

# PUBLIC RELATIONS THOUGHT & PRACTICE

This test is an overview of the public relations field. Topics include: the foundation ideas and fundamental concepts of contemporary public relations practice; studies of public opinion formation, influence and measurement; techniques of communication and journalism which effectively reach large audiences; and management skills required to plan and execute a successful public relations program. (3 s.h.) COM-210-TE

This is a two-hour examination in which you must answer 100 multiple-choice questions (worth 1 point each). A passing score is **60** out of 100 points.

**Here are the topics covered and their approximate importance on the test:**

## **I. OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS FIELD (25%)**

This category includes the terminology that distinguishes public relations from other aspects of business such as marketing, advertising, and press agency. It also includes the history, people, and events that formed and developed the public relations profession, such as Ivy Lee, Edward Bernays, and others. The test-taker should be aware of the functions of public relations such as managing problems and issues, communicating changes, and communicating ethical concerns.

## **II. LEGAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES (5%)**

The test-taker must become aware of the ethics and professionalism of the public relations practitioner. Statements issued by the Public Relations Society of America clarify the legal and ethical issues of the public relations field. Concepts of libel and invasion of privacy should be understood.

## **III. PERSUASION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS (15%)**

The test-taker must understand the various avenues of communication (internally and externally) available to practitioners of public relations. The test taker should be aware of how many practitioners understand public opinion through research and how that information develops public relations strategy.

## **IV. WORKING WITH THE MEDIA (15%)**

There are several strategies that a public relations practitioner uses to gain cooperation with different media: print and broadcasting. Strategies vary with different media: newspapers, magazines, news syndicates, radio, television, and cable television. The test-taker should be aware of these strategies.

## **V. THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROCESS: PLANNING, PROGRAMMING, IMPLEMENTING (35%)**

The process includes a) research, b) analysis, c) communication, d) evaluation.

## **VI. PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS (5%)**

The test-taker should understand the corporate setting in which public relations fits. An understanding of corporate responsibility and consumer affairs is necessary. Government, non-profit organizations, health care, education, trade associations, professional societies, and labor unions are also included in this category. Each has different informational goals.

**A textbook to help you prepare:**

We recommend that you use this text as your primary reference.

Glen M. Broom. *Cutlip and Center's Effective Public Relations*.  
Current edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall/Pearson

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

1. Which part of public relations deals with emerging issues and their potential impact on an organization?
  - a. Public opinion
  - b. Issues management
  - c. Public affairs
  - d. Lobbying
  
2. Approximately half of all practitioners work in
  - a. government
  - b. business and commercial
  - c. health care and hospitals
  - d. public relations firms
  
3. What is the most common threat to a client-firm relationship?
  - a. Clients' questions about costs
  - b. Resistance to outside advice
  - c. Superficial grasp of organization's unique problems
  - d. Personality conflicts
  
4. In which era did muckraking journalism lead to the widespread introduction of public relations in business?
  - a. Postwar Era, 1945 - 1965
  - b. Roosevelt Era, 1930 - 1945
  - c. Booming Twenties Era, 1919 - 1929
  - d. Seedbed Era, 1900 - 1917
  
5. What is the main purpose of licensing practitioners?
  - a. To regulate access to posts in the field
  - b. To create an elite of public relations practitioners
  - c. To preserve the well-being of society
  - d. To achieve better wages for licensed practitioners
  
6. Publishing and selling the creative work of others and protecting property rights of one's own creative work is regulated by
  - a. libel and publication regulations
  - b. access and deregulation
  - c. Securities and Exchange Commission
  - d. copyright and trademark law

7. Early theories of mass communication suggested that mass society audiences were passive recipients of media messages and vulnerable to manipulation by those in control. Which of the following best describes current thinking?
  - a. Audiences are more vulnerable and passive than ever before.
  - b. Television viewing, in particular, creates increased activity in the right hemisphere of viewers' brains.
  - c. Active receivers are not uniformly affected by mass communication messages.
  - d. Technology has led to increasingly passive recipients at the ends of message transmission systems.
8. Which form of communication is most effective in forming or changing predispositions toward an issue?
  - a. Interpersonal
  - b. Media
  - c. Group
  - d. Public
9. What is the major advantage of organizational publications?
  - a. Their ability to provide a revenue source for sponsoring organizations
  - b. Their ability to deliver specific, detailed information to narrowly defined target publics
  - c. Their ability to avoid the problems typically associated with two-way media
  - d. Their ability to give sponsoring organizations a means of uncontrolled communications
10. What should a practitioner do if he does not know the answer to a reporter's question?
  - a. Give the reporter other information he is certain is correct.
  - b. Say that the information is "off the record" and will be disseminated later.
  - c. Say "I don't know" and promise to provide the information later.
  - d. Say "no comment," rather than look like he doesn't know.
11. The "internal factors" portion of the situation analysis often includes
  - a. a communication audit
  - b. strategy suggestions
  - c. community focus groups
  - d. a listing of media contacts
12. The process of identifying who is involved and affected by a situation is called a(n)
  - a. exploratory survey
  - b. situation interview
  - c. communication audit
  - d. stakeholder analysis
13. About what proportion of nonprofit sector practitioners do research?
  - a. One-quarter
  - b. One-half
  - c. Two thirds
  - d. Almost all

14. Psychographics refers to
  - a. individual values, lifestyles and characteristics
  - b. individual sex, age, race and income statistics
  - c. potential influence
  - d. all of the above
  
15. The American flag is an example of a
  - a. stereotype
  - b. semantic device
  - c. symbol
  - d. message
  
16. Which traditional news criterion would you expect to be most important in public relations messages distributed through the mass media?
  - a. Proximity
  - b. Timeliness
  - c. Prominence
  - d. Impact
  
17. Which of the following companies specializes in radio ratings research?
  - a. Audit Bureau of Circulation
  - b. A. C. Nielson Company
  - c. The Arbitron Company
  - d. Simmons Market Research Bureau
  
18. Which phase of research is associated with summative evaluation?
  - a. Implementation
  - b. Impact
  - c. Attitude change
  - d. Preparation
  
19. What is the primary public relations activity in financial relations, often requiring half of the staff's time for up to six months a year?
  - a. Measuring opinions toward the company among investors
  - b. Producing the annual report
  - c. Making arrangements and preparing materials for financial meetings
  - d. Writing and disseminating financial news releases
  
20. What is the primary job of government public relations practitioners today?
  - a. To ensure active cooperation in government programs
  - b. To foster citizen support for established policies
  - c. To provide appropriate propaganda to ensure maintenance of power
  - d. To ensure the constant flow of information to citizens

21. Which of the following best describes the primary task(s) of public relations that are common to all nonprofit organizations?
- a. Promoting public service and building public trust
  - b. Lobbying the government for increased funding
  - c. Identifying the weak areas of community support
  - d. Justifying the cost of fund-raising efforts

### **ANSWERS TO SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

1. **b** 2. **b** 3. **a** 4. **d** 5. **c** 6. **d** 7. **c** 8. **a** 9. **b** 10. **c** 11. **a**  
12. **d** 13. **c** 14. **a** 15. **c** 16. **d** 17. **c** 18. **b** 19. **b** 20. **d** 21. **a**