

CALISTHENICS

*Daily exercises
to help you get your brain in shape
for the APR Examination*

#6 Strategy

Each day for the next several days:

1. Find something in the news that involves an organization outside your own field -- a small business, a large corporation, a government entity, or a nonprofit. It can be a challenge, a problem, a solution, an event -- whatever is making news.
2. Put yourself in the shoes of a public relations person for the organization
3. List half a dozen audiences you should be considering.
4. Select two audiences which seem to be the most significant. Choose at least one where money comes into play -- customers, investors, contributors, vendors, dues-paying members, others which fit the situation

Think about what you -- in your public relations capacity for the organization -- might want from those two audiences.

Think in terms of awareness, attitude or action -- **the end result** you are targeting. Consider verbs such as "be aware of, favor, oppose, endorse, buy, discard. . ." or others which fit the situation.

5. NOW consider your **STRATEGY** or strategies for working toward your end result for each audience. You may have one or more strategies for each audience; you may have strategies which fit both of them. Whatever works.

Tip: Your objective -- your end result -- is the "**what**" in your thinking. What you hope to accomplish with that audience. Your strategy is the "**how**." How can you do this effectively, efficiently, on someone else's nickel, using someone else's credibility, bypassing barriers to communication, or otherwise to your advantage?

Military parallels may help, here. Your objective might be to defeat the enemy at a site you are approaching. Your strategy might be to attack under cover of darkness, or circle around behind the enemy and cut off reinforcements, or create a diversion to distract attention, or any number of other pieces of cleverness.

Try to find the pieces of cleverness in your current civilian situation which would give you an advantage.

CAUTION: You may find yourself thinking in terms of specifics and details -- things you would do to carry out your plan. These probably could be regarded as tactics, which are subdivisions of a strategy. Back up one step and see if you can identify the broader

strategy -- the approach you are envisioning which 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 are likely to have “tactics in search of a strategy.” Take time to identify the strategy. It’s probably there, hiding in your list of tactics. It’s important to get it out into daylight. When you need to justify your plan, to supervisors or clients, laying out your strategy or strategies is a basic step.

Do more than one news item a day if you wish -- it can be kind of fun , especially if you compare your notes with a colleague. Comparing is always good. Different brains have different frames of reference, and may augment your thinking.

Ask your colleague if the difference between "what" and "how" is apparent.

You don't need to keep notes. It can be a mental exercise.

It's the brain cells we want to get in practice.