



THE UNIVERSAL ACCREDITATION BOARD ACCREDITATION STUDY COURSE

BASIC CONCEPTS

Session **1**

Overview

This session of the Accreditation Study Course is designed to familiarize candidates with the historical development of public relations in the United States, some of its benefits, and the environment within which professionals currently practice. It also offers a system for effective study.

Reading to be assigned BEFORE this session

- Background and Basic Premises of Public Relations
- Definitions of public relations
- Objectives of public relations
- Benefits
- History (events, dates, people, trends, developments, eras)
- Socioeconomic and political factors influencing the practice of public relations
- Sections 1.1, 1.2, 2.2 through 2.5, and 6.4, Detailed list of Knowledge, Skills and Abilities tested, Candidate's Preparation Guide for Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations

Special Note for Coach

If you have not been coaching recently, please review these preliminary materials: For You, the Coach; The Coaching Method; Managing the Class; About House Rules. Before the day of the class, make sure you are familiar with the content in the reading which candidates should have done, and with the exercises you are going to conduct in this session. Consider any adjustments you may need to make if this is a free-standing unit, or is part of a sequence of preparation classes.

▶ **Significance in Examination**

- History is 2% of the multiple choice examination, but is essential to understanding our profession and doing well in the Readiness Review.

▶ **Handouts for this session**

- Definition of Public Relations – Handout #1
- Public Relations: An Overview (PRSA Foundation Monograph)
 - “How Public Relations Helps Management” by Pat Jackson – Handout #2a
 - How Public Relations Benefits Society – Handout #2b
 - What Public Relations Does – Handout #2c
- SQ3R Study Method – Handout #3

- ▶ **Visual Aids needed for this session**
 - Agenda (if desired, make visual)
 - House Rules (if desired) – Visual #1
 - SQ3R Study Method (optional) – Visual #2
- ▶ **Other materials needed for this session**
 - Roll of chart paper, shelf paper or tractor feed paper – 20-25 feet long (one foot per decade)
 - Large Tip Markers
 - Projector for Visuals
- ▶ **Exercises conducted during this session**
 - Definition of Public Relations
 - Benefits of Public Relations to Management and Society
 - Environment for Public Relations
 - Distinctions among fields (integrated communications)
 - History: Build Timeline (*may be omitted*)
 - Social Responsibility

Agenda for Session

Instructions: Announce agenda, post on flip chart paper or create visual if desired

- Get Acquainted
- Check on Reading
- History
- History Exercise
- Definitions of Public Relations
- Benefits of Public Relations
- Environment for Public Relations
- Social Responsibility
- Distinctions among fields
- Study Tips

I. Get Acquainted

*Instructions: Coach introduces activity
5-10 minutes*

Ask candidates to introduce themselves by name and organization only, to save time; recommend they get further acquainted on break or when convenient.

II. Check on Reading

*Instructions: Questioning by coach
5 minutes*

Ask: How many have made time to do ANY reading so far?
> History
> Pioneers
> Socio-economic and political factors?

- ▶ **Remind class:** You cannot pass the Examination for Accreditation without doing the recommended reading. You cannot cram all the reading into the last few weeks. You won't have the tools to work with as we proceed. It is important to keep current on the reading, and give yourself the best chance possible in the examination.

III. History

Instructions: Coach facilitates discussion.

Allow 15-20 minutes

- ▶ **Ask:** Who's done some reading on history of the profession? (show of hands)
- Say:* Think about breaking the time into eras or stages: How would you label the eras?
- ▶ **Ask:** Who will give me one stage you thought of?
How many had something similar?
Who has another?
How many had something similar?
Proceed in this fashion as long as you think appropriate

► **Probe for these concepts:**

Baskin-Aronoff

- > ***Manipulation.*** Using whatever means is available to achieve desired public opinion and action. Technique of 19th-century press agents. “*There's a sucker born every minute.*”
- > ***Information.*** Public relations is a conduit for information flowing from organizations to the public, so that the public will understand, sympathize with and patronize the organization. Practitioners are publicity agents.
- > ***Mutual influence and understanding.*** Public relations assumes the responsibilities of the previous information function, but also provides information and counsel to management on the nature and realities of public opinion and methods by which the organization can establish policy, make decisions and take action in light of public opinion. Practitioners are public relations counselors.

Bernays' view of manipulation

Bernays said, “The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society.”²

Burson's “Maturation of the Profession”

- > Has anyone come across Harold Burson’s summary of “maturation” of the profession? (*The Handbook of Strategic Public Relations & Integrated Communication*)
- > He was in practice more than 50 years
- > Burson says: Early on, the CEO would ask the public relations person, “How do I say it?”
- > The subject matter was already decided by others
- > Public relations’ assignment was to find the right words
- > In the Sixties, amid issues of civil rights and consumer rights, the question to public relations staff became “What do I say?”
- > When business news moved to the front page, and was subjected to sensationalism, the question became “What do I do?”

► ***Ask:*** *Has anyone come across roots of public relations in the 1700s? 1800s? 1900s?*

- Seedbed era 1900-1917
 - World War I 1917-1919
 - Booming Twenties 1919-1929
 - Roosevelt era and World War II 1930-1945
 - Postwar boom 1945-1965
 - Global information age 1965-present
- > ***Preside over a little discussion.*** If you see gaps in their background, don’t try to fill them; urge the candidates to do more reading to fill their own gaps. Encourage them to use the SQ3R method – which you will hand out later – for better retention.
 - > ***Comment:*** It is important to have a sense of the flow of events and emergence of philosophies about public relations. You may not be examined about specific dates, but you will be expected to know how things have changed over time, and more or less when that occurred. So, set your milestones – whatever is easy for you to remember.

IV. History Exercise: Build Timeline

NOTE: If you are trying to hold this session to two hours total time, you may want to omit this exercise, or hold it to the end to see if time remains. It is useful but not essential.

Instructions: Timeline constructed by candidates under the direction of coach. 20 minutes

** Let members spontaneously choose tasks on the timeline; assign task if candidates hang back.*

- ▶ **Instruct class:** Take the roll or pack of paper and lay it out on a table or whatever work surface you have available in the room. Take big felt-tip pens: Start marking decades – one foot per decade more or less. Start with the current decade and work backwards – as far as you think we need to go back in history.
 - > Now draw a horizontal line down the middle of the strip of paper, full length.
 - > Above the line, insert public relations events and eras
 - > Draw from items mentioned in “roots” above.
 - > Below the line, insert estimates or dates for technology and societal events:
 - development of newspapers, magazines, radio, movies, TV, satellite communication
 - typewriter, telegraph, word processors, desktop publishing, Internet
 - wars, changes in government, depression
 - railroads, automobile, air travel
 - fragmentation of media (from mass media to niche publishing)
 - other significant changes from class
- ▶ **Ask:** What's missing that affects our lives and communication?
 - > If candidates are uncertain about data, and if they will be meeting in a subsequent session, defer until next time and suggest research. Otherwise, remind them to do further reading and study. They need this perspective on their profession.
 - > If this class begins a sequence, keep this as a continuing activity, for reference during class sessions.
 - > Add pertinent items from study or discussion.

V. Exercise: Definitions of Public Relations

Instructions: Conducted by Coach Allow 20-30 minutes

- ▶ **Present the situation orally:** Your local newspaper is preparing a special section with advertising from colleges and business schools and news/feature copy on career fields. You are asked to be the interview source about public relations.
 - > A reporter shows up with this definition as a starting point and asks for your reaction.
 - > Hand out a definition of public relations to each candidate (different definition to each candidate). (*Handout #1*)

Allow two minutes for candidates to make notes.

NOTE TO COACH: If you have a large class, you will need to assign the same definition to more than one candidate, and consolidate the response process.

Here is a method:

- 1) Hand out the definitions, without telling the candidates there will be duplications.
- 2) Modify the instructions:
 - > Give the candidates two minutes to make their notes, but instruct them to zero in on three points they think it important to make in discussion with the reporter. No more than three.
- 3) When you call for responses:
 - > Inform the candidates that several had the same definition
 - > Ask one candidate for one point
 - > Ask another candidate with the same definition for a different point
 - > Continue to request different points from the candidates with that definition
 - > If someone has more than three, accept a few additional items, but remind them that you asked for three only, and in the examination it is important to limit yourself to what the questions say or what the review panel asks for.

- ▶ What points do you want to cover?
 - > You may agree or disagree with the definition; comment on what is missing or extraneous; focus on what is significant.
- ▶ *Ask* each candidate to read the allotted definition and tell how he or she would respond.
- ▶ **Inquire:** What are you seeing as the most significant aspects to get across to the reporter and the eventual readers?
- ▶ **Take a look at textbook definitions:**
 - > Have class find definitions in whatever texts are in the classroom at the moment
 - > Ask class to single out strong points and shortcomings
 - > If someone finds Rex Harlow's long definition, note tangle of activities, concept and function (*Effective Public Relations*, 8th edition, page 4.)
- ▶ **Observe:** Sometimes you are better off to rely on description rather than definition. Here is a statement from one of the partner organizations in the Universal Accreditation Board, PRSA. It is more than twenty years old, but the basics endure. You may find it useful in interpreting your function.
- ▶ **Hand out** “What Public Relations Does” (*Handout #2c*)
 - > Somewhere in the examinations this subject will probably come up.
 - > When selecting your answer, make sure the significant elements are covered.

Elapsed: 1:00

VI. Benefits of Public Relations

Instructions: Coach gives instruction and facilitates discussion. Allow 15 minutes

▶ **For management**

- > Coach announces exercise orally:
 - You have been invited to make a guest appearance in a university class of students working toward an MBA. Your assigned topic: “How public relations helps management.”
 - Take five minutes; list five points you want to cover.
- > At end of five minutes, call for responses:
 - Who will give me one thing from your notes? (recognize one candidate for one item)
 - How many had something similar? (show of hands)
 - Who has something different? (recognize different candidate)
 - How many had something similar? (show of hands)
 - Continue in this fashion

▶ **Remind** candidates to reinforce or amplify their own lists, for future review

- > Anyone have something in your notes that you haven't mentioned?
- > **Probe:** Look over your list; anything missing?
 - If they have overlooked something essential: What's still missing?
As coach, your goal is to make them keep thinking.

▶ **Hand out** the late Pat Jackson's thoughts from *PR Reporter*, cited in a PRSA Foundation monograph.³ (*Handout #2a*)

- > *Comment:* “Here are one person’s thoughts on this topic.”
“Not new but still very current.”

▶ **For society**

Allow 10-15 minutes

- > Coach announces exercise orally:
 - A regional association of teachers and researchers in sociology will hold a convention in your city. The program chair is assembling a forum on the effect of various professions on society. You are invited to be the spokesperson for public relations.
 - Take three minutes. The topic again: The effect of public relations on society.
 - Note three points you want to emphasize and would be prepared to discuss.
- > Proceed as in previous exercise: Who'll give me one thing? How many had something similar? Who has something different ?

NOTE TO COACH: *Be aware: You may not get much material from candidates. We do not think about this topic often enough in our professional circles. So be sure to probe, offering insights of your own to get the discussion going.*

▶ **Hand out** *How Public Relations Benefits Society*⁴, from PRSA Foundation monograph, and recommend it to them for use when indicated. (*Handout #2b*)

VII. Environment for Public Relations

*Instructions: Coach opens discussion & conducts exercise
This is sometimes called the ecology of public relations.*

Allow 20 minutes

▶ **EXERCISE:**

Take three minutes and list five **characteristics** of society today that have a bearing on your own public relations work.

> In usual fashion, share and compile:

- “Who will give me one thing?”
- “How many had something similar?”
- “Who has something different?”

> This can be an important list. Let's develop it further. What further **trends** in society do you observe, which impact your public relations work?

▶ Allow two minutes, take responses as usual.

> If necessary, probe for **changes** in:

- Family structure, unwed couples, single parents, gay/lesbian households
- Interracial families, by marriage or adoption
- Health care and payment for it
- Housing: single-family, apartment, condo, retirement village, assisted living
- Gender roles
- Life expectancy
- Work patterns: employee, independent contractor, part-timer
- Manufacturing, retailing, financial services
- Education: public schools, private schools, universities, technical schools
- Immigration and ethnically diverse population
- International business activity
- Humanitarian activity in the United States or abroad
- Poverty or prosperity
- The overall ecology: concern for the environment
- Others of your choice in light of current affairs

▶ **Ask:** What's still missing? Anything new and significant?

▶ **Observe:** Take a look back at the knowledge, skills and abilities relevant to this session which were listed in the assigned reading. Think about how they relate to this discussion of trends.

** It is fair to say you should be prepared for a question of some kind on this topic, or be able to incorporate it into a related discussion.*

VIII. Social Responsibility

Instructions: Coach raises questions for study & discussion *Allow 10 minutes*

- ▶ **Take up** each question in turn, and let discussion proceed within the allotted time.
 - > What do you see as the responsibility of your firm/employer to society?
 - > Are there differences of opinion about that?
 - Internal, external?
 - > Is this a significant question?
 - > What if you are working for Exxon Mobil? Or Philip Morris?

You are not likely to get a specific question on this topic, but you may well be expected to reflect your awareness and understanding of the concept in the personal interview.

Elapsed: 2:00

IX. Exercise: Distinction Between/Among Fields

Instructions: A drill to assess existing knowledge. *Allow 20-30 minutes*

- ▶ **Present** this situation orally: You are asked to make an appearance before a continuing education class in business school.
 - > The class includes adults currently in business, working on MBAs.
 - > Discuss the difference between:
 - Public relations
 - Propaganda
 - Advertising
 - Sales promotion
 - Marketing
 - Publicity
- ▶ **Allow** 10 minutes for the class to make notes on the common ground and differences in the fields.
- ▶ **Repeat** the statement and the list as they start to work.
- ▶ **Call for** responses as seems best to you:
 - > Over the whole list, over pairs of terms, or as they arise spontaneously.
 - > See that all are discussed and put into perspective
- ▶ Probe especially for comparison between public relations and marketing
 - > There is a tendency today to use the term “marketing” in a broad sense.
 - > There are many similarities in structure.
 - Identifying audiences, segmenting them, setting objectives

- ▶ **Primary difference:** Marketing always aims at an exchange, usually involving money.
 - > You are in the market; you exchange something for a product or service.
 - > Public relations may assist this process.
 - > Public relations may, instead or in addition, aim at:
 - awareness
 - attitude
 - preventing action
 - mitigating crises
 - controlling damage
 - enhancing opinions
 - other specific objectives not directly linked to sales
- ▶ **Organizational difference** (staff and line):
 - > Marketing usually is a **line** management function.
 - > Public relations is a **staff** management function, providing counsel and other services to support line functions.⁵
- ▶ **Ask:** Now, what about integrated communication?
 - > How many of you are using some form of integrated services in your work?
(*Show of hands*)
 - > Can you share with us how this works?
- ▶ **Recommend** to class the bookshelf resource, *Handbook of Strategic Public Relations and Integrated Communications*, specifically the Introduction by Clarke L. Caywood, editor, Northwestern University⁶

X. STUDY TIPS

If desired, Visual #3, SQ3R

It is probably safe to assume that you will be doing further study as you progress toward a Readiness Review. Let me share with you a study method which has proven to be effective for accreditation candidates. (*Give class Handout #3, SQ3R Study Method*) Take a couple of minutes to read through it. If you have questions, we can talk about it. Otherwise, take it home with you and put it to work.

*Elapsed: 2:30
With timeline exercise, c. 2:50*

References

- 1 *Public Relations, The Profession and the Practice*, Otis Baskin, Craig Aronoff, Dan Lattimore, 1997 (Dubuque IA: Times Mirror Higher Education Group, Inc., Brown & Benchmark). Copyright 1997, Times Mirror Higher Education Group, Inc.
- 2 *The Later Years*, p. 150, Marvin Olansky quoting Bernays' book *Propaganda* (H&M Publishers, Rhinebeck NY 12572) Copyright 1986, H&M Publishers
- 3 *Public Relations, An Overview*, PRSA Foundation Monograph Series, Vol. 1, Number 3, November 1991 (New York: The PRSA Foundation) c. 1991 The PRSA Foundation
- 4 *Public Relations, An Overview*, PRSA Foundation Monograph Series, Vol. 1, Number 3, November 1991. (New York: The PRSA Foundation) c. 1991 The PRSA Foundation p. 9
- 5 *Effective Public Relations*, Scott M. Cutlip, Allan H. Center, Glen M. Broom, p. 111, 8th edition. (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs NJ 07632 2000)
- 6 *The Handbook of Strategic Public Relations & Integrated Communications*, Clarke L. Caywood, Ph.D., Editor, pp iii, iv, xi-xxv. Copyright 1997, Clarke L. Caywood. (McGraw-Hill, 11 West 19th Street, New York, NY 10011)

Session 1 Links**Handouts**

- | | | |
|-------|---|---|
| #1 | Definition of Public Relations | http://www.prsa.org/_Advance/apr/coachpdf/coachHO1.pdf |
| #2a-c | Public Relations:An Overview
(PRSA Foundation Monograph) | |
| #2a | “How Public Relations Helps
Management” by Pat Jackson | http://www.prsa.org/_Advance/apr/coachpdf/coachHO2a.pdf |
| #2b | How Public Relations
Benefits Society | http://www.prsa.org/_Advance/apr/coachpdf/coachHO2b.pdf |
| #2c | What Public Relations Does | http://www.prsa.org/_Advance/apr/coachpdf/coachHO2c.pdf |
| #3 | SQ3R Study Method | http://www.prsa.org/_Advance/apr/coachpdf/coachHO3.pdf |

Visual Aids

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|---|
| * | Agenda (if desired,make visual) | |
| #1 | House Rules (if desired) | http://www.prsa.org/_Advance/apr/coachpdf/coachVis1.pdf |
| #2 | SQ3R Study Method (optional) | http://www.prsa.org/_Advance/apr/coachpdf/coachVis2.pdf |