of being chosen.
- **Nonprobability samples:** An informal selection of people to be interviewed.
    - **Convenience or accidental:** Drop by the company cafeteria to ask questions of whomever you find there.
    - **Quota:** In a school, find 10 elementary teachers, 10 middle school teachers, and 10 high school teachers. Any 10 of each kind.
    - **Dimensional:** Identify a specific number of male or female employees, employees in clerical or technical jobs, employees who are married or single, or some combination of characteristics such as married female technical workers. Any employee is acceptable if he or she matches the dimensions.
    - **Snowball:** You may know only a few users of a certain type of computer, but they probably know other users. You contact the first few and ask them for names of others. You then proceed in successive waves of questioning to find the universe you desire.
    - **Purposive:** Identify a sample that suits your purpose. For a quick check among music lovers, do intercept surveys in the lobby before a symphony concert. For opinions of golfers, hang out at the 19th hole and buttonhole people. For business executives, choose a specific industry and contact corporate officers identified in annual reports of selected companies.

Nonprobability sampling is easier and faster than probability methods. While nonprobability samples can give you quick clues to a group's opinions or behaviors, results cannot be projected onto the universe. Probability sample results can be considered representative of the total population that interests you.

Based on information from Henry Milam, Ph.D., APR.

Sample Size and Accuracy

The table below shows the effect of sample size on survey accuracy from a random sample. The list is for populations of 100,000 or more. A random sample of 384 from such a population will yield a confidence level of 95 percent with a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percent. The confidence level means that 19 chances in 20 the true result will be within 5 percentage points (plus or minus) of the survey result. If you wish to reduce the margin of error, you must enlarge the sample substantially. To achieve a plus or minus 4 percent margin, the sample must be nearly doubled to 600. To lower the margin of error by another point to plus or minus 3 percent, the sample must be more than 1,000. These figures become significant if you are planning telephone interviews at a fixed cost per interview of $25 or more. Plus or minus 5 percent is often regarded as sufficiently accurate.

Sometimes researchers oversample for greater reliability or to ensure subgroup samples are of sufficient size to provide reliable analysis. Reducing the size of the sample below 384 raises the margin of error and makes the results less dependable.

Limits of error + or -	Sample size
.25%	153,658
.50 %	38,415
.75 %	17,073
1 %	9,604
2 %	2,401
3 %	1,067
4 %	600
5 %	384
6 %	267
7 %	196
8 %	150
9 %	119
10 %	96
15 %	43
20 %	24
25 %	15
30 %	10
35 %	8
40 %	6

Focus Group Research

What Are Focus Groups?

Focus group interviews are focused discussions led by a moderator and involving eight to 12 participants. Focus groups are a form of *qualitative* research.

Why Do We Use Focus Groups?

- Focus group interviews help us explore feelings people have for a given product, service or idea. Group discussions help us understand the language people use to express these feelings.
- Focus groups help us gain insight into why people feel the way they do. Group comments may reveal misperceptions or misunderstandings about a given product, service or idea.
- Focus groups are valuable and often sufficient by themselves to test market assumptions regarding the emotional responses people are likely to make to a given concept.
- Focus groups are useful to pre-test creative ideas or to seek creative ideas for expressing benefits of a product, service or concept.
- Focus groups are helpful in identifying what benefits some publics may associate with a product, service or idea.
- Group interviews tend to have a synergistic effect on how individuals respond. The group interaction typically stimulates a broader range, and sometimes a greater depth of response, than one would get from individual interviews.
- Clients tend to like focus group interviews. Clients like the direct contact. They may trust relatively unstructured, verbatim responses more than numerical data from surveys.

Uses With Surveys

- **Before a survey** — Because of their power to reveal how people express feelings and ideas, focus groups are useful before surveys. Group results help expand understanding of what needs to be researched and help identify language for survey questions. Focus groups give researchers and clients overviews of trends, themes, issues and points for survey questionnaire design.
- **After a survey** — Focus group interviews are useful after a survey to explore in-depth findings or trends that may be observed in the analysis of quantitative results.

Limitations of Focus Group Interviews

- Because they are qualitative research, not quantitative, focus groups cannot be used to measure human behavior statistically.
- Individuals interviewed may be drawn at random from the population to be studied, but their numbers are too few to offer any statistical assurances of the validity and reliability of their comments.
- One focus group reveals feelings of only the people in that one group. As a result, you should conduct at least **two focus groups** for a given market or public. Subsequent groups allow you to see if comments and behaviors observed in the first group are repeated. Such replication gives evidence that the feelings may be common in the population being studied. The second focus group often provides additional insights and helps avoid a group bias that might result from a line of reasoning that some comment in the first group may set into motion.

Based on information from Henry Milam, Ph.D., APR, and Ferne G. Bonomi, APR, Fellow PRSA.

Scientific Method Research

The scientific method follows a series of steps to test the validity of a concept.

- The scientific method is self-correcting in that changes in thought or theory are appropriate when errors in previous research are discovered.

  Example: Scientists changed their ideas about Saturn after information gathered by Voyager spacecrafts revealed errors in earlier observations. In communication, researchers discovered that an early perception of media's power to influence behavior directly was incorrect. After numerous research studies, communication scholars concluded that a combination of social, psychological and communication variables affect behavior and ideas and that people can react to the same message in different ways.

- Science tries to provide more reliable answers to questions than those offered by other generally used ways of knowing, such as intuition. To the extent that you can use the scientific method for decision making in public relations management, you can elevate the public relations function from an intuitive, artistic enterprise to a strategic part of an organization's management. In the strategic approach, research is at the core of how the function is managed. Research is implemented to accomplish the following:
    - Define the problem or situation for the purpose of developing a public relations program.
    - Monitor program implementation for performance accountability and for strategic adjustments.
    - Measure program impact or effectiveness with respect to goals and objectives.

Scientific Method Research Procedures

The scientific method of research can provide an objective, unbiased evaluation of data. To investigate research questions and hypotheses systematically, both academic and practitioner researchers should use these steps.

1. Select a problem.
2. Review existing research and theory (when relevant).
3. Develop hypotheses or research questions.
4. Determine an appropriate methodology/research design.
5. Collect relevant data.
6. Analyze and interpret results.
7. Present results in appropriate form.
8. Replicate the study (when necessary).

Courtesy of Henry Milam, Ph.D., APR.

Additional Resources

Lindenmann, W. K. (2001). *Research doesn't have to put you in the poorhouse*. Institute for Public Relations. Retrieved June 18, 2010, from www.instituteforpr.org/ipr_info/research_in_poorhouse.

Newsom, D., & Haynes, J. (2011). *Public relations writing: Form & style* (9th ed.) Boston, Mass.: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Diversity

Culture and diversity should play a role in public relations programming. Practitioners need to understand the values, attitudes and beliefs important to all publics an organization serves. For example, in the health arena, culture can affect the effectiveness of health promotion, disease prevention and management, early detection, access to health care, trust and compliance (Satcher & Pamies, 2005). Public relations practitioners equipped with culturally proficient communication models, messages and tools can influence an organization's publics by addressing the unique needs of each. Public relations experts agree that "understanding the internal communication of any organization requires analysis of the culture of that organization" (EPR 11th, p. 190).

In the business world, diversity goes beyond communication strategies. Encouraging understanding and acceptance of people from diverse backgrounds is at the core of many companies' cultures. Affirmative action, valuing diversity and managing diversity are part of the business case for diversity. Managing diversity moves beyond affirmative action and valuing differences. Diversity is achieved when a business recognizes the strengths of its various publics and employees and chooses strategies based on these strengths and perspectives. (Fiske, 2004; Satcher, D., & Pamies, R., (2006). *Multicultural medicine and health disparities* (6th ed.), New York: McGraw-Hill)

➔Exercise: Practicing Diversity

Many global companies today have developed statements attesting to their firm commitment to diversity. Think about the following statements, and for each, provide three practical programs you would advise senior management to implement in order to turn policy into practice.

Excerpts From UPS Diversity Statements

"UPS understands that diversity encompasses more than ethnicity, gender and age. It's how employees think, the ideas they contribute and their general attitude toward work and life.

"Diversity is encouraged by recognizing the value of people's different experiences, backgrounds and perspectives. Diversity is a valuable, core component of UPS because it brings a wider range of resources, skills and ideas to the business.

"UPS understands that customer diversity requires understanding the differences in cultural backgrounds and the unique needs of each customer."

Identify practical steps to turn policy into practice by listing below.

1.

2.

3.

Excerpts From The Home Depot

"Diversity is the catalyst for innovative thinking, entrepreneurial spirit and new ways of building our communities. The greater the diversity of our people, the greater our ability to serve our customers. At The Home Depot, we firmly believe that talent comes in many forms, and we celebrate each and every one of them. It is talent above all else that is cultivated, nourished and is considered to be the foundation of our culture."

Identify practical steps to turn policy into practice by listing below.

1.

2.

3.

➔Exercise: Who's Keeping Time: Communicating With Cultural Competency

Consider the following example to determine the best approaches to maintain respect, sensitivity and cultural understanding.

Your client is developing a public education campaign to help Latina adolescents adopt safe driving methods. After polling to find out the most convenient time for a group of volunteers, you scheduled focus group meetings for 15 teenage girls for the next three Wednesdays at 7 p.m. On the first Wednesday, you and the facilitator arrive at 6 p.m. to set up for the meeting. The first teen arrives at 7:05 p.m. By 7:25, all but one of the 15 girls have arrived, so you begin the session. You feel frustrated and have been pacing the floor as you wait for group members. Indeed, your time is precious, and you are aware that the young girls have to return home no later than 8:30 p.m. You're not sure how you will be able to achieve results in the now-limited time.

Describe how you would initiate a dialogue with the group to ask for punctuality.

Definitions

Attitude: A cognitive predisposition, often unconscious, relating to likes and dislikes. Attitudes are affective, rather than rational; subjective, rather than objective; global or general, rather than specific; and enduring, rather than easily changeable. Attitudes help people evaluate an object, situation or issue and may relate to behavior. Once attitudes are influenced, new behaviors may follow.

Audience segmentation: The breakdown of an audience into demographic, psychographic or other dimensions. These divisions allow planners to adapt strategies, tactics and messages to audience need or interest.

Baseline data: Data collected before or at the beginning of a project or program. These data will be compared to information collected during and after program implementation to assess program effectiveness.

Benchmarking: Comparing products and services from one organization to those of competitors or those recognized as the "best in the industry." The goal is to identify standards for improvement or superior performance. Sometimes the term is used to signify milestones or progress achieved during the life of a project.

Communications audit: A complete analysis of an organization's communications processes, both internal and external. The audit is designed to reveal how an organization wants to be perceived by designated publics, what it is doing to foster that perception and how it is actually perceived.

Content analysis: A study of publications, print, online and broadcast media reports, speeches, and letters to measure, codify, analyze and/or evaluate the coverage of an organization, its people and its activities. In a strict sense, content analysis uses a rigorous, statistical methodology. But in many cases, it is less formally structured.

Descriptive research: Collecting information that describes existing conditions, the status quo of individuals, group opinions, opinions or behavior. Usually designed to test a theory or hypothesis.

Evaluation research: Process of evaluating concepts, design, plan, implementation and effectiveness of a program. Used to learn what happened and why it happened.

Formal research: Uses principles of scientific investigation such as the rules of empirical observation, random sampling in surveys or comparison of results against statistical standards, to replicate results. If done correctly, formal research allows accurate statements about publics based on evidence drawn from scientifically representative samples. Clear objectives and purpose are a must.

Formative research: Gathering information for use in making decisions before a program or making adjustments in a program/plan during implementation.

Gantt Chart: A bar chart that shows the visual and linear direction of project tasks useful for tracking deadlines and monitoring a project's progress as well as for planning and scheduling tasks. A Gantt Chart visually lays out the order in which tasks will be carried out. It can identify resources needed for each task. The chart always shows a start and finish date and may identify team member responsibilities.

Goal: Statement that spells out the overall outcomes of a program. Goals are usually a more specific expression of a mission or purpose and are directly related to the problem or opportunity at hand. Goals are often related to one aspect of the mission or purpose.

> ***Examples***: To increase public use of mass transit. To introduce people in developing countries to multiyield agricultural practices.

Historical research: Collecting information that exists on the record. Sources include historic documents, personal papers, journals, official records and online databases.

Informal (nonscientific) research: Methods of gathering information that don't necessarily follow the scientific method and are usually subjective and exploratory. Informal research can look at values or qualities and is good for pre-testing formal strategies. Findings cannot be projected to represent an entire population. Informal research may provide an early warning signal about emerging issues and is often used to inform formal scientific research.

Examples: Personal interviews, community forums, call-in phone lines, field reports.

Mission or mission statement: The overarching reason an organization exists; a visionary statement that can guide an organization's purpose and planning for many years.

Examples: To bring affordable transportation to the common person. To end world hunger.

Objective: The measurable result that must be achieved with each public to reach the program goal. Objectives should be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-specific) and may establish milestones toward a goal. Objectives should do the following.

1. Address desired result in terms of knowledge change, opinion change and/or behavioral outcome, not in terms of communication output.
2. Designate the public or publics that should show the knowledge, opinion or behavior changes.
3. Specify the expected level of accomplishment (knowledge, opinion or behavior change).
4. Identify the time frame for these accomplishments to occur.

Examples:

- To increase ridership of public transportation in the Los Angeles metropolitan area [*behavioral outcome*] by 8 percent [*level*] among workers earning less than $25,000 per year [*public*] within the first six months [*time frame*] of the communication program.
- To have at least 10 percent [*level*] of a randomly selected sample of public transportation riders in the Los Angeles metropolitan area [*public*] identify one public relations campaign communication tactic as their reason for using public transportation [*behavioral outcome*] by the end of the second year of that campaign [*time frame*].
- To have confirmed reports that 50 percent [*level*] of the natives of one Asian, one African and one South American developing country [*publics*] are applying multiyield agricultural practices [*behavioral outcome*] by 2020 [*time frame*].

Omnibus survey or study: A quantitative research method that combines questions from several organizations into a research company's national or regional poll; also called subscription studies. Omnibus research is often less expensive than developing a stand-alone survey for an organization.

Opinions: Observable (verbal) responses or statements concerning issues or topics. Opinions are specific to a topic and time (situational and focused), rational (cognitive and objective) and changeable. Public opinion is often described as the composite opinion of all people who make up a public.

Outcomes: Measurable result of change in action, attitude, awareness, behavior, opinion, support.

Outputs: Measure of tools, tactics or activities supporting a plan or project.

Examples: Number of news releases issued, media reports earned, tweets posted, trade shows attended.

Population: Individuals whose opinions are sought in a survey. The population can be as broad as every adult in the United States or as focused as liberal Democrats who live in the Fifth Ward of Chicago and voted in the last election. A sample may be drawn to reflect the population, which is sometimes called the sample universe.

Positioning: The process of managing how an organization distinguishes itself with a unique meaning in the mind of its publics — that is, how it wants to be seen and known among its publics, especially as distinguished from its competitors.

Primary research: Investigation or data collected you do yourself or you hire someone to do for you.

Problem statement: A brief summary of the situation as it is now. The statement should be written in the present tense and not imply blame or a solution. The statement typically answers these specific questions (EPR 11th, pp. 244–245):

1. What is the source of concern?
2. Where is it a problem?
3. When is it a problem?
4. Who does the problem involve or affect?
5. How have those people been involved or affected?
6. Why is this situation a concern to the organization and its publics?

Proportional sampling: A method used to ensure that a survey sample includes representatives of each subset in the survey population in proportion to that group's size in the universe.

> ***Example***: If 53 percent of a certain population were women, a proportional sample would contain 53 percent women.

Publics: Groups of people connected by some common interest or other identifying factor. Publics may identify themselves, such as fans of a sports team or residents of a neighborhood, or be identified by a public relations planner: retired residents 60 to 75 who live within five miles of our store.

Qualitative research: Research that gathers impressions and feelings about topics or probes understandings of issues without relying on statistical methods. Researchers often use open-ended questions and free-response formats to investigate the value of programs, delve deeply into questions and explore the how and why of beliefs. Results are usually descriptive (not measurable), and analysis, while systematic, is usually subjective. The goal is often an in-depth understanding of an issue. Qualitative research may be exploratory.

> ***Examples***: Focus groups, community forums, advisory boards, informal discussions.

Quantitative research: Research that can be numerically stated or compared and may use statistical standards. Researchers often ask close-ended or forced-choice questions. Responses are usually multiple-choice, true-false or agree-disagree. Analysis is highly objective. Results, if drawn from random samples of a population, may be projected to the total population.

Random sample: Each person in a population has an equal chance of being chosen.

Reliability: The extent to which a survey, test or measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials.

Research: Systematic information gathering to describe and understand situations, check assumptions about publics and make programming decisions. Research helps define the problem.

Respondent: In polling, a person who participates in a survey or poll by answering questions.

Risk assessment: The determination and ranking of how likely certain emergencies or crises are to happen. Risk assessment is related to the larger function of risk management. It uses outcomes of risk assessments to plan and execute strategies to deal with such risks.

Risk management: The process of assessing risk and developing strategies to manage such risks.

Sample: A portion of a larger whole. In polling, a sample is a relatively small group of individuals selected to represent a population. If the sample is drawn randomly, responses from the sample may be generalized to the entire population.

Scientific method: Principles and procedures for the systematic pursuit of data through replicable observation and experimentation. Scientists formulate and test hypotheses; use methods that can be replicated; collect objective, empirical data; and compare results against established theoretical standards.

Secondary research: Using research findings of others or collecting information secondhand.

> ***Examples***: National or regional studies, studies by trade associations used by members in the industry.

Situational analysis: Information pulled together to define a situation (e.g., history, factors affecting a situation, people involved). Contains all information needed to write a problem statement.

Stakeholder: A person or group with an interest in an organization or cause, someone affected by an organization or someone who can affect an organization. The term sometimes refers to investors but includes others who are committed to — or otherwise involved with — an organization in a sense other than financial.

Strategy: The overall concept, approach or general plan for a program designed to achieve objectives. Each objective can have multiple strategies. General, well-thought-out tactics flow from strategy. *Strategies do not indicate specific actions to achieve objectives.*

> ***Examples***: Use communication vehicles that can be understood by a public with limited education to demonstrate that riding public transportation to work is an attractive alternative to driving.

Strategic thinking: Formulating plans for achieving goals.

Summative research: Gathering information as a way of monitoring a program and documenting the effectiveness of the whole program or its parts.

Tactics/tools: The exact activities and methods used at the operational level to implement a strategy and reach an objective. By helping achieve objectives, tactics, in turn, support goals that have been set to carry out the mission or purpose of the organization. Tactics/tools involve use of selected personnel, time, cost and other organizational resources.

> ***Examples***: Design, produce and distribute radio, television, print and online public service announcements. Conduct a "Why I'd rather be riding" essay contest.

Trend analysis: Tracking and analyzing trends in news coverage, online activity, marketplace events and the overall environment to prepare and respond as changes occur.

Validity: Refers to the degree to which a research study accurately assesses what the researcher set out to evaluate. Researchers assess external and internal validity. External validity refers to the extent to which results of the study can be transferred to other settings or groups. Internal validity assesses the study's methodology and alternative explanations for study results.

> ***Example of external validity***: A study found that three messages were effective in educating members of the Pima Indian tribe about diabetes self-care steps. External validity checks would assess if the same messages were appropriate for members of another tribe or ethnic population.
>
> ***Example of internal validity***: Researchers surveyed a group of high school students to determine where and how they receive messages on college education. Each question on the survey was determined to be reliable; however, in reviewing responses, the researchers found that many of the surveys from three classrooms had incomplete responses for the last questions. To ensure that the answers were validly computed and consistent with other classrooms, researchers determined the percentage affected by this "item missingness" and applied the same percentage to responses from the remaining classrooms.

Communication Theories and Models

Communication theories and models account for 15 percent of the Certificate Examination questions. Specific KSAs for these topics are:

- **Communication models:** Demonstrates familiarity with communication theory and public relations research that guides planning, prioritizing audiences, developing messages, selecting spokespeople, establishing credibility and trust, etc.
- **Barriers to communication:** Understands and applies how messages are interpreted by different audiences and how they are or are not moved to action based upon those messages. Understands how semantics, cultural norms, timing and context may impact how messages are interpreted.

Theories

Nothing is more practical than a good theory, social psychologist Kurt Lewin (1952, p. 169) once wrote. Theories are statements that explain or predict how things happen (Shoemaker, Tankard, & Lasorsa, 2004). Theories are based on observation, experience and experimentation. Everyone has lots of theories about how the world works. We use those theories every day to decide what actions to take or to determine what results to expect from an action. For example, if you drop a container of milk, you can be certain the container will fall to the floor (law of gravity). If you consider what the container and floor are made of, you can predict from previous experience what might happen when the container hits the floor: A glass container might break. A plastic container might bounce. If the container breaks or the milk otherwise spills, you can further predict that you might have sour milk smell in the room if you don't clean up the mess thoroughly. All these thoughts apply theories about how things work to the situation at hand.

EPR 11th (p. 148) says a theoretical framework for public relations practice is necessary "for understanding, organizing and integrating the many activities and purposes of public relations." Good theory drives good practice. Many theories from communication and the social sciences (e.g., psychology, sociology) can be the basis for a public relations program, and many of these theories are described in detail in public relations textbooks on the Short Bookshelf of Recommended Texts (p. 7 of this study guide). You should be familiar with major theories guiding public relations work.

The tables below show some — but definitely not all — theories used by public relations practitioners. Each entry names the theory, briefly summarizes what the theory explains or predicts, and gives an example of the theory in action.

Transmission/media-effects theories

Theory	Description/purpose	Example
Magic bullet/ hypodermic needle	Developed after WWI (Harold Lasswell, 1927), this theory says media messages directly affect human behavior. The theory reflects stimulus-response thinking (behaviorism). The "atomized," passive audience can't resist the message effect. Lasswell's 1948 statement reflects bullet thinking: Who said what to whom through what channel with what effect?	I saw an ad for an iPhone, and I just had to have one!

Two-step flow	Media messages indirectly affect human behavior. "Opinion leaders" mediate message effects. Everyone in the audience can receive the message, but opinion leaders influence how individuals understand and respond to messages. Paul Lazarsfeld first hypothesized two-step flow in 1944 after studying the 1940 presidential election. Elihu Katz and Lazarsfeld refined the theory in 1955 (*Personal Influence*).	I've seen lots of information online about hybrid cars, and my dad has been encouraging me to buy one. He knows a lot about cars.
Agenda setting	Media messages can have a direct cognitive effect but not necessarily a behavioral effect. Repeated news reports about an issue can make it important to readers (transfer of issue salience from media agenda to public agenda). Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw first demonstrated agenda setting during the 1968 presidential election (1972 publication).	I know reducing unemployment is important. I've been seeing things in the news about it for weeks.
Framing/second-level agenda setting	As a media-effects theory, framing involves transfer of attributes (or frames) describing a person, issue or topic from media to audience. News stories, for example, describe a political candidate in a certain way. News consumers begin to use those attributes to describe the candidate.	I trust the governor. Everything I've read about him makes me think he's an honest, straight-talking politician (attributes). He has middle-class values and is concerned about people like me (more attributes). **OR** I won't vote for that candidate. From what I've seen, I don't think he's qualified for office.
Organizational theory of public relations	Organizations are more likely to give information than to seek information. Information flow is generally one way (James Grunig, 1976).	The Colombian agricultural agency had trouble informing farmers. The agency was more likely to give information than to seek information. The agency was unlikely to listen to or engage in dialogue with its publics (Grunig, 1976, 2006).
Cultivation	Mass media (particularly television) shapes (cultivates) people's view of social reality. Secondhand experience through media content can distort what people think of the world. George Gerbner, who began this line of thinking, found that people who watched lots of TV tended to be fearful of the world, suspicious of others and susceptible to social paranoia or conspiracy theories ("mean or scary world effect").	I won't go downtown after 6 p.m. I don't want to get mugged. I know from watching the TV news each evening that crime is rampant downtown at night.

Audience theories

Theory	Description/purpose	Example
Diffusion of innovation	Everett Rogers' theory describes how people adopt new products or ideas. Personality traits influence how people approach new things. The theory proposes five personality categories: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards. Five factors influence how soon people adopt a new idea: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trainability, observability.	In June 1995 only 14 percent of Americans used the Internet. By August 2011 that number had climbed to nearly 84 percent.
Uses and gratifications	People seek out communication media to satisfy specific needs. Audience members are actively involved in the communication process and make goal-oriented media choices.	College students prefer to get news through social networks rather than through traditional mass news media (newspapers, radio, TV).
Third-person effect	When a person lacks information about other people's opinions, he/she thinks others will think and behave as he/she would. W. Phillips Davison (1982) said people expect mass media messages to affect others (them: third person) more than themselves (us: first person). That belief may lead the first persons to act in mistaken anticipation of the media effect.	Comments on Twitter about our product are ridiculous. Any thinking person can see these statements are baseless. Nevertheless, we better reduce the price to prevent a drop in sales.
Spiral of silence	Elisabeth Nolle-Neumann (1974) said people constantly monitor the opinion climate around them. They perceive the majority viewpoint. Those who disagree keep silent. They are afraid of social isolation if they buck the majority view. This theory helps explain "bandwagon effect."	I know people don't agree with me. Therefore, I'm keeping my opinions to myself.
Situational theory of publics	Context influences relationships. Publics are active or passive. People are more likely to seek information related to a decision they are making than to reinforce their attitudes (James Grunig, 1966). Those publics are active. Three elements are involved in this process: (1) Problem recognition (awareness, interest), (2) Constraint recognition (what's required or what motivates a person to act), (3) Level of involvement (importance). Some publics are active on several issues; others are active on only one. Passive publics usually aren't interested in the issue, or it isn't important to them.	Elected church decision makers are more likely to seek information about church issues from church newspapers than are rank-and-file church members (Cannon, 2007).
Social learning	Albert Bandura says people can learn by watching others. People adopt opinions and behaviors they see modeled and rewarded.	Children watched adults treat dolls violently. Later, those children replicated the violent behavior.

Social exchange	Perceived costs and rewards (effort) of an action predict group behavior.	My church and most of my friends favor green burials. We won't join the effort to make the practice legal in my state, however. The effort would take too much work and probably wouldn't succeed. The funeral lobby is too strong.
Social judgment	People accept or reject messages to the extent that message content corresponds to each individual's attitudes and beliefs, and influences his or her self-concept. Carl Hovland helped develop this theory (Sherif & Hovland, 1961).	I won't support same-sex marriage. A same-sex couple doesn't fit my idea of what "marriage" means. If same-sex couples can "marry," then my marriage isn't the special union I always thought it was.
Cognitive consistency theories (Balance, symmetry theory of interpersonal action, congruity, cognitive dissonance)	Inconsistencies between attitudes and actions drive (motivate) people to change what they think/believe. The goal is to achieve consistency between expressed opinions and actions. Major theorists: Heider, Newcomb, Osgood, Festinger.	I've never liked people from that group. After working with some of them, however, I now don't think they are so bad.
Attribution theory	To understand or explain circumstances, events or phenomenon, communicators assign (attribute) cause(s) to events. Internal attribution (personal factors), external attribution (situational factors) and attribution error (wrongly assigning cause) are important considerations with attribution theory.	When Walmart was found to be contracting with an employer who hired illegal workers, many customers and media organizations blamed Walmart for employing illegal workers. But the contracted service employed the illegal workers. While Walmart should have explored practices of its contractors, the retail giant was improperly blamed by many in the public for employment of illegal workers.
Identification	Identification theory examines how communication helps people seek to identify with individuals, groups or causes. The goal of identification is to overcome separateness. Identification occurs when individuals are made aware of the common ground they share with others.	To encourage more Hispanic voters to identify with Republicans, the party created ads in Spanish with Latino characters.

Reasoned action	A person's attitude toward a behavior consists of (1) a belief that that particular behavior leads to a certain outcome, and (2) an evaluation of the outcome of that behavior. If the outcome seems beneficial to the individual, he or she may intend to or participate in a particular behavior. Included in a person's attitude toward a behavior is his/her concept of the subjective norm. Central concepts include attitude, intent and behavior. Knowing people's attitudes and intents helps predict their behaviors.	John knew his friends usually followed his example. Habitat for Humanity needed volunteers to build a house. John thought Habitat did good work. If he volunteered, his friends would likely join him, and Habitat would have several volunteers. If he didn't volunteer, his friends probably wouldn't volunteer, either. Because John wanted to advance Habitat's mission, he volunteered and expected his friends to volunteer as well.
Inoculation	William McGuire found that people are more likely to resist persuasive messages if those people have been exposed to counterarguments in advance. People are less likely to change opinions they have already formed and tested.	Our first ad shows that our candidate is an upstanding family man who has been active in the local community. We don't want our opponent to paint him as a "Washington insider."
Cognitive dual processing	People use different strategies for processing messages or making decisions. These strategies are based on how important the topic is (motivation), or the individual's cognitive capacity (time to think about the topic, knowledge of the topic or general intelligence). People generally try to use as little cognitive energy as possible to make decisions. Three models illustrate cognitive dual processing: The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion (1979), The Heuristic-Systematic Model of Cognitive Processing (1980), and Motivation Determines Processing (MODE Model, 1990). Each model presents two paths or roots to decision making.	"The president said it, and I believe it because I trust him" is an example of peripheral (ELM), heuristic (HSM) or spontaneous (MODE) processing. The speaker uses minimal cognitive energy. He/she makes a decision based on the information source (a cue or rule of thumb) and not on message content. "I really need to consider all the options" is an example of central (ELM), systematic (HSM) or deliberate (MODE) processing. The speaker intends to use cognitive energy to weigh the merits of the information.

Message theories

Theory	Description/purpose	Example
Framing	As a message-focused theory, framing describes how content elements (frames) prompt audience members to recall certain already established, shared and persistent stereotypes, metaphors or social qualities. These predispositions shape how audience members interpret messages and respond to narratives and events.	News reports quickly classified destruction of the World Trade Center as a "terrorist attack," rather than a "tragic accident" or "criminal act." President Bush described our response as a "war on terror." People thought about the events as military matters, not police matters. **OR** The committee report said that researchers "had made great strides" and that the project was "moving forward." Progress is associated with walking forward.

Rhetoric	Rhetoric represents a category of communication concepts that trace their roots to Aristotle. Rhetorical elements are ethos, logos and pathos. The rhetorical approach uses information about the communicator, the logic of the message and the emotional appeal of the message to describe and predict how effective a message will be. Organizations use language/messages to build consensus (organizations and publics co-create meaning). The process may involve advocacy and counter-advocacy. People are adjusted to ideas, and ideas are adjusted to people.	For many years Tiger Woods was a credible spokesman for Buick. He represented the young, hip image that GM wanted to associate with Buick. Woods was an effective speaker who could connect with target audiences who might buy Buick models. He delivered a credible message about Buick quality and appeal.
Sleeper Effect	In propaganda research Carl Hovland found a decreased tendency over time to reject the material presented by an untrustworthy source (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). People may initially reject a message because the source isn't credible. But after about six weeks, people may forget the source but remember — and begin to believe — the message.	I won't go to that coffee shop anymore. I read someplace that the pumpkin spice latte contains dangerous toxins.

Public-relations-specific theories

Theory	Description/purpose	Example
Agenda building	Often described as a subset of agenda-setting theory, agenda building describes how organizations can use "information subsidies" to news outlets to influence the media agenda. (Information subsidies include news releases, blog posts and interview opportunities with policymakers or advocates.) The thinking behind agenda-building theory is that news coverage doesn't just reflect reality. News coverage is a manufactured product that can be influenced. By working to boost media attention to a topic, organizations get more public attention for their issues. Increased news coverage can make those topics important to people in key publics (transfer of issue salience from media agenda to public agenda).	A business might coordinate the use of news releases, blog posts, tweets, special events and interviews to build — and then sustain — media interest in a new product. News releases and story pitches could be timed in weeks before the product launch to draw attention to the story and highlight intriguing features of the planned item. The launch event and follow-up interviews with company representatives could bring more attention to the product. Continuing attention to reactions by customers and analysts could keep the story on the media agenda.
Competence	A PR practitioner's knowledge and skills determine his/her role in an organization. Perception of competence depends on work context and the measurement method management uses. Competent practitioners balance concerns for what's effective with what's appropriate. They base judgments on social impressions of how actions and messages work to reach strategic goals.	As a technician, I'm concerned most with output, message content and framing. As a manager, I'm concerned with outcomes and relational results (goodwill).

Excellence	James Grunig, Larissa Grunig and David Dozier first published this general theory of public relations in 1992. The theory "specifies how public relations makes organizations more effective, how it is organized and managed when it contributes most to organizational effectiveness, the conditions in organizations and their environments that make organizations more effective, and how the monetary value of public relations can be determined." Excellence theory shaped lots of thinking about public relations in the late 20th century. The theory includes the four classic models of public relations: press agentry/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical.	If an organization makes public relations a distinct senior-management function, lets the PR executive fill both management and administrative roles, considers public relations outcomes in policymaking, fosters an open corporate culture, generally practices two-way symmetrical communication and engages activist publics, the organization meets standards of "excellence."
Relationship management	Mary Ann Ferguson (1984) asserted that relationships between organizations and their key publics should be the focus of PR research. John Ledingham and Stephen Bruning's (1998) relational perspective positions PR as a "management function that uses communication strategically" (p .56). The theory advocates long-standing engagement between organizations and publics with indicators of control mutuality, trust, satisfaction, commitment, exchange relationship and communal relationship measures used to evaluate relational dynamics.	Major banking institutions aim to score favorably on the six theoretical dimensions to ensure customers continue to bank with the institution and are satisfied with the relationship.

From Douglas F. Cannon, Ph.D., APR+M, Fellow PRSA.

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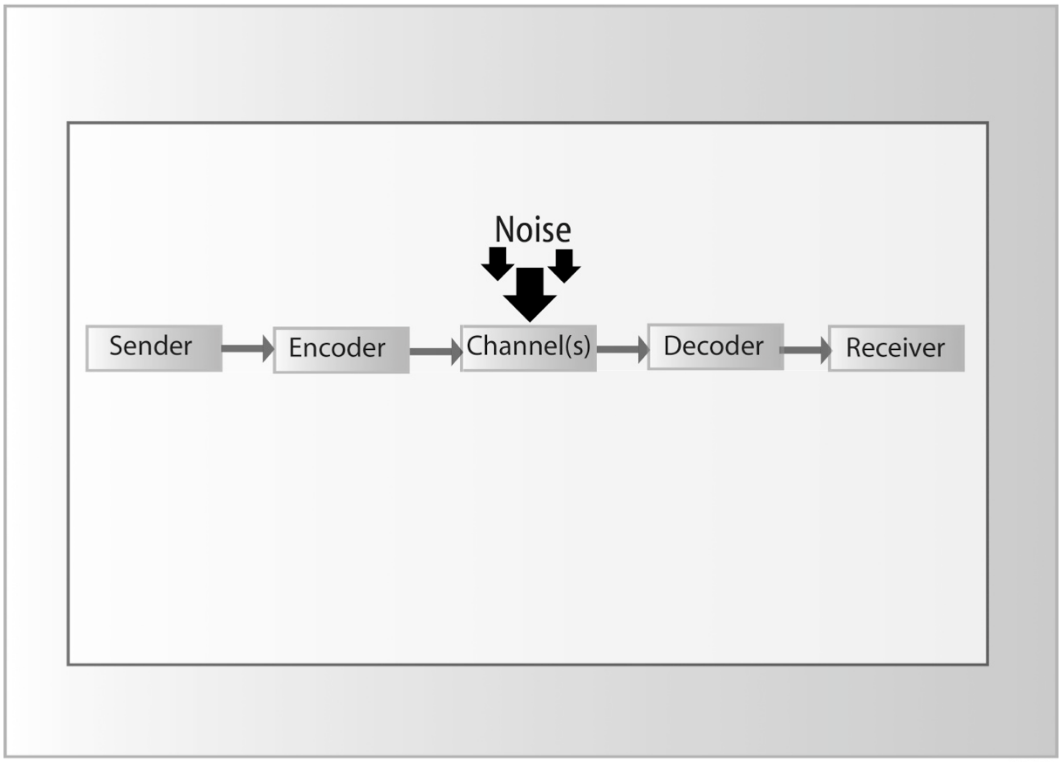
➔Exercise: Use Diffusion Theory

Effective public relations professionals design campaigns to target the five categories of people and motivate them at each stage of the diffusion process by using channels appropriate to that stage. Think about a new product or service launch involving your organization. How are strategies and tactics likely to change from one stage to the next or as communication technology evolves?

Communication Models

Models are not the same as theories. Theories explain and predict how things happen. Models describe, illustrate or imagine how things work (Shoemaker, Tankard, & Lasorsa, 2004). A couple of commonly referenced models illustrate the communication process. The simplest one reflects the work of two mathematicians named Shannon and Weaver. They developed this model in 1948 to show how communication by telephone works.

Early View of Communications Process



The Shannon-Weaver Model

The model consists of a sender, a message, a channel through which the message travels, noise or interference that impedes or distorts the message, and a receiver. For example, a telephone converts sound or spoken words into electrical impulses that are transmitted over a telephone line (the channel). On the receiving end, the process is reversed. The electrical signals are converted back into sound and speech. But noise can interfere with the signal and create problems in understanding the message.

As you develop specific messages, you should consider each part of this model. All elements must work effectively for receivers to get the intended message. Often communicators blame the audience for not accepting a message when the sender, encoding process or channels chosen were not appropriate. Although originally designed to describe telephone communication, the Shannon-Weaver model can apply to other forms of communication as well.

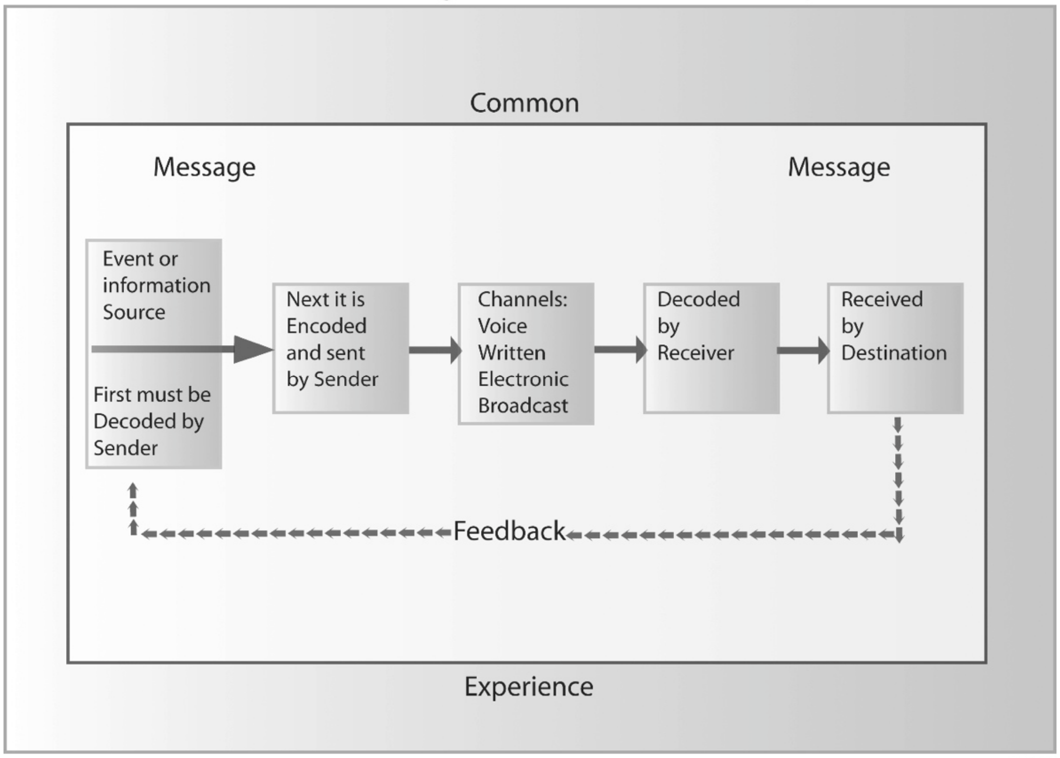
Speech: Thoughts are encoded into words, transmitted by sound waves and decoded according to the receiver's understanding of the words — if that person is within earshot. Physical noise can affect how well the receiver hears the words. Internal noise (such as lack of attention, lack of interest or distraction) can affect decoding and understanding as well.

Pantomime: Gestures encode thoughts. Light transmits the scene. Receivers decode the body movements based on their interpretation of your actions. Anything that prevents receivers from seeing or understand the gestures would constitute noise.

Printing: Thoughts are encoded into words of a specific language. Those words are further encoded into typographic characters and transmitted via a printed page. If receivers can read and know the encoded language, they can decode the words. If receivers understand the vocabulary, they can understand the message. Noise can enter the process at each step. Poor word selection or a misspelling can affect encoding. Poor-quality printing can make words hard to read. Lack of reading ability or lack of familiarity with the language or vocabulary used to encode the message can affect decoding and eventual understanding.

We can apply the Shannon-Weaver model to art, music, drama, signs, symbols, graffiti and countless other ways we attempt to transmit thoughts and meaning. But the Shannon-Weaver model is missing an essential step in the communications process: feedback. Without feedback, you don't know if receivers have received or understood your message.

Communications Process Illustrating Feedback within Common Experience



The Shannon-Weaver Model

Feedback follows the same communication process as sending a message, but in reverse. Can you apply these models to your practice of public relations?

As the Shannon-Weaver model shows, noise can introduce barriers to effective communication throughout the process. Below are some common barriers to communication, and strategies for overcoming them.

Communication Barriers

- Fuzzy language
- Misalignment of messages with culture and values
- History of distrust
- Distractions
- Negative influencers
- Sources or spokespeople with no credibility

- Unreliable media
- Media with which people are not comfortable, e.g., blogs, social networks and, for some where illiteracy is high, printed material
- Captive audiences
- Gatekeepers

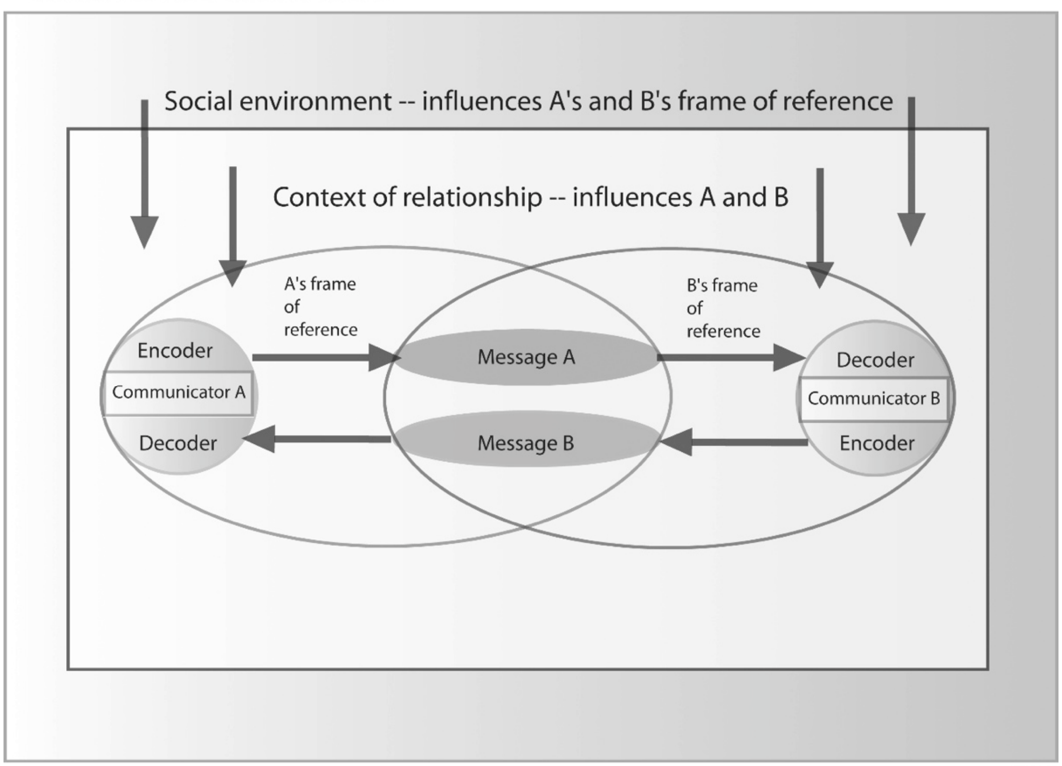
Ways to Overcome Communication Barriers

- Design and deliver the message so that it gets the attention of the intended audience.
- Employ signs, images and symbols that relate to experiences that are common to senders and receivers.
- Arouse personality needs in the receiver; appeal to the self-interests of receivers.
- Offer ways to meet those personality needs that are appropriate to the group situation the receiver is in at the time you want that receiver to respond.

Describing factors that influence effective communication, communication scholar Wilbur Schramm wrote:

> Communication (human communication, at least) is *something people* do. It has no life of its own. There is no magic about it except what people in the communication relationship put into it. There is no meaning in a message except what the people put into it. When one studies communication, therefore, one studies people — relating to each other and to their groups, organizations and societies, influencing each other, being influenced, informing and being informed, teaching and being taught, entertaining and being entertained — by means of certain signs which exist separately from either of them. To understand the human communication process, one must understand how people relate to each other. (EPR 11th, p. 169)

Communication Process Model



From work of the late Wilbur Schramm

Identify people in your organization in the A and B roles of this diagram. What are differences in their frames of reference? Where is the common ground? How are their social environments different or the same? Consider their cultures, customs, languages, occupations and demographics that make a difference.

As noted in EPR 11th (p. 306), Walter Lippmann, author of "Public Opinion," published in 1922, described several communication barriers:

- Artificial censorship
- Limitation of social contact
- Meager time available for paying attention
- Distortion from compressing events into short messages (sound bites in today's terms)
- Difficulty expressing a big, complicated world in short messages
- Fear of facing facts perceived to threaten established routines

The **7 Cs of Communication** (EPR 11th, pp. 308–309) can help to overcome the barriers Lippmann has listed.

1. Clarity
2. Credibility
3. Content
4. Context
5. Continuity
6. Capability
7. Channels

Tools You Can Use

Creative ways you devise to work around barriers to communication become creative strategies in your public relations planning. Communication theories and models are tools public relations professionals can apply to everyday situations.

- Define your publics, including subsets or segments.
- Identify your social relationship with each public.
- Understand the context and frames of reference of your relationships.
- Encode your messages effectively.
- Choose the proper medium to convey your messages.

Four Classic Models of Public Relations

James Grunig and Todd Hunt introduced four models of public relations in 1984 in "Managing Public Relations." Each model illustrates a common way that public relations practitioners approach their work. The table below summarizes points of each model. These models have become part of excellence theory. Research since 1984 has shown that these models do describe the way many organizations approach public relations. Few organizations follow one model exclusively. Depending on the situation, many organizations use all of them.

Characteristics	Press agentry/ publicity	Public information	Two-way asymmetrical	Two-way symmetrical
Purpose	Promotion	Report information	Scientific persuasion: The goal is to get people to do what the organization wants.	Mutual understanding, two-way influence
Nature of communication	One-way to undefined audience. Truth and accuracy of information are not essential.	One-way dissemination of factual, newsworthy information to undefined audience. Truth and accuracy are essential. Journalistic reporting standards apply.	Two-way: Audience research helps determine actions and craft messages designed to achieve specific behavioral goals.	Two-way with balanced influence (win-win situations). Audience research determines actions that will promote understanding and reduce conflicts with key publics. Publics are as likely to influence the organization as the organization is likely to influence publics.
Intent of communication	Influence thoughts, behaviors	Education	Influence thoughts, behaviors	Mutual benefit
Nature of research	None. Information about public isn't essential.	Little. May monitor public opinion polls or readability of messages.	Formative research on audience opinions and motivation. Information collected on audiences is not used to modify the organization's goals, policies or actions. Research simply guides message crafting.	Ongoing research to adjust messages throughout interactions with publics. Information collected from audiences may influence what an organization does and says.

From Douglas F. Cannon, Ph.D., APR+M, Fellow PRSA.

Additional Resource

Broom, G. M., & Sha, B-L. (2013). *Cutlip and Center's effective public relations* (11th ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education. (See chapters 7, 8, 13.)

Publics and Public Opinion

Identifying publics is one of the first steps in planning a public relations program. Typically, you identify the publics you want to reach after you've completed research about the opportunity, conducted a situation analysis and developed a problem statement. Equipped with this research, you then develop goals, identify publics to be served and write measurable objectives for each public.

"Publics" Defined for Public Relations

Public relations professionals refer to people or groups of "people who are somehow mutually involved or interdependent with particular organizations" as "publics" (EPR 11th, p. 2). A public may be further defined as "a particular group of people with a common interest, aim" (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/publics).

The so-called "general public" includes many specific or specialized publics. These publics respond in different ways and have different needs. Messages and communication tactics must be shaped to respond to the needs of each public. Publics often overlap and can be segmented in multiple ways.

Following is a list (excerpted from *Public Relations, An Overview*, Vol. 1, Number 3, PRSA Foundation Monograph Series) of publics for an organization. It could be a private or publicly held business, a not-for-profit group, government agency, educational or religious institution or other organization or group. Notice how the publics are identified from all sectors of a community: government, education, business, external to an organization and internal to an organization.

Employee
Management
Hourly vs. salaried
Prospective employees
Families
Union members
Retirees

Community
Business locations
Neighborhood coalitions
Chambers of Commerce
Community organizations
Local government
Religious organizations

Media
General
Ethnic
Foreign
Trade, specialized
Social networks

Government
Legislators
Regulatory agencies
Local, state, federal officials

Academia
Trustees, regents, directors
Administration officials
Financial supporters
Faculty and staff members
Students, prospects, alumni

Investment/Financial
Analysts
Stockbrokers
Institutional investors
Portfolio managers
Shareholders
Potential investors
Bankers (commercial and investment)

Industry/Business
Suppliers
Teaming partners
Competitors
Professional societies
Subcontractors
Joint ventures
Trade associations

Customer
Geographical
Local
Regional
National
International
Functional
Distributors
Jobbers
Wholesalers
Retailers
Consumers

The Public Opinion Process

Scholar James Grunig, in his work on communication behaviors and attitudes of environmental publics, defined publics by type. He found that publics could be grouped by the way they behave toward messages and issues. He identified four types:

- **All-issue publics** who are active on all issues.
- **Apathetic publics** who are inattentive and inactive on all issues.
- **Single-issue publics** who are active on a limited number of issues.
- **Hot-issue publics** who respond and become active after being exposed to an issue.

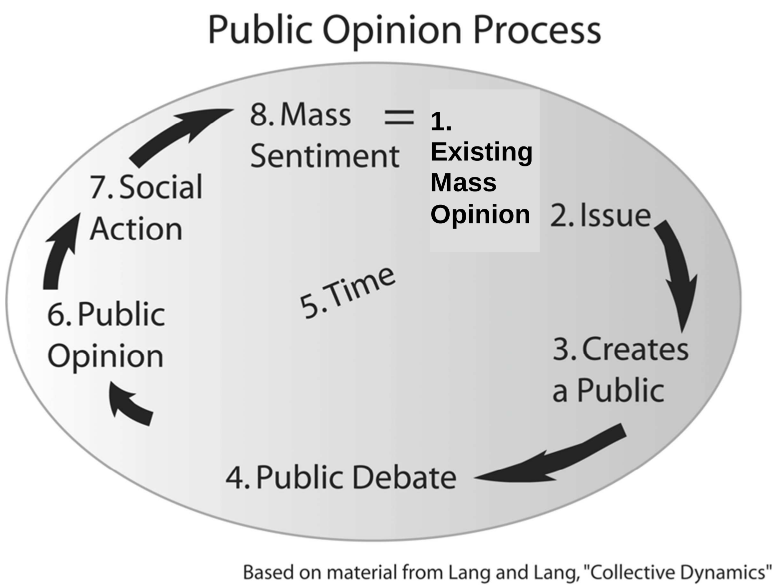
Grunig identified another method of labeling publics: **nonpublics, latent, aware** and **active**. Nonpublics have virtually no connection, involvement or interest in the issue at hand. Latent publics are not aware of their connections to a situation. Aware publics understand the importance of an issue to them, but they have not acted. Active publics are doing something about an issue. It is evident that target publics categorized in this manner will vary greatly depending upon the situation. Grunig implies that practitioners must often influence individuals in a progression from latent to aware to active on pertinent topics (EPR 11th, p. 268).

These types of publics are important to the process of public opinion formation because influencing each of them will require different tactics. If you understand the groups of publics you must reach and the types of publics within the groups, you will be closer to reaching your objective. Now think about how these work together with the elements that make up public opinion: **opinion**, **attitude**, **belief** and **value**.

- **Opinions** are observable (verbal) responses or statements concerning issues or topics. Opinions are specific to a topic and time (situational and focused), rational (cognitive and objective) and changeable. Opinions can be measured directly by asking a person a question and recording the response. The response is the person's opinion.
- **Attitudes** are covert predispositions governing likes and dislikes. Attitudes are affective, rather than cognitive; subjective, rather than objective; global or general, rather than specific; and enduring, rather than changeable. Attitudes cannot be measured by asking direct questions. People often can't explain their attitudes. Therefore, attitudes must be inferred through indirect questioning about how people feel (not what they think) or through physiological responses.
- **Beliefs** are assumptions people live by. Beliefs are understandings about the way things in the world work or should be. People often have trouble explaining their beliefs in detail. Nevertheless, beliefs are building blocks of attitudes and opinions. Researchers often group beliefs into systems such as capitalism, feminism or Christian theology.
- **Values** are explicit standards for evaluating right, wrong, desirable or undesirable. Values determine what people think are important in life and, like attitudes, are usually covert. People can usually say what they think is right or wrong or what is important to them, but they usually can't explain why they make those judgments.

Reading through the definitions, you can see that each one is more systemic to the individual and becomes progressively harder to change. People often change opinions without changing attitudes, personal beliefs or, especially, values.

What happens when individual opinions merge into public opinion? A classic early model comes from the work of sociologists Lang and Lang, in "Collective Dynamics":



Lang and Lang observed that in any given situation, a mass sentiment or a general social consensus exists. At different times, people have different views about issues and, as Grunig points out, they become a type of public that will respond to an issue in a specific way. Those who fall into the all-issue, single-issue (if the particular issue affects them), or hot-issue publics will take pro and con positions on an issue and foster public and private debate. The public debate may include publicity, staged events, opinion polls or public appeals. This debate may lead people to make up their minds about the issue. A new **public opinion** may develop, and that opinion may lead to **social action.** That action might occur as an election vote, a consent decree by a court or a product recall by a company. A new **social value** may emerge and become part of mass sentiment. The time needed for this new social value to take hold is varied.

***Example*:** Consider the lengthy debate about secondhand smoke in public places and today's laws against smoking in restaurants. Changed public opinion led to laws and regulations, such as nonsmoking areas or outright bans on smoking in public places.

The diffusion theory of innovation addresses the adoption or rejection of new ideas and the impact of elapsed time on the process.

Think about how the Lang and Lang model applies to public relations situations you have faced or read about. Once you understand how the process works, you will be able to more effectively write public relations plans and strategies to achieve the outcomes you want.

Additional Resource

Lang, G. E., & Lang, K. (1961). *Collective dynamics*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.

Media Relations

Media Relations questions account for 15 percent of the Certificate Examination. Specific KSAs for this topic are:

- **Understands media:** Considers strengths and weaknesses, needs and lead times of media. Identifies appropriate media channels for delivering messages to internal and external audiences. Identifies influencers.
- **Distribution methods:** Understands distribution systems (e.g., wire services, electronic news conferences, special events, face-to-face communication, word-of-mouth and third-party communication).

Media relations is an integral part of most public relations programs. Public relations professionals interact with journalists, bloggers, podcasters and other media professionals, both proactively and reactively. The overall goal of good media relations is to establish relationships with reporters and editors. These relationships should, in turn, help foster accurate, balanced and timely coverage of your organization's information.

Whether dealing with a broadcast network reporting global issues or a specialized news outlet such as a trade journal concerned with a specialized industry segment, you can enhance relationships with journalists when you first conduct research to become familiar with specific news they cover. Receiving news that is unrelated to their audience profile serves not only to diminish journalists' trust but also the respect that is so important to earning coverage.

Media relations campaigns should be planned to deliver messages related to public relations goals to key publics through appropriate media channels. The effectiveness of a media relations campaign should be evaluated regularly. Comprehensive metrics have been developed. Though amount of media coverage is only an output measure, it still remains among the top indicators that clients value.

News organizations have no obligation to use any story you pitch. Therefore, public relations practitioners must resist pressuring reporters for coverage and understand that submitting a news release does not guarantee its publication. Understanding and respecting the First Amendment rights of news organizations will go a long way toward building professional, ethical standards in your media relations.

Providing value to reporters is a way to foster good media relations. Offer newsworthy, timely stories of direct interest to their readers, listeners or viewers. Media databases such as Cision, Vocus and Factiva show what topics, areas and publics news outlets cover. This information can help you identify appropriate outlets and beats for your stories.

Even in the age of social media, the news release is still a media-relations mainstay. Public relations practitioners write the release and direct its approval process. This process varies by organization but may include input from the corporate legal counsel and the CEO. Public relations practitioners should focus upon the objectives of each communication piece and how it relates to the overall corporate strategy. Distribution is now most often electronic through email, online wire services, websites or social media. How releases are delivered may change with technology, but the overarching purpose of the release does not.

Video News Releases (VNRs) supply electronic journalists information, pictures and sound that can be used to illustrate your story. VNRs should look like news and not advertising. VNR content must be completely accurate because it might air as submitted to the program producer. VNRs should clearly declare the sponsoring company, organization or individual. Observing a code of good practice for VNRs will help establish your reputation as a trustworthy, reliable news source (EPR 11th, p. 220).

Seitel (2011, p. 189) notes that wire services continue to carry the most important news. He cites the Associated Press (AP), founded in 1848, as still one of the most important news organizations in the world. Also available are services such as PR Newswire, Business Wire and Market Wire. They charge a fee for distributing news releases.

Here are some questions to guide your understanding of sound media relations:

- Do you understand the relationships between public relations practitioners and journalists?
- Can you relate current events and trends to what your organization/clients are doing? In other words, have you developed news sensibilities and solid news judgment?
- Do you recognize the strengths and weaknesses of different media channels and select the ones that will be most effective for different communications goals?
- Do you understand how to use the Internet, Worldwide Web, social media and other new media technologies as part of an overall media strategy?
- Do you understand how the many information distribution systems work?
- Have you learned to recognize unique media relations laws, requirements and responsibilities associated with financial public relations for publicly owned companies?

Vital Media for External Publics

- Newspapers
- Wire Services/News Syndicates
- Magazines
- Radio
- Television
- Company Web page
- Email
- Blogs
- Chat rooms
- Interactive networks
- VNRs
- Direct mailings
- Podcasts/videocasts
- Online social networks

Important Relationships for Effective Media Relations

- Relations with newspeople (Help them do their job well.)
- Relations with production staff members (Get them on your side.)
- Relations with other public relations practitioners (shared responsibilities)
- Relations with freelance writers
- Understand differences between paid (advertising — controlled), earned (publicity — uncontrolled), shared (social media — uncontrolled) and owned (internal — controlled) media

Best Practices

- Keep background sheet handy.
- Maintain newsroom (news release archive, company backgrounder, downloadable images) on website or social media sites.
- Prepare for interviews by following these steps:
  - Know the facts.
  - Prepare for questions. Develop Q&A.
  - Plan for articulation of key messages.
  - Provide media training.
  - Select and train the right spokespeople.
  - Stick to the facts; never guess; never speculate; never lie.
  - Avoid "no comment," even if you can't comment.
  - Be confident, credible, personable.
  - Be on time.

Summary

- Learn as much as you can about the reporters and news organizations that cover the different aspects of your organization. For example, if you work for a school system, you should know education and local political writers. If you work for a health care operation, you should know health and business writers.
- Be informative and honest in every contact with journalists, bloggers, podcasters and other media.
- Always focus on the media channels that can meet your communication objectives.
- Work closely with other parts of your organization, including others in the public relations and/or communication department, to prepare for media contacts and ensure that you have the most accurate and up-to-date information.

Tip: Think about how you might work with reporters. Refer to texts on the Short Bookshelf of Recommended Texts (p. 7), and take advantage of other resources for developing your knowledge, skills and abilities in this area. Examples of other media relations resources include workshops and webinars, articles in public relations trade magazines or journals, and textbooks such as those listed throughout this study guide.

Adapted from information provided by the Minnesota PRSA Accreditation Committee.

Refer to Readings (p. 7) for more detailed information on media relations.

Additional Resources

Newsom, D., & Haynes, J. (2011). *Public relations writing: Form & style* (9th ed.) Boston, Mass.: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. (See chapters 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15.)

Seitel, F. (2011). *The practice of public relations* (11th ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall. (See chapter 9 on Media Relations/Print and Broadcast.)

Ethics and Law

Ethics and Law questions account for 12 percent of the Certificate Examination questions. Specific KSAs for these topics are:

- **Ethical behavior:** Conducts professional activities in a principled manner and adheres to commonly accepted standards for professional behavior.
- **Integrity:** Recognizes and deals professionally with ethical and legal issues.
- **Legal issues:** Upholds applicable international, national, state and local laws regarding defamation of character (e.g., libel and slander), corporate governance, disclosure, copyright, trademarks, fair use doctrine, First Amendment issues, privacy laws, etc.

Ethics

Ethics connotes the process you follow to decide what is right or wrong. The application of ethics to public relations practice is critical to our profession. Unfortunately, most ethical questions do not have black or white answers. Various values, such as our commitment to truth, honesty and transparency vs. our commitment to safeguard client confidences, often compete. The correct moral path may not be clear.

This section presents common ethical principles of public relations and a decision-making model. It is designed to help you evaluate ethical dilemmas and determine rationales to address them. Several scenarios are provided for you to practice ethical decision making.

General Principles Underlying Public Relations Practice

- Act in the public interest: Find the greatest good for the majority of the people (a utilitarianism or teleological perspective in which what benefits the most people in the end is moral).
- Use honesty and integrity as your guide.
- Ensure accuracy and truth.
    - Do not disseminate false and misleading information.
    - If you accidentally do make an error, correct it immediately with all publics.
- Deal fairly with all publics.
    - Respect yourself, and respect others.
    - When you move to a new position, leave proprietary materials related to your old job behind.

More Specific Principles Defining How Public Relations Is Practiced

- Accurately define what public relations strategies and tactics can accomplish. Do not guarantee results for areas beyond your control.
- Maintain the integrity of communication channels.
    - Ensure transparency with all publics, from employees to external publics.
    - Maintain ethical relationships with government, regulatory agencies, news media, colleagues and all other publics.
- Safeguard confidences.
    - Build trust through protection of confidential information.
    - Secure the privacy of organization and individuals.

- Do not damage the reputation of others.
    - Be careful during agency pitches.
    - Don't impugn the reputation of other practitioners.
    - Stick to the facts and avoid the gossip.
- Avoid conflicts of interest.
    - Disclose interests of yourself and others.
    - Get consent to represent conflicting views or competitors; maintain the related knowledge in two different areas.
    - Be ready to publicly identify your clients, sources of information and funding sources.

Decision-Making Process

Here are suggested steps in an ethical decision-making process:

- Define the specific ethical issue or conflict.
- Identify internal and external factors (legal, political, social, economic) that may influence the decision.
- Identify the key values.
- Identify individuals and publics who will be affected by the decision, and define your obligation to each.
- Select ethical principles to guide your decision-making process.
- Make your decision, and justify it.

An Ethical Dilemma and Application of the Decision-Making Process

Situation (From the Public Relations Society of America Board of Ethics and Professional Standards)**:**

Assume you are the director of public relations for Megabucks Energy Company, a Houston-based *Fortune* 500 oil and gas exploration and production company. Megabucks' profits are declining because of drops in oil and gas prices. Recent drilling on one of the company's properties in the Java Sea has produced promising indications of a significant new oil and gas reservoir. Although geological testing is incomplete, rumors are flying in the marketplace about the potential of this new well to increase Megabucks' profits. Senior management asks you to prepare a news release that responds to these rumors and downplays the significance of the find. As part of your research, you discover internal reports that show this new well is, indeed, a major discovery and that further testing is planned simply to determine the size of the reservoir.

One Way to Arrive at Your Decision

- **Define the specific ethical issue or conflict.**
  Can you ethically disseminate deceptive information about the financial condition of your company on which a number of key publics may rely?
- **Identify internal and external factors (legal, political, social, economic) that may influence the decision.**
    - What does the federal Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) require in such instances?
    - Do federal and/or state laws require a particular decision or disclosure?
    - What do company values, policies and/or procedures require?
- **Identify the key values.**

- *Loyalty* — As a professional, commitment to your employer often comes before other obligations.
- *Advocacy* — As a responsible advocate, you should consider both the company's interests and the interests of publics that may be affected by the decision.
- *Honesty* — Consider obligations to tell the truth in advancing the company's interest and in communicating to the public.
- *Independence* — Retain objectivity in counseling employers on a course of action that is in the company's best interest both today and into the future.

- **Identify the audiences who will be affected by the decision and your obligation to each.**

  Consider the company/employer, board of directors, shareholders/potential shareholders, SEC, other government agencies, financial analysts, financial media, employees, other publics, the public relations profession and society in general.

- **Select ethical principles to guide your decision-making process.**

  Protecting and advancing the free flow of accurate and truthful information is essential to serving the public interest and contributing to informed decision making. Maintaining the integrity of relationships with media and government regulatory agencies is central to public relations practice and in the best interest of the greater public. Truth and accuracy are underpinnings of our profession.

- **Make your decision, and justify it.**

  The public relations practitioner's greatest **loyalty** is typically to the client/employer; you are obligated to provide counsel and communications support that serves the best interest of the organization. At the same time, responsible **advocacy** requires that the interests of those affected by the decision be considered as well. In this case, numerous publics could both rely on this information and be adversely affected.

  Although the potential for **conflict between loyalty to employer and honesty exists**, the value of **independence** helps resolve this conflict. Sound, objective counsel requires you to refuse to write the release and advise the company on more appropriate actions that don't deceive the various stakeholders or conflict with laws governing financial disclosure. Ultimately, this course of action is in the company's best interest. Release of deceptive information could contribute to declining public trust and potential legal liabilities related to proper disclosure under SEC regulations. Your recommended action preserves the **integrity of the communications process** and helps maintain important company relationships, while **advancing the free flow of accurate, truthful information**.

Now ask yourself, in a real-life situation, might external pressures cause you to reach a different conclusion? If so, what would you do then?

➔Exercise: What Would You Do If … ?

If you practice applying this ethical decision-making process, it will become second nature. With some of your public relations colleagues, talk through some real-life dilemmas you are facing or have faced. You can use these scenarios to get started.

Scenario 1 (From the National School Public Relations Association)

A school board member who has been an outstanding advocate for the district is up for re-election. He calls to ask you if you would help with his re-election campaign. He says he values your communication expertise and needs help to defeat his opponent, who is very vocal about reducing administrative positions in the district. He considers them "fluff." In fact, your job as communication director is at the top of his list and will likely be the first to go. You know you can't work on the campaign during working hours, but you agree to work from home on the incumbent's campaign. You don't plan to tell anyone else you are helping him because what you do on your own time is your business.

Scenario 2 (From the PRSA Boston Chapter)

You are working for a pharmaceutical company that wants to sell more of its non-drowsy allergy drug. One of your interns offers to go into online chat rooms that focus on the topic of allergies to tout the success she has had using this drug. She does not intend to disclose her employer or that she doesn't personally suffer from allergies. She intends to do a content analysis on the responses for a term paper at her university.

Scenario 3 (From the PRSA Board of Ethics and Professional Standards)

A group of prominent citizens approaches you, a solo public relations practitioner. The group wants to advocate the closing of a nuclear power plant. Members argue that it is upwind from a major metropolis and either an accident or a terrorist attack at the plant could result in widespread radiation fallout, loss of human life and environmental damage. The group wants you to prepare informational materials without mentioning that closing the plant could result in rolling brownouts in the metro area.

Scenario 4 (From the PRSA Board of Ethics and Professional Standards)

A partner in a public relations counseling firm tells a reporter from a local newspaper that a competing public relations agency is recommending to a client some underhanded tactics to gain government approval of a plan to begin a new mining operation. Specific tactics included payments to elected officials. That "tip" results in a front-page story accusing the company of trying to "buy" mine approval by paying off local government officials. The practitioner providing the tip had been courting the same client but had lost the account to the competitor.

Additional Resources

Professional standard advisories and case studies are available for your further preparation. Visit www.prsa.org/aboutUs/ethics/index.html. PRSA membership is not required.

Laws for Public Relations Professionals

The Certificate in Principles of Public Relations Examination requires you to demonstrate broad understanding of several legal concepts: defamation, corporate governance, intellectual property (copyright, trademark, fair use), privacy and First Amendment issues. The following terms relate to those concepts. For a more extensive review of laws affecting public relations practice, see the media law section of the Associated Press Stylebook. Please also see sections of this study guide on Business Literacy, SEC Filings, and Business Laws and Regulations.

Copyright law: Two major goals of copyright laws are (1) to protect the original creator of the work and (2) to provide economic incentive for new knowledge. The statutory definition says that copyright exists in "original works of authorship in any tangible medium of expression ... from which they can be perceived, reproduced, or otherwise communicated" (17 U.S. Constitution, Sec. 102, as noted in EPR 11th, p. 139). Any written sources that are not original should be cited in following works. In addition, Internet and social network references should adhere to traditional copyright procedures for securing appropriate permissions and/or indicate proper citations.

Common law copyright: An author who creates a tangible expression of his or her ideas immediately acquires common law copyright for the work. This right continues until the author dedicates work to the public by a general publication or surrenders common law right to obtain specific statutory copyright protection. The purpose of copyright law is to protect an author's intellectual production. The dividing line between common law copyright and statutory copyright is publication. Statutory copyright is a legal word or act — the act by which the author makes the work available to the world while retaining control of the creative expression. Two types of publication exist. **General publication** is any overt act that indicates the intention to surrender one's right to control one's creative expression and allow the public to copy the material. If there is a general publication and the author has not obtained statutory copyright and does not use the copyright symbol (©), he has no further right to prevent the use by the public. **Limited publication,** such as delivery of a manuscript to a possible purchaser, does not cause the author to lose any common law rights.

Statutory copyright: To obtain statutory copyright, an author must submit copies of the what he/she has written to the Library of Congress and display the copyright symbol (©) on the material. Creative expression of ideas is subject to copyright. Securing a statutory copyright is simple. Notice/use of the copyright symbol must be on the very first copy sold or publicly distributed.

Ownership of copyright for photography and artwork: The contract between your organization and a non-employee who takes photos or creates artwork determines who owns the copyright. The copyright owner determines use and the cost of use of the creative work. Be clear about the ownership of both the negatives and hard copies of photos or artwork in the contract you develop with your legal counsel. The organization owns an employee's work done on behalf of the organization.

Defamation: Defamation is untruth that damages a reputation. Written or pictorial defamation is known as **libel**; spoken or verbal defamation is known as **slander** and need not be spoken in a public setting. To qualify as defamation, the statement must be untrue. To be defamed or damaged, an exposed person or organization must prove three conditions were present: **hatred**, **contempt**, **ridicule**. Damage must be proved as well. Reports of official proceedings are privileged and cannot be cause for libel (see fair comment below). To be actionable for libel, five elements must be present: **defamation**, **identification**, **communication** (publication/broadcast), **fault** (malice or negligence), and **damage** (in absence of fault, provable damages or injury). Because a public figure puts himself or herself before the public, he or she must prove actual malice. **Libel** has **four defenses**: **truth**, **privilege**, **fair comment** (see next entry) and **retraction**. **Retraction** is a full and prompt apology that helps mitigate damages.

Fair comment: This privilege insulates a reporter or publication against defamation (libel or slander). Fair comment is not a license to circulate derogatory information. The information must be related to community interest about the subject. Fair comment is a recognized defense against a libel action and is based on the argument that the statement was either true or **privileged** (taken from a public document). Be aware that although **truth** is the traditional defense against libel, truth is hard to prove. **Fair comment**, which involves privacy, should not be confused with **fair use**, which involves copyright.

Digital Millennium Copyright Act: A U.S. digital rights management law, enacted Oct. 28, 1998, created an updated version of copyright laws to deal with special challenges of regulating digital material. Broadly, the aim of DMCA is to protect the rights of both copyright owners and consumers.

Fair use: This principle allows use of parts of copyrighted materials without violating copyright laws and without paying a royalty or fee when that use is for criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship or research. Drawing the line as to what is fair use is one of the most difficult problems of copyright law. Fair use originally applied to printed works. With the advent of digital technology, the Internet and online social networks, fair use now applies to the redistribution of music, photographs, videos and software. Fair use is usually determined on the special facts of each case. If you begin to question how you're using something or how much you're using, be cautious. Public relations professionals should note that fair use does not apply to commercial use. **Fair use**, which involves copyright, should not be confused with **fair comment**, which involves privacy.

Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938: Public relations practitioners working for any "foreign principals," whether the practitioners are directly lobbying U.S. government officials or not, must register under this act. **The Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995** relates to the 1938 act in a broad context by requiring anyone in a public relations or related position who represents a foreign government to register and label lobbying materials as "political propaganda" (EPR 11th, p. 135).

Intellectual property: This legal term describes rights or entitlements that apply to the ownership and use of certain types of information, ideas or other creative concepts in an expressed (fixed) form.

***New York Times vs. Sullivan*:** This 1964 U.S. Supreme Court decision said public figures must prove actual malice to win a libel case.

Right of privacy: This legal principle, important for public relations professionals to know, ensures an individual's right to be left alone. This right may be violated if names, likenesses and/or information are used for commercial purposes. Privacy differs from defamation and is a practical effort to protect the individual who does not relish the unexpected appearance of his or her picture, story or testimonial in the public media. The publication need only injure the feelings of the person, even though it may not have any effect on his or her reputation. Many violations evolve from advertising, which is deemed worse than news reporting because of the potential for direct profit. Securing permission from the individual protects the public relations professional. While use of employee photos in employee publications isn't specifically covered, protecting your employees' right of privacy by obtaining signed waivers is a good idea. Four kinds of wrongful acts can violate privacy:

- **Appropriation:** Taking some element of a person's name or likeness for advertising or trade purposes without consent. An example would be using a celebrity's photo without permission and signed releases.
- **Intrusion:** Invading a person's solitude, such as audio or video recording him or her without permission.
- **Public disclosure of embarrassing private facts:** Truth is not necessarily a defense here (medical information, sex-crime victim identity, name of juvenile offender, embarrassing poses). Reputation need not be harmed.
- **False light:** Putting a person in a false position before the public, misleading the public to make a person appear other than he or she is (misrepresentation). Reputation need not be harmed.

Slavish copying: This term is used for extensive word-for-word copying. One can use an idea but not the creative expression of the idea. For a violation, copying must be exact, word for word. Paraphrasing is not a violation, but without attribution, it does raise ethical concerns. Speeches quoting the ideas of another can lead to copyright violation.

Using Information Technology Efficiently

Using Information Technology Efficiently questions account for 12 percent of the Certificate Examination. Specific KSAs for this topic are:

- **Knowledge of distribution channels:** Considers audience and objectives when selecting appropriate media for messaging. Understands benefits and differences between traditional and nontraditional media. Deploys public relations tools.
- **Technology literacy:** Understands reach and limitations of electronic tools and how they can be used for and against a client or employer. Uses electronic tools and technology in the planning phase.

Technology expands communication channels, but doesn't change public relations principles

Technological advances since the 1990s have greatly expanded the ways public relations practitioners can relate to publics. The Internet has interconnected humans more closely than ever before and provided the backbone for the Worldwide Web and all online social networks. These online channels allow public relations practitioners to tell stories through multiple channels directly to key publics. These direct messages can potentially personalize the connection between people and organizations and build grassroots support for products, services or causes. Thus, even in this digital age, the basic public relations management function within an organization and the principles of reputation management have not changed. Public relations practitioners work through online channels to foster mutually beneficial two-way relationships between organizations and those publics upon whom the organization's success depends. Furthermore, new technologies haven't eliminated other longstanding communication tools. Television, newspapers and other traditional media outlets still play major roles in delivering information to many publics. Nevertheless, as Internet, social media and mobile information technologies continue to evolve, more and more people seek and receive their news online. New online delivery tools come and go almost daily. Therefore, public relations practitioners must stay current with trends and adapt strategies to the digital age. The goal is to know which channels can most effectively reach each key public.

Information Technology Considerations

The development and enhancement of online communication opportunities and mobile technologies have created "on-demand media." Many 21st century news consumers expect content to be individualized, tailored to their needs and delivered to them regularly and instantaneously. This trend requires public relations practitioners to consider how to employ online communication tactics that are not only informative but also concise and useful — not sales pitches, fluff or trivia. People often search online for information they can use. They don't always pay attention to the online source. A tweet from an individual may be just as credible in some instances as a report from a traditional news organization like *The Wall Street Journal*. As a public relations practitioner, therefore, you need to understand your publics in more detailed ways than in the past, and to be well versed on emerging and ever-changing digital media trends. That understanding requires ongoing research and monitoring of online behaviors.

Gone are the days when updating your organization's website was all you needed to do to command market presence on the Internet. Your website is merely one stream feeding into the vast ocean of today's online information. The breadth and depth of search engines, combined with online social networking, create a plethora of real-time news-delivery sources as well as additional content channels to monitor. Following all these sites — as both ongoing research and a search for input opportunity through blogs, chats and social media — adds a vast new challenge to public relations work.

The "news cycle," which used to have specific deadlines in the morning, afternoon and evening, now runs 24 hours a day seven days a week for most news outlets and other direct media (curating websites, social media sites, blogs and other media without a gatekeeper). News organizations are no longer limited to filling a specific "news hole" (a limited number of newspaper pages or broadcast minutes to fill each news cycle). The demand for information in the 24-hour news cycle is massive, and the capacity for delivering stories is almost limitless. Public relations practitioners have always needed to be available to various publics, but with electronic media systems constantly being updated, you now must be on call around the clock. While media contacts still are important, the gatekeeping dynamic has changed. You can now reach publics directly and interact with people without media intervention. If the 6 p.m. local news doesn't cover a story, organizations can now get the word out through social media instead.

In addition, convergence is affecting traditional news operations. For example, most newspapers deliver audio and video reports as well as text through their websites and social media platforms. Radio stations post pictures and video as part of their online news coverage. Television stations include still photos and text stories on their websites along with video reports. The bottom line is that public relations managers must provide content in various modes through a variety of channels to both media outlets and key publics.

With the onset of high-quality digital still and video cameras and the advance of affordable mobile technologies, "the media" can now include almost everybody. Anyone with a smartphone can potentially share information with a massive global audience. "Citizen journalists" provide new opportunities for engaging key publics. These citizen reporters can deliver content from your organization. But citizen journalism can have a downside. People with mobile phones can capture and immediately post both positive and negative audio, video or still images online. Public relations practitioners must constantly be ready to respond to negative messaging. Furthermore, public relations executives need to remind organizational leaders about the reputational dangers of the unguarded remark made in public or private. Many politicians, sports figures and celebrities have been embarrassed in recent years when a "non-media" attendee at a party or other supposedly informal function posted video of an off-color or controversial comment online.

Although "virtually" all practitioners now use email, the Internet, social media, smartphones and other technological tools, they still must employ the fundamental skills of writing, critical thinking and strategic analysis in daily practice. The content of each message, not the delivery channel, still affects the credibility of the practitioner and the organization (EPR 11th, pp. 221–225).

Online channels provide a wide range of feedback data about users. These analytics help practitioners measure and evaluate message reach. But practitioners must be able to look beyond "hits," "likes" and "follows" to interpret what these numbers mean for organizations or clients in strategic business terms. What, for example, might such numbers say about message awareness, audience engagement, lead generation, share of voice, online reputation or return on investment?

Online digital communication can challenge public relations practitioners in many ways. Social media, for example, empower publics. Once organizations post information online, they can't control their messages. Publics expect organizations in online communities to be transparent and ethical. Organization credibility is constantly being scrutinized. Online followers can be anywhere. Therefore, geographic proximity gives way to cultural proximity. Practitioners must be alert to ways people in different nations or cultures might misperceive messages or organizational actions.

Reputation management is a growing field within public relations. Practitioners use electronic monitoring tools to scan the Internet for references that could affect the organization's reputation. These references may be in blogs, on websites or on social networks. With a few keyboard strokes or taps on a mobile device, negative online posts can instantly threaten reputation, credibility and market position. "Perception is reality" to many publics, and a potentially damaging Internet or social media rumor can reach millions of people in seconds. Prompt and appropriate responses are essential. The guidelines for crisis communication are as applicable to cyber crises as other types, with the added priority of urgency.

Public relations practitioners must be lifelong learners — about both people and technology. Though recent college graduates may know more than their clients or bosses about how the latest media technologies work, that knowledge may not be enough for success on the job. New practitioners must understand how to use those tools strategically as part of an overall public relations plan.

Business Literacy

Business Literacy questions account for 10 percent of the Certificate Examination. Specific KSAs for this topic are:

- Knowledge of organizational issues: Takes into consideration current internal and external business drivers for client or employer. Understands how industry forces and revenue/expenses impact stakeholder analysis and public relations planning.

Definition of Business Literacy

Business literacy is the ability to use financial and business information as the basis for decisions that help an organization achieve success. Business literacy permeates everything public relations practitioners do. Being business literate means understanding exactly how various organizations make money and what differentiates one organization from its competition. Business literacy includes knowing the legal, political and regulatory environment in which the organization operates and trends in employee, customer, shareholder and community relations.

Business literacy starts with an understanding of how businesses are organized and make decisions. Businesses fall into three basic categories:

- **For profit:** Publicly traded corporations such as General Motors, or privately owned companies such as Dell, that do business to make money for shareholders or owners.
- **Nonprofit:** Organizations such as certain hospitals, public radio stations, most colleges and universities, and charities that don't do business to make a profit for owners. Any surplus income derived from the business operation is used to expand the organization or support its mission. Nonprofit organizations often provide a public service.
- **Not-for-profit:** Organizations such as credit unions, mutual insurance companies and farm cooperatives that may generate revenue surpluses but are not designed to earn money for owners or members. Surplus revenue is generally used to carry out operations. If fiscal reserves become large enough, however, some money may be returned to member-owners.

Businesses are integrated horizontally or vertically. In horizontal businesses, production units create similar outputs. An example would be a brewer that produces beer under many different labels. Vertical businesses control all parts of their supply chains. For example, a newspaper publishing company could own forests, run logging operations to supply wood for making paper, operate wood-pulp plants to manufacture newsprint, maintain truck fleets for transporting newsprint to newspaper printing plants and run other trucks for delivering newspapers to distribution points.

The specific organizational setup of each business determines corporate culture, operational efficiency and effectiveness, market responsiveness, employee engagement and morale, and approaches to decision making. In some companies, decision making is centralized. In others, decision making is decentralized.

In centralized decision making, a top-level leadership group sets organizational policy and direction. This approach facilitates coordination across the enterprise, helps ensure decisions are consistent with organizational objectives and across all units, makes organizational change easier and avoids duplication of activities. But this top-down management method can create distance from market and customer needs as well as hamper customization required in regional markets.

In decentralized organizations, decisions are made in operating units across the organizations. This "horizontal" or "flat" approach promotes flexibility and market responsiveness, increases control over specific markets or products, creates a greater sense of autonomy within operating units and broadens a sense of accountability and ownership. But decentralized decision making can create organizational silos that hinder interaction and cooperation between units, hamper efforts to maintain product uniformity and permit duplicate functions to emerge.

Managers commonly use three financial statements to track the status of business operations:

- **Balance sheet:** A statement of assets, liabilities and capital on a specific date. The report details the balance of income and expenditure over the preceding accounting period.
- **Income statement:** A summary of how a business generates income and expenses through both operating and non-operating activities; also known as the profit-and-loss statement or P&L.
- **Cash flow statement:** A report of how changes in balance-sheet accounts and income affect cash and cash equivalents (cash in and out). The report breaks the analysis down by operating, investing and financing activities. Cash flow may be positive or negative.

Many public relations positions do not offer frequent opportunities to cultivate knowledge of business strategy, operation and management. That's why taking the initiative to broaden your knowledge in this area is important. Even for those who practice in a specialized field such as education or government public information, a higher level of business literacy will be valuable in dealing with constituencies and decision makers in the community. You should understand basic economic trends and how they affect different organizations. The direction of interest rates, for example, has a huge influence on many businesses.

Business Literacy Scavenger Hunt

This scavenger hunt is a tool to help you gather key data and begin to analyze an organization's competitive position. Think of it in terms of identifying information that will help you become a more valuable resource to your organization and more effectively use your public relations knowledge, skills and abilities to add value. Business knowledge can help a new public relations practitioner move up quickly within an organization.

Do the scavenger hunt for different businesses such as public relations agencies, corporations or nonprofit organizations. For a public relations agency, for example, use the scavenger hunt to assess the agency's competitive position in its market, and then begin to analyze a couple of the agency's clients' positions. This exercise will give you the broadest grasp of different markets and completely different competitive landscapes.

You will need to do basic background research as well as talk to employees of your target organization, perhaps one where you have interned, to put together a complete picture. Remember to exercise discretion; some information may be confidential, or employees may not be comfortable discussing some topics.

Although not every question that follows applies to every organization or situation, most of the information is relevant. Try to answer each question thoroughly, and think through the implications of what you learn during this exercise. Some helpful resources, including a brief overview of SEC Filings and Forms, can be found at the end of the scavenger hunt.

➔Exercise: Basic Scavenger Hunt

Here are some basic questions to help you think about the organization you are studying and its competitive landscape. These questions are applicable to public relations agencies, nonprofit organizations, government bodies and for-profit businesses large and small.

1. How does your organization make money — the money on which it operates?

2. Who decides how the public relations office or unit will spend its organization's money?

3. What drives growth for your organization?

4. What and/or who could put you out of business?

5. Who are your target publics for products or services?

6. Who is your competition?

7. What motivates your organization to improve?

8. Who gets promoted in your organization? What characteristics, what skills, what backgrounds get rewarded?

9. What values are important in your organization?

10. Which regulatory agencies affect your organization — list two or three — and how?

11. What is the biggest threat to your organization right now?

12. What is your organization's key competitive advantage?

13. Briefly, how are you organized in terms of who reports to whom, who supervises whom, who is responsible for transmitting information from level to level, up or down or sideways? Where does public relations fit into the organization?

14. What are the key ethical issues for your organization/industry at the current time?

Putting It All Together

Once you have answered these questions, analyze how successful the organization you studied has been at meeting key strategic goals. Does the information you collected support or contradict the choices the organization has made (as you know them — either from personal experience, from your informational interviews or from news reports)? This assessment involves thinking through the relationships between disparate bits of information. Such synthesis is at the heart of putting business literacy to use to support your public relations planning.

Additional Broad Resources

A wonderful source of business information is *The Wall Street Journal*; also ask your internship supervisors or other mentors which publications they read regularly and why.

As you already know, a lot of information is available on the Web — although sometimes the information you find should be taken with a grain of salt. Search online for companies that interest you, and read through financial statements they post on their websites.

Business Laws and Regulations

Anti-trust: Sherman/Clayton Act and Robinson Putnam Act make engaging in activity that ruins competition illegal. Overselling wording in news releases announcing acquisitions and divestitures can be cited as violations.

Lobbying: Federal Lobbying Act (1913) requires lobbyists to register with the clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives or the secretary of the Senate between the first and tenth day of each quarter. A lobbyist must report the amount of money he or she received during the previous quarter for lobbying activities. The lobbyist must name publications in which he or she has had an article or editorial published on behalf of the person or organization for which he or she is lobbying. This requirement does not apply to newspapers in the regular course of business. Cases indicate that this act applies only if a person is aiding in the passage or defeat of legislation, which public relations practitioners often do. Legal statutes for lobbying state lawmakers vary by state.

Political contributions: Federal Corrupt Practices Act of 1925, Hatch Act of 1939 and the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 govern labor relations management. These laws prevent organizations, including unions, from contributing to any political campaign or candidate and prohibit any candidate from accepting such contributions. Organizations and unions have formed political action committees (PACs)to get around these prohibitions. PACs are legal because employees or union members, not the organization itself, fund them. However, the 2010 Citizens United U.S. Supreme Court decision has changed the rules by which corporations, unions and other organizations can contribute to political causes.

Registering as a foreign agent: Registration of Foreign Agents Act of 1938 requires public relations professionals who represent a foreign government to register with the U.S. State Department. Anyone who acts in the United States as an agent of a foreign government without proper registration can suffer stiff penalties. This law grew out of practices by Carl Byoir and Associates in the 1930s on behalf of Nazi Germany and changed how public relations was practiced.

Regulation Fair Disclosure, Regulation FD or Reg FD: Adopted in August 2000, Regulation Fair Disclosure requires all publicly traded companies to disclose material information to all investors at the same time. Material information is any news that could influence a reasonable investor's decision to buy or sell stock. Consequently, a company can't share material news with just a limited audience (such as selected reporters); rather, the company must disclose that information in ways that ensure everyone has equal access at the same time. For more information about Regulation Fair Disclosure, go to www.sec.gov/answers/regfd.htm.

Sarbanes-Oxley: The **Sarbanes-Oxley Act**, passed in 2002, covers corporate auditing accountability, responsibility and transparency. The law, often called SOX, was enacted after revelation of accounting scandals at Enron and other major corporations between 2000 and 2002. Enron's CEO and CFO claimed they were not aware of the fraud the corporation had committed. SOX requires the CEO and CFO to sign certificates that say they have read and understood everything in company reports and that reports are complete and accurate. Other SOX provisions affect how information is disclosed and, therefore, affects public relations practice. Knowledge of what and when one's company must disclose is critical to executing public relations responsibilities.

Sections of the Securities Exchange Commission Laws Important to Public Relations Practice

The **Securities Act of 1933** and the **Security Exchange Act of 1934** were enacted following the 1929 stock market crash. These acts contain checks and balances for securities-related actions and remain in place today. The need for such legislation grew out of abuses in the securities industry. Investors' and brokers' devious practices were destroying small investors. While these laws are complex, certain sections directly relate to public relations practice as discussed below.

Rule 5c of the Security Act of 1933 deals with the registration of securities and led to the embargo of publicity materials during a specific timeframe — frequently called "**gag period**" — because these materials could be construed as an effort to sell a new security.

The gag period should not be confused with a **blackout**. Several types of blackouts exist in contracts, policies and business activities. Two common blackouts relate to employee benefits and political campaigns. A human-resources blackout is a temporary period during which access, often to retirement or investment funds, is limited or denied. In addition, a blackout can refer to a political party's restriction on advertising for a set period before an election.

The Security Exchange Act of 1934 mandates **disclosure**. While the actual legislation says little specifically about publicity, the regulations apply to how we practice public relations. The real aim is to level the playing field for all investors. The law requires filing specific information with the SEC to make it available to the public. SEC regulations don't specifically enforce or prompt timely disclosure, but rules of the stock exchanges do. Investor and media relations professionals deal most directly with these laws. **Rule 10 b-5** of SEC 1934 concerns fraud in disclosure. An organization has the legal responsibility to ensure the information it releases is both accurate and complete. This standard applies to all publications, including speeches, releases and all published materials.

A **1963 SEC** study of the securities market defined **insider trading**, **material information** and violations of each. Rules against **insider trading** encourage timely disclosure of **material information** in a further attempt to level the playing field between small and large investors. **Material information** is any news that could influence a reasonable investor's decision to buy or sell stock. The study showed concrete examples of how public relations practitioners used news media to disseminate false and misleading information, or deliberately withheld information from news media.

SEC Form 8-K: Form 8-K provides current information about a corporation so investors can make informed buying decisions. Companies must file Form 8-Ks within four business days of corporate actions that would materially affect stock prices. Information is "material" whenever a reasonable investor would consider the news important in making an investment decision. Issuing a news release and then filing that news release on a Form 8-K is an appropriate way to make a fair disclosure.

SEC Form 10K: Commonly called the "annual report," Form 10-K offers a detailed picture of a company's operations, the risks the organization faces and financial results for the fiscal year. The report includes analysis by company management of the business results and what is driving them.

Quiet Period: The interval between when a company registers a public offering of securities (stocks or bonds) with the SEC and the time the SEC declares the registration effective. At that point the company can offer the securities for sale. During Quiet Period, a company generally can't issue any information that might affect the stock price or be perceived as "front-running" the stock offering.

History Highlights

History questions account for 6 percent of questions on the Certificate Examination. Specific KSAs for this topic are:

- **Knowledge of the field of public relations:** Identifies key figures who influenced the field and major trends in the development of public relations as it is practiced today. Is familiar with outmoded perceptions of the PR profession.
- **Public relations and related concepts:** Defines public relations and differentiates among related concepts (e.g., publicity, advertising, marketing, press agentry, public affairs, lobbying, investor relations, social networking and branding.)
- Understands the effect and impact of emerging technology on communication models.

Eras of Public Relations

These key time periods are listed as described in EPR 11th (pp. 83–101). Also included are notable trends and figures during stages.

Seedbed Era (1900 to 1916)

- Organizational Attitudes: Let the public be informed. Muckraking, social reform, unions.
- PR Trends: Defensive publicity. Journalists hired as "interpreters" to get the news out.
- Key PR figures:
    - Ivy Ledbetter Lee — Full disclosure and tell the truth
    - President Theodore Roosevelt — bully pulpit

World War I Period (1917 to 1918)

- Organizational Attitudes: Let the public be informed. The war to end all wars.
- PR Trends: Organized promotion. Promote patriotism. Use interest groups.
- Key PR figure: George Creel (Committee on Public Information) — The Four Minutemen

Booming Twenties Era (1919 to 1929)

- Organizational Attitude: Mutual understanding.
- PR Trends: Promoting products. WWI publicity techniques used for social science.
- Key PR figures:
    - Edward L. Bernays — *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (1923), *Propaganda* (1928)
    - Arthur Page — Performance = Reputation

Roosevelt Era and World War II (1930 to 1945)

- Organizational Attitudes: Mutual understanding. Depression. World War II.
- PR Trends: Mass media use. Social responsibility.
- Radio delivers immediate news.
- Key PR figures:
    - Louis McHenry Howe — Responsible performance, persuasive publicity
    - Elmer Davis — Office of War Information

    - President Franklin D. Roosevelt — "Fireside Chats"

Postwar Era (1946 to 1964)

- Organizational Attitudes: Mutual adjustment. Professionalism. Postwar service economy, consumerism.
- PR Trends: Credibility. Associations form, including PRSA. Many PR Codes of Ethics written. Colleges establish curricula.
- TV emerges as key communication medium.

Period of Protest and Empowerment (1965 to 1985)

- Organizational Attitude: Mutual adjustment.
- PR Trends: Accommodation. Systems theory. Management by Objectives (MBO). Functional vs. functionary approach.
- Technology increasing.
- Key PR figures:
    - Marshall McLuhan — Understanding Media, "global village," "the medium is the message."

Digital Age and Globalism (1986 to present)

- Organizational Attitude: Mutual adjustment.
- PR Trends: Constant technological connections. International relationships. Organizational transparency.
- Internet, Worldwide Web, social networks, mobile technology.

Comparison of Descriptive and Historical Aspects of Public Relations			
Public Relations Models	Historical Periods	Organizational Attitudes	Example Practitioners
Press Agentry	Pre-Seedbed Era (pre-1900s)	Public-Be-Damned	P.T. Barnum
Public Information	Seedbed Era (1900–1916)	Public-Be-Informed	Ivy Lee
Two-Way Asymmetric	World War I (1917–1918)		
	Booming Twenties (1919–1929)	Mutual Understanding	Edward Bernays and Arthur Page
	Roosevelt & WWII (1930–1945)		
Two-way Symmetric	Postwar Boom (1946–1964)	Mutual Adjustment	Arthur Page, Scott Cutlip and Allen Center
	Period of Protest and Empowerment (1965–1985)		
	Digital Age and Globalization (1986–Present)		
Notes: Public relations models as explained in Grunig & Hunt (1984). Historical periods as articulated in EPR 11th. Organizational attitudes as articulated by Edward Bernays and Arthur Page (cited in EPR 11th). Example practitioners as identified in EPR 11th and Grunig & Hunt (1984).			

Acknowledgment: This chart is adapted from one that appears in Sha, B.-L. (2007). Dimensions of public relations: Moving beyond traditional public relations models. In S. Duhe (Ed.), *New media and public relations* (pp. 3–25). New York: Peter Lang.

Additional Resource

Grunig, J. E., & Hunt, T. (1984). *Managing public relations*. New York: CBS College Publishing.

Figures and Events in Public Relations History

Samuel Adams: Organization — Sons of Liberty, Committees of Correspondence; Symbols — Liberty Tree; Slogans — Taxation Without Representation; Staged events — Boston Tea Party.

Edward L. Bernays: Wrote "Crystallizing Public Opinion," first book on public relations (published in 1923), and coined the term public relations counsel with his wife Doris Fleischman. Taught first college course on public relations (at New York University) and was the first to call himself a public relations professional. Said good public relations counsel recognizes changes in an organization's social setting and advises clients or employers how the organization should change to establish a "common meeting ground." Among the first to advocate licensure for public relations counsels. (1920s)

George Creel: Chairman of the Committee on Public Information during World War I. Understood the power of publicity to mobilize the public. Started the "Four Minutemen" and created "spokespersons" from key interest groups such as lawyers, actors, journalists, teachers. Used persuasive tactics to dehumanize the enemy.

Elmer Davis: Director of the Office of War Information during World War II. Pioneered widespread use of radio, Hollywood and other mass media to publicize the war effort.

Rex Harlow: Founded the American Council on Public Relations, which ultimately became PRSA through mergers with other public relations organizations. (1947)

Louis McHenry Howe: Long-time public relations adviser to Franklin D. Roosevelt. Recognized that mutually beneficial public relationships could be built only by coupling responsible performance with persuasive publicity. (1936)

Ivy Ledbetter Lee: Created a document in 1906 termed the "Declaration of Principles" by journalists. Among the principles: to supply news and ensure the company's work is done in the open, provide accurate information and not advertising, and work with media to respond promptly to requests for additional information. Issued first news release in 1906. Among the first to recognize that publicity needs to be supported by good works. Performance determines the publicity a client gets. Used testimonials. Advised clients to make full disclosure, tell the truth and convince management to do the same. (1900s)

Arthur Page: An AT&T vice president who helped set the standard for corporate PR. Said a company's performance would be determined by its public reputation. (1927)

Publicity Bureau: Nation's first publicity agency, forerunner to today's PR agencies. Used tools of fact-finding, publicity and personal contact to saturate media with railroad propaganda.

Theodore Roosevelt: First president to exploit news media as a new and powerful tool of presidential leadership.

George Westinghouse: Created the first corporate public relations department. (1889)

Additional Resource

Cutlip, S. M. (1994). *The unseen power: Public relations — a history*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Crisis Communication Management

Crisis Communication Management questions account for 5 percent of the Certificate Examination questions. Specific KSAs for this topic are:

- **Understands phases of a crisis:** Understands the roles and responsibilities of public relations at the pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis phases. Communicates the implications of each of these phases and understands the messaging needs of each.

Anticipating a crisis is part of every public relations practitioner's job. To that end, every organization should have an up-to-date crisis communication plan in the hands of a clearly identified and prepared crisis communication team: internal public relations staff members, management representatives and outside public relations counsel. This plan should align with your organization's operations crisis plan.

The Team

- Assign specific roles to team members, such as designating one person to speak to external publics and another to keep internal publics fully informed.
- Rehearse the crisis management team regularly.
- Train and retrain spokespeople and emphasize the need for them to work with others involved (including officials and agencies) and to communicate so the organization will be seen as speaking with one consistent voice.

The Plan

- Monitor your environment regularly and identify your organization's vulnerabilities. Assess these vulnerabilities. Continuously seek ways to mitigate these vulnerabilities before they become crises.
- Develop a series of scenarios that reflect the crises your organization may face (what's possible). Prioritize your organization's vulnerabilities by identifying those that would be most urgent or most probable.
- Pay particular attention to the worst cases.
- Evaluate realistically the probability that the worst case will happen.
- Review current policies and strategies that might be affected.
- Review key messages you will want to impart in response to possible scenarios. Draft Q&A documents for responses to these possible crisis scenarios.

Seitel (2011) says that being prepared is the key to effective crisis management. Seitel cites four paramount issues to consider in crisis planning.

- Define the risk for each potentially impacted audience or public.
- Describe the actions that will mitigate each risk defined.
- Identify the cause of the risk.
- Demonstrate responsible management action.

Seitel writes that the most effective crisis communicators provide prompt, frank and full information to journalists as the crisis unfolds. He adds that keeping silent on crisis issues only angers reporters and makes problems worse.

Crisis management expert Jim Lukaszewski, ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA, suggests the following planning steps (EPR 11th, p. 282).

1. Identify what can go wrong and become highly visible.

2. Assign priorities based on which vulnerabilities are most urgent.
3. Draft questions, answers and resolutions for potential scenarios.
4. Focus on what to do and say during the first critical hours of a crisis.
5. Develop a strategy to contain and counteract, not react and respond.

Keep Plans Current

- Review the entire plan at least annually; a quarterly review is better. Practice implementing the plan through role-playing and mock events.
- Be sure that members of the crisis management team have copies of the current plan and can access them immediately.
- Put the crisis plan on your intranet with password protection.

Crisis Event

- Activate the crisis plan immediately. An organization's reputation often stands or falls based on how it handles a crisis during those critical first 24 hours — and especially the first hour — after a crisis.

Define the crisis in terms of a **triggering event** — the cause. Craft a timely statement that is accurate yet flexible enough to be refined as details about the crisis emerge. If your team is well prepared, day-to-day business can continue while the crisis gets needed attention from the designated crisis team. Only designated spokespeople should officially speak for the company as incident details become available.

Identify **priority publics**. These may change with the type of crisis while others will remain constant, such as employees, customers, shareholders, suppliers, the neighbors, larger community, news organizations, regulatory agencies and government officials.

- Inform employees and your internal audience first.
- Demonstrate concern for those affected by the crisis and communicate what the organization is doing or planning to do to solve the problem.
- Keep employees informed so they don't resort to speculation that generates rumors. Rumors can sometimes create more damage than the initial crisis.
- Have someone on call 24 hours during the most intense hours or days of the crisis.

The crisis message needs to be posted on the organization's website and social network platforms. This message should include a basic statement about the incident, how the organization is responding and supporting facts as they become known. Organizations often set up "dark" websites for crisis communication and activate them when an incident occurs.

As the Crisis Unfolds

Strive for a timely, consistent and candid flow of accurate information to both internal and external publics. This information flow should help allay fears and stifle rumors. The organization should continue to function as normally as possible and let the crisis management team contend with the emergency.

Major mistakes made by public relations practitioners and other leaders during crises include waiting too long to respond, hiding from various audiences, attacking involved publics and entering into unfavorable litigation. Major goals for most crisis situations are to minimize the problems as soon as possible and remove the event from the minds of affected publics (EPR 11th, p. 308).

Evaluation

Learn from the crisis experience. After it's over, reconvene the crisis management team to evaluate. Review the crisis' causes, the organization's responses to it and the outcomes. If necessary, make changes to the structure of the organization. If the organization has a history of an open-management style, such changes are likely to be slight. Update the crisis management/communication plan in light of this most recent experience.

Adapted from a presentation by Doug Newsom, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA, and Jim Haynes, APR, Fellow PRSA.

Additional Resources

Lukaszewski, J. E. (2010). The Lukaszewski Group Inc., Crisis Communication Management Specialists. Retrieved June 17, 2010, from www.e911.com/index.htm. (From the Articles, Case Studies, Books & Speeches tab; articles and speeches are available for one-time download and individual use at no charge. Also, click on Executive Actions in addition to other areas of this helpful site.)

Newsom, D., & Haynes, J. (2011). *Public relations writing: Form & style* (9th ed.) Boston, Mass.: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. (See chapter 20 on The Public Relations Planning Process.)

Seitel, F. (2011). *The practice of public relations* (11th ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Case Study and Public Relations Plan Examples

NOTE: *The following case studies are provided for study. The Certificate Examination doesn't include long examples like the ones in this section.*

➔Case Study: Blue Ridge Water Company

Blue Ridge Opening New Plant, Needs Rate Increase

Situation: You are the public relations director for a midsize water and wastewater utility in Northern Virginia called the Blue Ridge Water Company (Blue, for short). The company has been supplying 200,000 residents water and wastewater service for more than 45 years without issue. Before you joined the organization five years ago, Blue had no formal public relations strategy — or strategist like you — in place. In terms of communication, the company was reactive and issued information only when a particular situation necessitated it.

Your company, while a public utility, tries to operate more like a business. Blue has a strategic plan, a pay-for-performance appraisal system and an "AA" financial rating. The utility is well managed and has a strong record of fiscal and environmental stewardship. However, like many water utilities, it has operated under the radar for 45 years. You have done very little communicating about the company's internal business structure and plan, however positive. You have focused your very limited communications on customers, and only for issues related to water and sewer services.

Your customers are a highly educated, affluent group. Median household income is one of the highest in the country. Most customers have lived in your service area for less than five years. Because of growth in the Blue Ridge Region, your total number of customers doubles every 10 years.

In one year, Blue will start operating an advanced wastewater [sewage] treatment plant in the heart of your service area. The plant will be virtually odor-free and employ the best technology available to treat wastewater before returning it to the environment. In fact, the cleaned water will be available for sale for irrigation. While Blue has financed the construction of the plant over the next 20 years, day-to-day operations will be costly and will require a 6 percent user rate increase each year for at least the next three years — and possibly beyond. Blue has not had a rate increase for 12 years. You have featured the new plant prominently on the company website, posted updates on social media platforms and run frequent stories in the e-newsletter that is distributed to all customers. The local weekly newspapers have covered plant construction over the last year. Still, you do not believe that very many customers are aware of its arrival next year or the impending rate increase it will require.

Residents in your area are reeling from several years of increasing property tax assessments. Housing affordability and rising public service costs are extremely hot topics. In addition, local elected officials have recently come under investigation for unethical dealings. Two local elected officials serve on your board of directors, as does a prominent local developer.

Use the following research findings to answer the questions that follow:

- A survey you conducted indicated that 90 percent of your customers think your services are tax supported. (They are not. Blue is funded solely by water and sewer fees collected from customers.) Fifty-one percent of your customers cannot recall your company name unaided, let alone anything about your company. Twenty-five percent of your customers think trash service is among the services Blue provides. (It isn't.)
- Your board of directors does not understand public relations in its truest form. Directors see it merely as a way to promote good things or cover up or spin the bad things.

- After 10 years of unprecedented growth, residential construction has slowed down, and the number of water connections (hookups) is lower than projected, so cost control measures are in place for all internal departments until further notice.
- Blue is building a new headquarters next to the new plant. The headquarters will cost $11 million, and you will be moving into the building the same time next year that the plant starts operating. The building will employ many environmental and good-neighbor features, such as geothermal energy, energy efficient lighting, motion sensors and low-water landscape. The facility will feature an outdoor park and trail where the public can come for fitness activities, walks and picnic lunches. The building will have an indoor education center for community and school groups to book to learn about water science, treatment and conservation.

Questions

- **Step 1:** Describe what, if any, research is needed. Identify the source of information and a rationale for each research activity that you recommend.
- **Step 2:** In one general sentence, state the problem(s) to be addressed.
- **Step 3:** Identify three key publics to be included in your plan and a rationale for including them.
- **Step 4:** Provide one short-term and one long-term objective for each public.
- **Step 5:** Provide one strategy for each objective, and cite a theory or model as rationale for its use.

Courtesy of Samantha Villegas, APR, Accreditation Committee, National Capital Chapter, PRSA.

Plan: Blue Ridge Water Company (First Steps)

Step 1: Describe what, if any, research is needed. Identify the source of information and a rationale for each research activity that you recommend.

Topic of Research	Type or Source	Rationale
Rate Increase	Content analysis and/or interviews with other utilities	See how rate increases by utilities have been reported by media to understand and anticipate what angles are typically used and/or what information proves to be confusing. Ask other utilities about lessons learned.
	Focus group, intercept interviews or complaint reviews	Find out early reaction from customers/attitudes about rate increases to know how to shape message.
Wastewater Treatment Plant Site	Focus group or intercept Interviews	Find out early reaction from customers/attitudes about water and wastewater treatment plants to know how to shape message and find out what most worries them.

Step 2: In one general sentence, state the problem(s) to be addressed.

Blue suffers from poor or weak branding that will soon be magnified by the rate increase, typical negative perceptions and fears associated with operation of a wastewater treatment plant near residential areas, the need to explain a beautiful new headquarters, and reaction to the combination of the rate increase with the two new facilities.

Step 3: Identify three key publics to be included in your plan and a rationale for including them.

Publics	Rationale
Rate-paying customers	They will be affected by the rate increase.
Public school system (teachers and students)	Children are one of the most effective ways for reaching parents with messages. Targeting them through the schools and teachers, with the indoor education center and the outdoor interpretive area, will get messages out into the community about the wastewater treatment plant technology and good-neighbor provisions of the plant.
Blue Ridge neighbors (people who live near the new wastewater treatment plant)	Blue's immediate neighbors must get to know the company. If they understand and believe the reputation that Blue has built, then Blue will have a better shot at building understanding and support for the wastewater treatment plant and its operation as well as for the new headquarters building and rate increase.

Step 4: Provide one short-term and one long-term objective for each public.

Public	Short-term objective (less than one year)	Long-term objective (more than one year)
Rate-paying customers	Within one year, the percentage of rate-paying customers who think Blue is tax supported will be reduced from 90 percent to 65 percent.	In two years, more than half of those surveyed will characterize the rate increase as necessary, warranted or adequately justified.
Teachers/ students	At least 50 percent of the teachers and/or students in the local public school system will visit the new education center during the first month it's open.	In two years, more than half the students or parents of students surveyed will be able to name two of the good-neighbor policies employed at the wastewater treatment plant.
Neighbors	Within one year, 60 percent of the neighbors will support the wastewater treatment plant (up from 51 percent) and be able to identify benefits of its operation.	In two years, the number of neighbors who will support the wastewater treatment plant will be 85 percent (up from 60 percent), and those able to identify benefits of its operation will be 75 percent (up from 50 percent).

Step 5: Provide one strategy for each objective, and cite a theory or model as rationale for its use.

Objective	Strategy	Rationale/theory
Rate-paying customers/ short-term objective	Statement stuffer, advertising, social media presence	You can cost-effectively reach customers with statement stuffers and social media posts. You can access reserve funds for targeted local advertising on cable TV and in homeowner association newsletters. Agenda-setting theory.
Rate-paying customers/ long-term objective	Customers/face-to-face interaction via town hall meetings, participation in community events	A deeper, more complex understanding of the organization will require a more intimate relationship based on getting to know the company and recognizing it as an important part of the community. Identification theory.
Teachers/students/ short-term objective	Field trips and special events at new education center	We can reach thousands of students and their teachers by making full use of this facility. And

		we can send teachers away with a colorful packet of information about water and wastewater treatment plants. Two-step flow theory.
Teachers/students/long-term objective	Return field trips and repeat special events at new education center. Provide opportunities for staff to establish one-on-one relationships with teachers and possibly some students.	Again, we can reach thousands of students and their teachers during visits to this facility. Return visits will show that they like it and give staff the opportunity to build on relationships established during the first visits. Social judgment theory.
Neighbors/short-term objective	Community meetings, advertising, media relations, social media outreach	This approach requires a layered effort to create opportunities for community meetings, participate in neighborhood events, work with local journalists and spend money on cable TV or local newsprint ads. Diffusion of innovation.

Courtesy of Samantha Villegas, APR, Accreditation Committee, National Capital Chapter, PRSA.

➔Case Study: Healthtech Labs

Healthtech Labs Targeted by Animal Rights Activists

Create a communication plan for this case study by using either a grid- or paragraph-style plan. Look at the situation. Then develop your plan. Start with the research element before you move on to the remaining three steps, or look at the sample provided.

Situation: You are the director of public relations for Healthtech Labs, a large chemical research company in Gaithersburg, Maryland, a suburb of Washington, D.C. Your privately held company has been in business for 21 years and has specialized in providing research and chemical analysis in a variety of areas. Virtually all your work is based on contracts from federal and state agencies and on grants from foundations. The majority of your work involves developing sewage treatment and water purification programs for applications in the United States and developing countries. Your researchers have been recognized frequently for their work in this area, and the lab has a reputation for producing environmentally sound, socially aware solutions to problems. As PR director, you have conducted an aggressive and successful campaign to generate publicity for the lab's research program. But the company has kept one research program under wraps.

For the last 10 years, the lab has had a small contract to test Ragus-A, a new medicine that appears to reverse a genetically based deficiency of the hormone insulin, which is the cause of diabetes mellitus or Type 1 diabetes. To test Ragus-A, the lab has modified the genes of chimpanzees to cause them to lack the insulin hormone and to pass that trait on to their offspring. The offspring are then treated with Ragus-A. The experiment involves regular injections of Ragus-A. The control group is not treated and exhibits symptoms of diabetes, including episodes of insulin shock under certain circumstances. As part of the test, mature monkeys are killed so the long-term effect of Ragus-A on the brain and other body parts can be determined. In 10 years, 30 monkeys have been used in the experiment, and 10 have been killed for examination. The tests are scheduled to last another six months.

The Ragus-A experiments have not been publicized nor has the contract ever been announced. In fact, most Healthtech employees don't know about the program, and the public knows virtually nothing about the Ragus-A contract.

You learn that ROAR (pROtectors of Animal Rights) has found out about the Ragus-A program and is planning to demonstrate outside the lab in just over a month. ROAR has been successful in generating media coverage of demonstrations at the National Institutes of Health and other private laboratories in the Washington area.

You are concerned about the negative publicity that could come from the protest — especially the impact of publicity on Healthtech employees and on decision makers at federal and state agencies and foundations that support the vast majority of the lab's work.

You inform Dr. Alan Parker, president of Healthtech Labs and a distinguished researcher, of the planned demonstration. He asks you to develop a communication plan for what the lab should do.

Step 1: How will you go about research in the limited time available? Outline in some detail the steps you would take, and explain why you would take each step. Include in your answer responses for each question below.

- Whom do you want information from or about?
- What information do you want?
- What formal and informal research is needed?

Step 2: When Dr. Ralph Johnson, director of the Ragus-A program, is informed of the planned protest, he suggests that the entire project — including all the monkeys and the four-person research team — be moved quickly to a small Healthtech facility in another state. The lab could then deny the existence of the program and stonewall reporters and demonstrators for six months until the project could be concluded quietly. Dr. Parker asks you to consider Dr. Johnson's suggestions as you continue to develop your action plan.

Develop a complete public relations plan for the four weeks before the demonstration and for the day of the demonstration itself. Be specific. Include these eight elements as well as any other planning elements you think appropriate.

1. A response to Dr. Johnson's suggestion, including a rationale for your position
2. Key publics
3. Long- and short-term objectives for the plan
4. Messages, strategies and tactics
5. Specifically, how to reach each public
6. Materials you will need and use
7. Spokespeople to be used (including identification, selection and preparation)
8. Timetable

Step 3: Describe the media relations program you will use to implement the plan outlined above in detail and include the following:

- Targeted news organizations and social media platforms
- Activities before the day of the demonstration
- Activities on the day of the demonstration
- Activities in the week following the demonstration

Step 4: Explain how you will evaluate your program.

Plan: Healthtech Labs

(This plan was written during a four-hour exam by a candidate who is now an APR. *Notes* describe what she would do differently today.)

Step 1: Formal Research Needed

Research	Sources of information	Rationale
Survey	Randomly selected sample of members of the medical community, including doctors and researchers *Note*: This approach assumes that an accurate list (i.e., sampling frame) of members of the medical community is available. Without the sampling frame, selecting a statistically valid random sample would be difficult.	This method is useful for gaining information that can be generalized to the whole population of "members of the medical community." I need this information to gauge potential support among "experts" for the Ragus-A program. The findings may be cited in communications with target publics who find members of the medical community to be credible sources in the context of the situation.
Survey	Randomly selected sample of employees of Healthtech Labs	This information is required to provide a benchmark of whether and to what extent employees know about the program. Although management thinks employees don't know because they haven't been told, that does not

		mean that employees didn't hear whispers about the program through informal channels of communication. We need this baseline formation to evaluate the communication efforts later.

Informal Research Needed

Research	Sources of information	Rationale
Interviews with influentials	Dr. Johnson (director of Ragus-A program); each of the four people on the research team; the company president and other executive-level leaders	This method is useful for gaining better understanding of project details (purpose, execution, preliminary findings). Interviewing allows sources of information to express their opinions in their own words. I would use these findings to craft messages explaining the program.
Interviews with influentials	Key decision makers for government regulatory agencies about animal testing in general	This method would help me gauge whether these individuals understand animal testing issues and benefits as well as help me identify potential allies for the program.
Secondary analysis *Note*: The proposed research may actually be "secondary research" in which one looks at information both collected and analyzed by others. In contrast, "secondary analysis" occurs when you take information collected by others and analyze that raw data yourself. The original answer did not really address whether I would re-analyze raw data collected by others.	Study by the American Medical Association regarding prevalence of diabetes-related illnesses in the last three years	Although I would have to be careful about using research data collected by others (looking at who collected the data and how the questions were asked), this information would help me determine the potential contributions of the Ragus-A project. That knowledge, in turn, would help me construct messages for target publics by using argumentation strategies such as logical explanations.
	Opinion polls conducted by other organizations on whether and what types of people support animal testing	See caveats above. This information would provide a baseline of what kinds of publics I might be dealing with as well as the values and concerns of those publics. This information would help me prioritize my publics as well as help me craft communication appeals to them. These appeals might be based on altruism strategies (appealing to their sense of helping people who need this type of research).
Trend analysis	Major print and broadcast media stories from the past year	This method helps me determine whether journalists have been covering this type of story. If they haven't, I should be prepared for a possible onslaught and the need to educate reporters about animal testing in general. If they have, I can assess the angle of these stories and how they have portrayed companies. (If I had more time, I would conduct a content analysis of these print and broadcast stories. It would be formal research. However, because I'm short on time, I can do only an informal analysis of apparent trends in media coverage of animal testing issues.)

Step 2: Identify Publics

The problem is that Healthtech Labs has been conducting animal testing "under wraps" without sharing this information with important organizational publics who should have been informed. As a result, the company will not be able to draw on key supporters in the event of a public protest of the program. We are looking at lack of awareness and, consequently, lack of support.

Note: Although not requested to do so in the instructions, I should have at this point articulated a goal statement for my campaign. Goal statements should be positive reiterations of the problem statement. One appropriate goal statement would be "to raise awareness and support of the Ragus-A program among members of the target public within the next two years."

Five key publics include the following:

- Rank-and-file employees
- Federal and state agencies that can exert regulatory control over Healthtech Labs activities
- Physicians and medical researchers who support animal testing in general
- Members of the local community who support animal testing
- Members of the local community who aren't sure whether they support animal testing

Original Note: I am not targeting the protesters as a key public because they are unlikely to be willing to communicate with us in a two-way symmetrical manner. As a result, they are highly unlikely to listen to our point of view and prefer instead to insist on their own views. Thus, communicating with them is a waste of time because we are unlikely to prevent the protest anyway — just totally unrealistic, especially given the emotional nature of the animal-testing issue. Instead, we can try to get "our side" of the issue to those who are still in the middle or undecided as well as to reinforce the sense of rightness among those who already support our position.

Objectives

Note: Short-term objectives center on knowledge outcomes, which necessarily precede the changes in attitude and behavior that are longer-term objective outcomes.

Publics	**Short-term objectives (within this calendar year)**	**Long-term objectives (within the next two years)**
Rank-and-file employees	Increase to 100 percent employee awareness of the Ragus-A program. Increase to 100 percent employee knowledge of the purpose of the Ragus-A program.	Gain and maintain support of the program from 75 percent of employees. Maintain employee satisfaction levels with the company at 75 percent or above.
Federal and state regulators that have jurisdiction over types of activities in which Healthtech Labs is engaged	Increase to 100 percent regulators' awareness of the Ragus-A program. Increase to 100 percent regulators' knowledge of the purpose of the Ragus-A program.	Gain and maintain support of the program from 75 percent of regulators.
Physicians and medical researchers who support animal testing in general	Increase to 90 percent the proportion of pro-animal-testing doctors and researchers who are aware of the Ragus-A program. Increase to 90 percent the	Gain and maintain support of the program from 90 percent of pro-animal-testing doctors and researchers. Increase to and maintain at least 15 people as the number of pro-animal-testing doctors and researchers who are willing to speak publicly in

Publics	Short-term objectives (within this calendar year)	Long-term objectives (within the next two years)
	proportion of pro-animal testing doctors and researchers who know the purpose of the Ragus-A program.	support of the program.
Members of the local community who support animal testing	Increase to 90 percent the proportion of pro-animal-testing community members who are aware of the Ragus-A program. Increase to 90 percent the proportion of pro-animal-testing community members who know the purpose the Ragus-A program.	Gain and maintain support of the program from 90 percent of pro-animal-testing community members.
Members of the local community who aren't sure whether they support animal testing	Increase to 90 percent the proportion of "undecided" community members who are aware of the Ragus-A program. Increase to 90 percent the proportion of "undecided" community members who know the purpose of the Ragus-A program.	Gain and maintain support of the program from 60 percent of currently "undecided" community members.

Strategies

Note: My original answers here did not adequately distinguish among the three types of strategies: (1) action strategies, which are internal changes the organization would have to make to achieve its objectives; (2) communication/message-delivery strategies, which are ways by which the messages would be delivered; and (3) communication/message-content strategies, which deal with the content of organizational messages.

Publics	Objectives (for specifics, see above)	Strategies
Rank-and-file employees	Increase employee awareness of the program and knowledge about its purpose.	Educate employees about the purpose, goals, execution and preliminary findings of the project.
	Gain and maintain support of the program among employees.	Explain and justify the previous decision to keep employees from knowing about the program; highlight the benefits of the program.
	Maintain levels of employee satisfaction with the company.	Earn employee trust by apologizing for not informing them earlier, promising to keep them apprised of program developments and findings, and keeping that promise.
Federal and state regulators that have jurisdiction over types of activities in which Healthtech Labs is engaged	Increase regulators' awareness of the program and knowledge about its purpose.	Educate regulators as to the purpose, goals, execution and preliminary findings of the project.
	Gain and maintain support of the program among regulators.	Highlight the benefits of the program; explain and justify the previous decision to keep regulators from knowing about the program.

Publics	Objectives (for specifics, see above)	Strategies
Physicians and medical researchers who support animal testing in general	Increase among these doctors and medical researchers awareness of the program and knowledge about its purpose.	Educate these doctors and medical researchers about the purpose, goals, execution and preliminary findings of the project.
	Gain and maintain support of the program among these doctors and medical researchers.	Highlight the benefits of the program; explain and justify the previous decision to keep regulators from knowing about the program.
	Increase to and maintain at least 15 doctors and researchers who are willing to speak publicly in support of the program.	Convince them of the importance of "expert witnesses" in the "court of public opinion"; convince them that supporting Healthtech Labs is in essence supporting the pro-animal-testing cause in which they believe.
Members of the local community who support animal testing	Increase among these community members awareness of the program and knowledge about its purpose.	Educate these community members about the purpose, goals, execution and preliminary findings of the project.
	Gain and maintain support of the program among these community members.	Highlight the benefits of the program; explain and justify the previous decision to keep regulators from knowing about the program.
Members of the local community who aren't sure whether they support animal testing	Increase among these community members awareness of the program and knowledge about its purpose.	Educate these community members about the purpose, goals, execution and preliminary findings of the project.
	Gain and maintain support of the program among these community members.	Highlight the benefits of the program; explain and justify the previous decision to keep regulators from knowing about the program.

Step 3: Implementation

Note: The words in ALL CAPS below refer to the "seven Cs of communication" explained in EPR 11th.

Publics	Strategy	Message	Tactics/tools	Spokesperson
Rank-and-file employees	Educate employees about the purpose, goals, execution and preliminary findings of the project.	Diabetes is a tough disease, and we must make tough choices to fight it.	Town meeting with all employees Write-up of the program in the next employee newsletter	Company president (because he is the most CREDIBLE and appropriate to this CONTEXT)
	Explain and justify the previous decision to keep employees from knowing about the program; highlight the benefits of the program.	Human diseases are tough enemies, and we must make tough choices in the war against them.	Town meeting with all employees	Company president

Publics	Strategy	Message	Tactics/tools	Spokesperson
Federal and state regulators that have jurisdiction over types of activities in which Healthtech Labs is engaged	Increase regulators' awareness of the program and knowledge about its purpose.	Diabetes is a tough disease, and we must make tough choices to fight it.	In-person meetings with regulators Simple brochure about the program and its benefits	Company president (because he is the most CREDIBLE and appropriate to this CONTEXT)
	Gain and maintain support of the program among regulators.	Human diseases are tough enemies, and we must make tough choices in the war against them.	Simple brochure about the program and its benefits	Company president
Physicians and medical researchers who support animal testing in general	Increase among these doctors and medical researchers awareness of the program and knowledge about its purpose.	While cases of diabetes are increasing, Healthtech Labs is developing a cutting-edge treatment.	Feature article about the program in professional association newsletters	Director of the program (because he is the most CREDIBLE and appropriate to this CONTEXT; also, he can articulate CLEARLY details of the program in ways that fit the technical CAPABILITY of this public)
			Public relations advertisement in trade publication that promotes cutting-edge research of Healthtech Labs without mentioning specific programs	Company president (because he is the most CREDIBLE voice of the organization as a whole)
	Gain and maintain support of the program among these doctors and medical researchers.	Human diseases are tough enemies, and we must make tough choices in the war against them.	Exhibit booth at professional association meetings where program researchers can talk face-to-face with members of this public.	Director of the program
	Increase to and maintain at least 15 doctors and researchers who are willing to speak publicly in support of the program.	Stand up to diabetes; stand up with Healthtech Labs.	Personal contact with potential spokespersons, possibly by phone initially	Director of the program
Members of the local community who support animal testing	Increase awareness of the program and knowledge about its purpose.	Diabetes is a tough disease, and we must make tough choices to fight it.	Video news releases for local broadcast media	Company president Doctors and researchers who support animal testing

Publics	Strategy	Message	Tactics/tools	Spokesperson
			Advertising to put issue on public agenda	Member of the community who talks about how animal testing made possible the treatment that saved her loved one
(Doctors and researchers would be CREDIBLE spokespeople because of their expertise; they are opinion leaders for this public whose views are likely to be heeded, according to the two-step flow model of communication and Roper's concentric circles theory, both of which basically argue that opinion leaders are necessary filters of messages between senders and their desired receiver.)				
	Gain and maintain support of the program among these community members.	Human diseases are tough enemies, and we must make tough choices in the war against them.	Op-ed pieces for community paper and other local print media	Company president Doctors and researchers who support animal testing
Members of the local community who aren't sure whether they support animal testing	Increase among these community members awareness of the program and knowledge about its purpose.	Diabetes is a tough disease, and we must make tough choices to fight it.	Video news releases for local broadcast media	Doctors and researchers who support animal testing
			Advertising to put issue on public agenda	Member of the community who talks about how animal testing made possible the treatment that saved her loved one
	Gain and maintain support of the program among these community members.	Human diseases are tough enemies, and we must make tough choices in the war against them.	Op-ed pieces for community paper and other local print media	Written by an employee to give the "Average Joe" viewpoint (This approach makes the message CLEAR without jargon and accessible to a public with limited CAPABILITY to understand the complex nature of an unfamiliar issue.)

Budget

Tactics/tools	Details	Cost details	Cost
Town meeting with all employees	Refreshments	$1 per attendee, 1,000 employees	$1,000
Write-up of the program in next employee newsletter	Staff time spent writing article	$20/hr equivalent staff salary; five hours to write and edit	$100
Flier that summarizes the program and its benefits to go to all employees with their next pay stubs	Write summary and other information; design flier	$20/hr equivalent staff salary; 15 hours to write, edit and design	$300
	Insert with paychecks	$1 per manual insertion for 1,000 employee pay stubs	$1,000
Personal meetings with regulators	Gas and mileage; and parking downtown	$10 per meeting, for 10 meetings	$100

Tactics/tools	Details	Cost details	Cost
	CEO time spent in meetings	$500/hr equivalent salary for 10 1-hr meetings	$5,000
	Staff time spent arranging meetings	$20/hr equivalent staff salary; two hours	$40
Simple brochure about the program and its benefits	Write summary and other information; design brochure	$20/hr equivalent staff salary; 10 hours	$200
	Printing of brochure	$0.25 per piece for single fold, 4,000 pieces	$1,000
Feature article about the program in professional association newsletters	Senior staff time spent writing and pitching article	$30/hr equivalent staff salary; 20 hours	$600
Op-ed pieces for community paper and other local print media	Senior staff time spent writing and pitching article	$30/hr equivalent staff salary; 20 hours	$600
Video news releases for local broadcast media	Senior staff time spent writing script and training spokespersons; then filming	$30/hr equivalent staff salary; 40 hours	$1,200
Advertising to put issue on public agenda		Contracted to local ad agency; includes talent fees, shooting, film and agency costs	$20,000
		TOTAL COSTS (in-house):	$11,140
		TOTAL COSTS (for budget):	$31,140

Timetable (P=Planning; I=Implementation)

Tactics/Tools	ASAP	In 1 Mo	In 3 Mos.	In 6 Mos.	In 9 Mos.	In/At 12 Mos.	At 18 Mos.	At 24 Mos.
Town meeting with all employees	PI							
Write-up of the program in next employee newsletter (and keeping employees apprised of program developments)		P	I		I	I	I	I
Flier that summarizes the program and its benefits to go to all employees with their next pay stubs	P	I						
Personal meetings with regulators	P	I	I					
Simple brochure about the program and its benefits	P	I	I					
Feature article about the program in professional association newsletters		P	P	I		I		
Op-ed pieces for community paper and other local print media	P	I						

Tactics/Tools	ASAP	In 1 Mo	In 3 Mos.	In 6 Mos.	In 9 Mos.	In/At 12 Mos.	At 18 Mos.	At 24 Mos.
Video news releases for local broadcast media	P	I						
Advertising to put issue on public agenda	P	I						

Step 4: Evaluation

Objectives	Data collection method	Evaluation criteria	Evaluation intervals
Increase to 100 percent employee awareness of Ragus-A program. Increase to 100 percent employee knowledge of the purpose of the Ragus-A program.	Survey	One hundred percent of employees indicate awareness of the program in general and accurate knowledge as to the purpose of the program.	At one year
Gain and maintain support of the program from 75 percent of employees. Maintain employee satisfaction levels with the company at 75 percent or above.	Survey	Seventy-five percent of employees indicate that they support the program, and 75 percent of employees indicate they are satisfied with the company.	At one year and 1.5 years (to measure progress) At two years (to measure achievement or failure)
Increase to 100 percent regulators' awareness of Ragus-A program. Increase to 100 percent regulators' knowledge of the purpose of the Ragus-A program.	Telephone interview	One hundred percent of regulators indicate awareness of the program in general and accurate knowledge as to the purpose of the program.	At one year
Gain and maintain support of the program from 75 percent of regulators.	Telephone interview	Seventy-five percent of regulators indicate support for the program.	At one year and 1.5 years (to measure progress) At two years (to measure achievement or failure)
Increase to 90 percent the proportion of pro-animal-testing doctors and researchers who are aware of the Ragus-A program. Increase to 90 percent the proportion of pro-animal-testing doctors and researchers who know the purpose of the Ragus-A program.	Survey	Ninety percent of doctors and researchers indicating pro-animal-testing views also indicate awareness of the program and knowledge about its purpose.	At one year

Objectives	Data collection method	Evaluation criteria	Evaluation intervals
Gain and maintain support of the program from 90 percent of pro-animal-testing doctors and researchers.	Survey	Ninety percent of doctors and researchers indicating pro-animal-testing views AND knowledge about the program also indicates support of the program.	At two years
Increase to and maintain at least 15 people as the number of pro-animal-testing doctors and researchers who are willing to speak publicly in support of the program.	Trend analysis of print and broadcast news stories about the program	News articles include quotes from 15 pro-animal-testing doctors and researchers supporting the program.	At two years
Increase to 90 percent the proportion of pro-animal-testing community members who are aware of the Ragus-A program. Increase to 90 percent the proportion of pro-animal-testing community members who know the purpose of the Ragus-A program.	Focus group of pro-animal testing community members *Note*: This use of the focus group is not really appropriate because qualitative methods should not be used to obtain quantitative results that can be applied generally from the sample to the population.	In nine out of 10 focus groups, the participants indicate awareness of the program and knowledge as to its purpose.	At one year
Gain and maintain support of the program from 90 percent of pro-animal testing community members.	Focus group of pro-animal testing community members *Note*: See above.	In nine out of 10 focus groups, the participants indicate support for the program.	At two years
Increase to 90 percent the proportion of "undecided" community members who are aware of the Ragus-A program. Increase to 90 percent the proportion of "undecided" community members who know the purpose of the Ragus-A program.	Focus group of (previously) undecided community members *Note*: See above.	In nine out of 10 focus groups, the participants indicate awareness of the program and knowledge as to its purpose.	At one year
Gain and maintain support of the program from 60 percent of currently "undecided" community members.	Focus group of (previously) undecided community members *Note*: See above.	In six out of 10 focus groups, the participants indicate support for the program.	At two years

Note: For intervals of evaluations, see column on the right of table above.

Note: Cost estimates in the budget of this plan would be higher today.

Courtesy of Bey-Ling Sha, Ph.D., APR, who wrote the original plan in 2001. Notes were provided in 2007 by Dr. Sha, now a professor at San Diego State University.