



THE UNIVERSAL ACCREDITATION BOARD ACCREDITATION STUDY COURSE

SHORT EXERCISES

Session E

Overview

These seven short exercises have been assembled for coaches' use as needed. The exercises can be offered to augment a class on a related subject, for warm-up, for quick drills or to zero in on a specific point such as propaganda or the question: "Is public relations a profession?" All of them have been used over a period of years within a successful Accreditation preparation program, and have proven to be effective tools for igniting discussion and learning. Consider their possibilities for developing the aplomb candidates will need in the Readiness Review.

- Relationship to Management (20 min.)
- Career Options in Public Relations (20 min.)
- Helping Management Understand (20 min.)
- Concept of a Profession (10 min.)
- "Quickies" on Communication (30 min.)
- Propaganda (15 – 20 min.)
- Purpose & Value of Associations (10 – 15 min.)
(NOTE: To be used after class has studied the Diffusion Process.)

1. Relationship to Management

20 minutes

Instructions: Present exercise orally

- ▶ You are invited to make a presentation to a prestigious management club in your city. The members are CEOs of small-to-mid-sized organizations or seconds-in-command aspiring to move up. MBA types. Your topic:

“What management should expect from public relations staff or counsel”

- ▶ *List five main points you want to be sure to cover.*
 - > Take five-to-ten minutes to make notes, share
- ▶ *Manage the discussion as usual; fill gaps.*
 - “Who will give me one thing?”
 - “How many had something similar?”
 - “Who had something different?”
 - Until all of everyone's items have been heard.
- ▶ *Probe for the following dozen items and encourage note taking.*
 - > The purpose of this exercise is not to establish the five highest priorities, but to broaden the candidates’ horizons to a comprehensive view of the function.

NOTE TO COACH: Remember the procedure for probing: *What’s missing? What’s still missing? You’re overlooking some things I think are important . . . There are still some significant items I haven’t heard . . . Keep thinking...*[Don’t feed items unless candidates absolutely cannot come up with them unaided].

- Anticipating emerging issues
 - Early warning system
- Assistance in or management of crises
- Understanding of communication and public opinion
 - Ability to elicit and measure opinion, internally and externally
- Being attuned to groups and influences outside the executive's normal sphere
- Familiarity with the organization's goals, mission, structure
- Familiarity with the industry or field
- Ability to build a coherent public relations plan
- Constructive interaction with other functions
 - Support of activities by other functions (depending on organizational structure)
- Responsibility
- Loyalty
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Financial accountability
- Any remaining points from ethical considerations

- Let me read you some thoughts from L.L. Golden, author of *Only by Public Consent*, and a contributing writer on public relations to the *Saturday Review* in the 1960s. This is sometimes termed “The NO Function”:

“The practitioner of the future will have to be a 'no' person who will have to tell management what they may not like to hear. This is an extremely difficult part of the job, for it means that the public relations professional may well be laying his or her job on the line. This is understandable, for managers are like other people. They do not like to be told unpalatable facts. Too often they want only to be confirmed in their fixed opinion. But if the professional in public relations fails to perform the 'no' function, others will be found to do it.”

- *Ask:* Do you think his remarks are on target?
- Does anyone have personal experience along this line?
- [Do not linger on this, but reinforce the 'no' function.]

2. Career Options in Public Relations

20 minutes

▶ **Handout for this session**

- Elements of Public Relations – Handout #48

Note to Coach: Please see *The Coaching Method* (in the introduction section) about presenting exercises orally and managing the discussion.

▶ *Present the exercise orally:*

- > You are invited to give a presentation to an adult education class in career fields.
- > The class includes high school students, high school graduates, degreed adults who are re-entering the workforce or seeking a change of occupation.

▶ Your topic is “*Options and Opportunities in Public Relations.*”

- > What will you cover? Take five-to-ten minutes to make notes.
- > Seek responses in the usual fashion.

Who will give me one thing . . . how many had something similar . . . who has something different . . . continue until all notes are reported . . .

Note to Coach: This exercise should bring up a range of jobs, junior to senior, specialized areas, centralized/decentralized departments, contract services, graphic design, desktop publishing, webmastering, outside counsel . . .

- > Remember to probe with “What's missing?”
- > This is **adult education**.
 - What kind of mature adults do you have?
 - What about events management?
 - Hospitality?
 - Liaison with organized groups?
 - Government relations?
 - Other things mature people can do . . .
- > Check responses against list in Handout #48, *Elements of Public Relations*

3. Helping Management Understand

20 minutes

▶ Handouts for this session:

- Elements of Public Relations– Handout #48
- How Public Relations Helps Management– Handout #2a

[*Note to coach:* Reviewing the handouts for your own information before conducting the exercise will give you a better handle on the topic. Distribute them to the class **at the end** of the exercise.]

▶ *Present the situation orally:*

- > You are to participate in a panel discussion describing and defining public relations for a class of experienced middle managers in an executive-development MBA program. List at least five elements or aspects of public relations practice that you want to be sure the panel covers in discussion.
- > Select one element on which you wish to comment, and list the points you will cover.
- > Take ten minutes.

▶ *When time is up, continue:*

Ask for elements first.

- > Let student responses augment each other.
- > Probe for benefits to management.

▶ *Also probe for:*

- management function
- planned activity or programs
- two-way communication
- aligning management and publics
- internal and external audiences
- public interest

▶ Give class the two handouts; preside over any discussion they generate.

NOTE: The purpose of this exercise is simply to broaden the candidates' frame of reference about the comprehensive nature of the profession and its functions. It is not intended to set up rote learning. It is intended to give them ammunition for responding to questions about the field in which we work, and how our activities are beneficial to management.

4. Concept of a Profession

Instructions: Raise questions with the class

10 minutes

- ▶ What constitutes a profession? [Reference, *Effective Public Relations*, Page 51]
 - > Take two minutes and make notes.
 - > Share as usual. "Who will give me one thing?"

- ▶ What are the hallmarks of a professional approach?
 - > For response, shift to raising hands; take responses immediately.
 - > Probe with questions: "How do you know when you are dealing with a professional? How is that different from another person in the same occupation?"
 - > Probe for body of knowledge, standardized training or education, other aspects in text.
 - > Probe for aspect of performance in the public interest.

- ▶ "What about licensing? Is it the mark of a profession?"
 - > Recognize opinions immediately.
 - > Think about the occupations in which persons are licensed — what do they have in common?
 - Medicine, law, engineering, architecture, cosmetology, bartending . . .
 - Probe for effect on human health and safety.
 - > Why do you think public relations practitioners are not licensed?

- ▶ Preside over discussion
 - > **Probe for**
 - Conflict with Constitutional right to free speech
 - No 'lever' for enforcement

Note to Coach: Don't try to settle these questions at this time. Just start the class thinking about these points and encourage them to recognize their significance.

- ▶ *Conclude by reminding class:* "Be thinking about these things.. See what your textbooks have to say, and what the opinions of leading figures have been. These are important points."

5. “Quickies” on Communication

Instructions: Review information, preside over discussion

15-20 minutes

- ▶ **Readability:** Be sure you are acquainted with the “Fog index” and related systems
 - > Understand how to use them.
 - You are not likely to need to do it manually
 - Word processing programs may include this application.
 - > Remember, people who are capable of high reading levels:
 - May use those levels for work-related or instructional materials.
 - Probably prefer lesser level for leisure or public-information material.
 - May be giving fragmentary attention when they read your material.
 - So write for easy reading whenever possible.
 - > Caveat: defogged does not equal good
 - Evaluate the defogged stuff for clarity, comprehension and the other hallmarks of good written material.
 - > References – *Effective Public Relations*, p. 439

- ▶ **Feedback:** How can you arrange it?
 - > *Ask class* for examples of how they get feedback.
 - > Supplement from your own experience if needed and if you wish.
 - > If examples are insufficient, assign class to ask colleagues and report back.

- ▶ **Channels you can control.**
 - > Cite Jim Lukaszewski¹ on mass media. [Pronounced: Loo-ka-shev'-skee]
 - We're still operating on obsolete notions about news media being objective.
 - If you use news media as a principal conduit, your information will be filtered, altered, modified, editorialized and emotionalized or ignored altogether.
 - Never substitute media relations for directly reaching those most directly affected, first. Move around the media; go direct.
 - Go face-to-face, door-to-door, belly button to belly button. If your audiences hear it from your lips directly, what the media says and does will matter a whole lot less.

¹ James Lukaszewski, APR, Fellow, The Lukaszewski Group, Inc., White Plains, NY, publishes Executive Action newsletter and is represented in many other publications. This quotation is from Executive Action 1-3/93, copyright 1993 James Lukaszewski, permission granted to reprint with attribution.

6. Propaganda

Instructions: Discussion conducted by coach

30 minutes

- ▶ *Raise a question* with class: Are you ever accused of dealing in propaganda?
 - > Is that good or bad?
 - > Why?
- ▶ Are you familiar with the source of the word?
 - > [If no one in the class knows, cite the Catholic Church. In the late 1600s, Pope Gregory V established the “congregation for propagating the faith,” sometimes called the Propaganda College. It was active in missionary work.]
 - > Dictionary definitions include “(a) ideas, facts or allegations spread deliberately to further one's cause or damage an opposing cause.” [Webster's Ninth Collegiate].
- ▶ *Ask class:* Does that sound like anything you ever do?
 - > Do you spread ideas or facts to further your cause?
 - > What's right or wrong with that?

Note to Coach

This section usually generates spirited discussion. Probe for the **advocacy** function. Are we required to disseminate negative information about our organizations, to balance the positives we emphasize? Relate to ‘Customary’ Codes of Ethics.

Advocacy – 1) Serving the public interest by acting as responsible advocates for those we represent. 2) Providing a voice in the marketplace of ideas, facts and viewpoint to aid informed public debate.

Honesty – Adhering to the highest standards of accuracy and truth in advancing the interests of those we represent and in communicating with the public.

Expertise – Building mutual understanding, readability and relationships among the wide array of institutions and audiences.

Loyalty – Being faithful to those we represent, while honoring our obligation to serve the public interest.

You could lead discussion to historical comments cited – discussion of releasing information during wartime, the definition of propaganda, substituting name-calling for evidence of facts, truth, etc.

- ▶ *Comment:* Some good thinkers in this field saw propaganda as positive
 - **Edward Bernays**², 1928, “Intelligent men must realize that propaganda is the modern instrument by which they can fight for productive ends and help to bring order out of chaos.”
 - **Bernays**³, 1932: “How can you blame the intelligent business man who has millions invested in his industry, and thousands depend on it for jobs, if he attempts by

² Edward Bernays, in *Propaganda*, cited by Marvin Olansky in Bernays' *The Later Years*, p. 147. c. 1986 H&M Publishers, Rhinebeck NY 12572.

intelligent propaganda to give these shifting tides of taste a direction which he can follow without loss; to control by means of propaganda what otherwise would be controlled disastrously by chance?"

- **Walter Lippman**⁴, 1922, describes the importance of mental images and preconceptions in forming public opinion, and suggests that propaganda is an effort to alter the mental picture and “to substitute one social pattern for another.”
 - **Elmer Davis**⁵, 1946: “The Office of War Information did make propaganda against our enemies, both to their home publics, to the inhabitants of occupied countries and where necessary to neutral countries; but we stuck to the truth. Luckily, the truth was on our side. We told the truth to advance the interest of the United State at war. That was propaganda and I am not ashamed of it.”
 - > Davis cites a distinction between psychological warfare, which is harmful, and “harmless” propaganda, to “tell the truth, to endeavor to present a complete and rounded picture of American news and American life, with both the lights and shadows” as the way to “advance the prestige and the interest of the United States.”
- ▶ **Comment:** **Ivy Lee** saw propaganda as “the effort to propagate ideas,” but observed that “the essential evil of propaganda is failure to disclose the source of information.” The evil can be dispelled if editors use judgment and the public demands to know the source of information, he said.
- ▶ **Ask:** How can you recognize propaganda [especially when someone else uses it!]
 - > Ask for current examples of these propaganda devices cited by Clyde R. Miller⁶ (1937)
 - Glittering generalities – so dazzling they blind one to the evidence
 - Name calling – emotion-laden terms that become substitutes for evidence
 - Transfer – guilt by association; favorable impression by association
 - Bandwagon – “everyone is doing it”
 - Plain folks – plays on distrust of superiority or excellence
 - Testimonials – cites an authority whose expertise is irrelevant to the topic
 - Card-stacking – one-sided evidence and half-truth
 - > Probe for use of name-calling in controversies such as abortion; endorsements by public figures for good causes under transfer; “bandwagon” in soft-drink advertising, “plain folks” in politics; testimonials by sports figures . . .
- ▶ **Ask:** How are you going to decide when propaganda is good or bad?
 - > **Probe** for “bad” when it deceives, misleads or damages.

³Edward Bernays, in *Atlantic* magazine, cited by Marvin Olansky in Bernays' *The Later Years*, p. 148. c. 1986 H&M Publishers, Rhinebeck NY 12572.

⁴ Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion*, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1922, cited in PRSA Body of Knowledge, III.1.C.17

⁵ Elmer Davis, “The Government News Service: Shall It Be Continued?” *Journalism Quarterly* 23 (1946) 146-154, cited in PRSA Body of Knowledge I.I.A.14

⁶ Clyde R. Miller (1937)

7. Purpose & Value of Associations

10-15 minutes

NOTE: This exercise should be used after class has studied the Diffusion Process

► **Reading to be assigned BEFORE this session, if possible**

Otherwise, recommend it for follow-up

- > Textbook material on business and nonprofit associations
 - *Effective Public Relations*
 - *Public Relations: The Profession and the Practice*
 - Other texts
- > Sections 2.1, 2.3, 5.2, 5.8, 5.9, Detailed List of Knowledge, Skills and Abilities tested in the Examination process

► *Ask:* How many have read some textbook material about associations?

- > *If necessary, admonish:* Do not neglect your reading. You need both class work and reading to be sure of your background for the examination.

► *Cite DeTocqueville*

[Pronounced: de Tohk'vill]

- > *Relate:* Alexis de Tocqueville, an aspiring politician in France, came to the United States in 1831 to study the operation of a democratic society, and produced an authoritative work in two volumes. Among his observations was the fact that Americans organize themselves into voluntary associations, creating networks of contacts that are a strong element in the nation. All you need to do is look around you to be reminded that this is true today. Americans often do business through their associations. These are channels through which they lobby, they market, they form insurance groups, they socialize, they promote.

- Now, what good is that to you in the practice of public relations?

► Let's suppose that members of a profession, or an industry, are among your target audiences.

- > *Ask:* Can you think of a strategy that might involve an association?
 - Allow one to two minutes, share thoughts.
 - Probe for gaining endorsement, disseminating through their publications, consulting with committee chairs, appearing on conference programs, identifying respected peers, obtaining testimonials, undertaking legislative efforts.
- > Connect your strategy to the diffusion process (See Session 7):
 - Is there a parallel to the extension agents — knowledgeable, helpful?
 - Is there a parallel to “neighbors and friends?”
- > Your project might tie into the association’s own mission, goals or objectives.