DEVELOPING THE MIND OF A STRATEGIC ADVISOR:
GETTING TO THE TABLE EARLIER & WITH MORE PERSONAL POWER

Participant Guide

Sponsored by the
North Dakota Professional Communicators Spring Conference 2014

Presented by
James E. Lukaszewski,
ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA

Friday, April 11, 2014
10:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Central

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Today’s Program

Today’s program will focus on:

• Defining Strategy
• The Seven Skills of the Strategist
• Building Your Influence
• Being Sought After
• Your Questions
My Philosophy

1. All problems are management problems before they are any other kind of problem.
2. All management problems are leadership challenges.
3. Leadership resides with those who can maintain more supporters than detractors.
4. Staff functions exist and are funded by leadership to help leaders do their jobs better.
5. Managers and leaders want to make the decisions... often based on the advice they receive from trusted strategic advisors.

My Assumptions

1. You are the table
2. You recognize what you need to do to be trusted
3. You are willing to change yourself to get there
4. YOYO

What do they want from you?

• Be candid.
• Help the boss with what to do next.
• Provide advice on the spot.
• Provide options.
• Say things that matter.
• Say things that the boss doesn’t know.
• Say things that the boss needs to know.
Understanding Leadership Realities

• Leadership is mostly self-designated, self-taught, self-evaluated, and self-regenerated.
• Leadership is a fundamentally lonely activity. The bigger the organization the more isolated leadership can become.
• Freedom to act is limited.
• Success depends on everyone else.

Five Trends

• The average tenure of U.S. CEOs is decreasing (41 months or less).

• Huge compensation packages still allow CEOs to drop out, even with public uproar.

Five Trends (continued)

• Non-business issues are imposing themselves, e.g., globalization, adverse legislation, anti-corporate activism.
• CEOs have yet to be measured on their morality or belief systems, but that’s coming.
• In both the U.S. and in Europe, career-defining risks for CEOs are increasing.
Broaden Your Perspective

- Notice trends.
- Study leaders.
- Study management information.
- Talk/write to time.
- Understand their needs.

Leaders Are Strategists

Managers Work Inside The Box
Strategy

- A unique mixture of mental energy verbally injected into an organization through communication, which results in behavior that achieves organizational objectives.

Jack Welch on Strategy

The movement of a core idea or concept through changing circumstances.

Jacked Up: The Inside Story of How Jack Welch Talked GE into Becoming the World’s Greatest Company
By Bill Lane

Strategy Is...

- Positive
- Energizing
- Purposeful
- About tomorrow
- How we get to the future
Strategies Are...

• Longer term
• Adaptable
• Broad in scope
• Inherently risky
• Lateral thinking vs. logical thinking

Understand the Differences Between:

• Leadership and management
• Staff and operations
• Strategy and stuff
• Optimism and pragmatism
• Management thinking styles
• Yesterday and tomorrow

Non-Strategy

• Create spin.
• Create stuff.
• Debate the past.
• Focus on the unimportant.
• Whine about lawyers or consultants.
Seven Skills of the Strategist

• Constructive Approaches (Tools)
• Inconsistency
• Management Sensitivity
• Pattern Intuition
• Pragmatism
• Strategic Thinking
• Verbalization

Seven Skills of the Strategist
1. Verbalization

• Outcome-Directed
• Storytelling
  – Describe:
    • Destination
    • Route
    • Options
    • Costs
    • Pitfalls

Seven Skills of the Strategist
2. Strategic Thinking

• Focus on achieving the ultimate outcome.
• Go for the useful increments.
• Options driven.
• Provide truly strategic insight.
• Talk, think, and recommend in a strategic context.
• Use management language.
Questions About Being Strategic

• How do I get to the table?
• How do I stay at the table?
• How can I get better control of the boss?
• How can I have true influence over the boss?
• What do I do once I get to the table?

Better Questions About Being Strategic

• Help the boss achieve his/her goals
• Helps the organization achieve its goals
• Focuses on what matters
• Options are provided and identified rather than end points

Understand Why Strategies Fail

• Not really part of strategic interest.
• Management can’t support them.
• Developed without input from the boss.
• Usurp legitimate territory of others.
• Avoid dealing with truly tough stuff.
• Media are rarely the first concern of management.
Lateral Thinking

• Intentionally different
• Opposite thinking
• Outrageous
• Purposefully unusual
• Unusual approaches
Seven Skills of the Strategist
5. Constructive Approaches

• Goal-focused
• Incrementally achieved
• Intentionally surprising
• Long-term
• Process-driven
• Strategically relevant
• Time sensitive

Make Recommendations in an Operational Context

Step 1: Situation Description: Briefly describe the nature of the issue, problem, or situation. (60 words)

Step 2: Analysis/Explanation/Interpretation: Briefly describe what the situation means, its implications, and how it threatens or presents opportunities for your organization. (60 words)

Make Recommendations in an Operational Context (continued)

Step 3: The Goal: Where are we headed? What’s our destination? What’s the end-point? How far do we have to go? (60 words)

Step 4: Options: Develop at least three response options for the situation you’re presented. You can suggest more, but three is optimal for management to choose from. Make sure that one of the options is “doing nothing.” (150 words)
Make Recommendations in an Operational Context (continued)

Step 5: Recommendations: This is what you would do if you were in the boss' shoes, and why. (60 words)

Step 6: Justification: Identify the negative or positive unintended consequences, events, and problems that could arise due to the options you have suggested or by doing nothing. (60 words)

Strategic Tools

- Action/readiness templates
- Checklists
- Exposure management & surveillance
- Issue forecasting
- Message maps
- Mind maps
- Option sequences
- Prioritized action steps
- Timelines

Seven Skills of the Strategist

6. Pattern Intuition

- All incidents and circumstances have prior history and patterns.
- Draw existing information together to extract new insights, lateral thinking.
- Find a solution by working against the patterns.
- Forecast based on pattern knowledge.
Seven Skills of the Strategist
7. Management Sensitivity

• Helps the boss achieve his or her objectives and goals.
• Helps the organization achieve its goals.
• Is truly necessary.
• Keeps money.
• Makes money.
• Saves money.
• Aspects of the business will fail or not progress without it.

Know What Management Wants

• Advance warning, plus options for solving, or at least managing trouble or opportunity, and the unintended consequences both often bring.
• Someone who can forecast patterns of events and problems.
• Something beyond what the boss already knows.
• Well-timed, truly significant insights.

Key Insights

• Tomorrow vs. Yesterday
• Speak in management language
• Challenge every assumption
• Use tools
• Tell stories
• Seek out patterns
• Talk to time
See You at the Table

Check out Jim's Crisis Guru Blog

www.e911.com
Your first stop when crises occur.

Sign up for the free E-Newsletter

Mr. Lukaszewski's web site:
www.e911.com

To contact Mr. Lukaszewski directly:
jel@e911.com

To learn more about Risdall Marketing:
www.risdall.com
YOUR CEO'S IN HANDCUFFS! THINGS ARE GOING DOWN HILL, FAST!
YOUR WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING TO SEE WHAT YOU DO NEXT.

Time matters. Your reputation and your job are on the line. It's a career-defining moment – your destiny is in your hands. Fail to manage it, and tomorrow's history – the victims will!

In this industry-defining book on crisis management and leadership recovery, Jim Lukaszewski jump-starts the discussion by clearly differentiating a crisis from other business interruption events and introduces a concept rarely dealt with in crisis communications and operational response planning: managing the victims dimension of crisis.

Delivered in his straight-talking style laced with compelling case studies, Lukaszewski On Crisis Communication is your guide to preparing for a crisis and the explosive visibility that comes with it. In no chapter of field-tested how-to's and to-do's Lukaszewski missing your:

• How crises create victims; • To avoid the toxicity of silence; • To overcome the absurd, intrusive and coercive behavior of bloviators, bellyachers, back-bench bitchers, backdoor lobbyists, backstabbers, backstabbers, backstabbers; • To drive attorneys to settle instead of litigate; • Apology is the atomic energy of empathy; • Simple, sensible, sincere, constructive, positive techniques to reduce contention and to succeed!

NOW AVAILABLE ON AMAZON.COM

A Book for Everyone Who Wants to Tell the Boss How to Do It

• Do people hold up meetings waiting for you? • Do people remember what you said and why you are there? • Do others seek you out instead of others? • Do they try to influence you instead of you? For more than a few reasons, this book is a must read for every professional. To avoid the toxicity of silence and to succeed, you need to learn the seven secrets of influence. For more than a few reasons, you need this book. Simple, sensible, sincere, constructive, positive techniques to reduce contention and to succeed.

AVAILABLE IN BOOK STORES

Thank you for attending!

Developing the Mind of a Strategic Advisor: Getting to the Table Earlier and with More Personal Power

By James E. Lukaszewski, ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA
April 11, 2014

Dear Seminar Participant:

Thank you for registering for the NDPC seminar: Developing the Mind of a Strategic Advisor: Getting to the Table Earlier and With More Personal Power. During the brief time we’ll be together on April 11th, I’ll talk about the crucial, personal beliefs and actions that will enable you to become a more truly strategic thinker, and about how to add substantial value to your organization or clients through a more management-oriented approach. This program is designed to help you look at yourself, examine how you think, and learn how you can become a truly sought after strategic practitioner.

This program is about:

1. Building your influence
2. Acceptance of your counsel
3. Being sought after
4. Getting called earlier
5. Having more personal impact
6. Achieving a more satisfying career

Please review the enclosed materials. During the final 20 minutes of the program, time will be devoted to the specific questions and concerns of those participating in the teleseminar.

Should you wish to contact me ahead of time with the issues or questions you’d like me to address during the seminar, you may do so by e-mail directly to me.

jel@e911.com

If you would like to visit my website to get a flavor for the extensive knowledge and background brought to bear on today’s topic, please go to www.e911.com. Or visit my Crisis Guru Blog. Just go to my website, www.e911.com, and click on the Crisis Guru Blog link on the top right navigation menu bar.

While you are on my website, remember to sign up for my FREE eNewsletter, Executive Action: Strategic Management Insights for Leaders, Decision Makers, and Their Trusted Advisors. Just go to www.e911.com and enter your email address at the bottom of the home page. Also check out the eNewsletter archive page for previous editions of Executive Action.

See you on April 11th. The time will be jam-packed with interesting, powerful, and useful information.

Sincerely,

James E. Lukaszewski, ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA
President
The Lukaszewski Group
DEVELOPING THE MIND OF A STRATEGIC ADVISOR:
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Handout

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HOW TO DEVELOP THE MIND OF A STRATEGIST

Strategy is a mindset, a way of thinking about decision making, work issues, even a wide variety of life-related issues. Michel Robert in his 1993 book, Strategy Pure and Simple: How Winning CEOs Outthink Their Competition1 defines strategic thinking as, "...a fresh approach to the subject of strategy. It identifies the key factors that dictate the direction of an organization and is a process that the organization's management uses to set direction and articulate their vision."

In his newest volume, Strategy Pure and Simple II: How Winning Companies Dominate Their Competitor2 Mr. Robert makes the key point that, "...the companies that will prosper and outpace their competitors during the next two decades will be those that will be able to outthink their competitors strategically...the winning CEO in the future will be the one who can craft a singular strategy that gives the company a distinctive advantage." Becoming a strategist means committing to a mental approach that outthinks the competition, or the opposition, or the media and produces a distinctive or unique approach, series of steps, solution options, or direction choices.

It's easy to list these outcomes but much tougher to consistently achieve them. Keep in mind that we're talking about a management process, not the creative process. Creativity and strategy are different. I'll address the differences in a future column. Today let's help you learn how to develop the mind of a strategist. Let's begin by helping you assess your strategic tendencies.

A LITTLE SELF-ANALYSIS

How strategic are you? What's your strategic mindset? Here's an exercise you can do privately to determine just how strategic you really are. Assess yourself against these strategic attributes:

1. **Inconsistency:** The strategist is intentionally inconsistent; in fact with a true strategist, inconsistency is a virtue. Strategists relentlessly question all assumptions. The goal is always a different approach and identifying new options.

Are you predictable? Do you approach problems in the very same way, is what you recommend and think about virtually the same every time?

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2. **Conclusive Approaches:** The strategist seeks the force and impact of a conclusive result even though that result may only be one of a series of increments and often not terribly exciting or very visible.

Is your approach always to try to find the "big idea" or, if that's impossible, to "do things," or to create activity and action, or to simply generate visibility?

3. **Substantive Intensity:** A strategist applies focus and intensity to the most critical parts of a problem or opportunity through fact finding, truth seeking, and reality testing.

Do you focus primarily on the communication aspects of an issue? Can you see problems and issues and their priorities from the boss' perspective? Do you make operating recommendations, or do you merely suggest language changes or media contact that produces mindless visibility?

4. **Laggereish, Entropy:** A strategist understands the priority and sequence of doing something and also of doing nothing. There are always a variety of options for action, including non-action.

Are you a person with a bias for action, attack, stuff, things, and the irrepressible urge to tell people?

5. **Pragmatism:** A strategist attempts to clarify, refine, and carefully target; to deal in facts, truth, and reality-based information; and, wherever possible, to forecast results that can actually or reasonably be achieved as well as the unintended consequences of various action options. A strategist usually forecasts underwhelming results.

Is your focus on the words more than analysis of problems and opportunities? Can you, do you accurately forecast the intended and unintended results of your recommendations?

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**A USEFUL MODEL**

The model I like most for describing the strategic thinking process was developed by Kenichi Ohmae as presented in his book, *The Mind of the Strategist: Business Planning for Competitive Advantage*. The epiphany, for me, came on page 14 of this book through an illustration called, "The Mind of a Strategist," reproduced here on page 3 with permission from The McGraw-Hill Companies).

The powerful insight of Mr. Ohmae's approach is his analysis of the three management thinking methodologies:

- Mechanical systems thinking (I call it "linear thinking");
- Intuition; and
- Strategic thinking.

Let me talk about each of them as I've come to understand them and teach them to others.

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Linear Thinking

The linear thinker is the manager, boss, or specialist; the physician, the economist, the engineer, the scientist, or your typical CEO.

This thinking is typified by a more chronological, more linear approach. Linear thinkers are the people who not only plan with the end in mind, but actually use a structured outline format, chronology, order of manufacture, etc. It's the doctor, lawyer, engineer, MBA, operations manager, boss.

They are the people that public relations people or any creative or intuitive person loves to hate because linear thinkers seem so organized, so "logical," so ... well, linear. Very few public relations people can be linear thinkers for long. This is the reason why few public relations professionals ever become CEOs of businesses other than public relations agencies. And, my guess is that most PR agency CEOs would rather be in the field with clients anyway.

With the linear thinker, the end to be achieved is identified early (maybe years earlier), and a plan is constructed backwards to include every detail, up to and through today.

Intuitive Thinkers

Public relations professionals and other creative people such as artists, painters, news reporters, and writers are intuitive thinkers. Intuitive people don't indulge in much truly analytical thought. The goal is to find the great idea and/or the most interesting or creative solution - the big idea.

The "Jell-O Phenomenon" is the best way to describe how the intuitive thinker works. You've all made Jell-O or at least know what it is. You boil the water, stir in the powder until it's dissolved, put the bowl in the refrigerator, and at some point in time - we're not exactly sure when (there may be a deal between God and General Foods) - Jell-O happens. It's an amazing mystery.

While the linear thinker is driven by a timeline, a chronology, and a structured outline with basically all of its elements known, the intuitive thinker is simply driven by a deadline. There is little long-range thinking about how things will turn out until the very last minute just before the deadline (when the Jell-O Phenomenon happens). It's unexplainable. It's a mystery.

With the intuitive thinker, no deadline, no progress. It's this unexplainability, the lack of evidence, which upsets the linear thinker (read boss) and frustrates the intuitive thinker (read PR person/reporter) because, "they (linear thinkers) just don't get it."
Strategic Thinkers

The strategic thinker, as you can tell by Mr. Ohmae's diagram, takes an entirely different approach - on purpose. Inconsistency is one of the key attributes of strategic thinking. It's consciously, relentlessly, purposely following different approaches. The strategist is intentionally going for a result that no one expects or may recognize.

Liberally interpreting Ohmae, strategic thinking is a process involving four segments:

- Problem dissection;
- Analysis and weighing of constituents;
- Scenario development based on different constituent configurations or options; and
- Creative re-integration.

When you examine Ohmae's diagram, you notice just how different the three thinking styles are:

- The linear thinker moves symmetrical concepts around, more to reconfigure than to reinvent.
- The intuitive thinker seeks the critical fact, idea, notion, or insight among a host of other potential ideas and concepts.
- The strategic thinker is, literally, deconstructing the problem in ways that are unique.
- The pattern of assumptions made by the intuitive and linear thinkers are totally challengeable in the strategist's mind.

As you compare the solutions, you see a graphic depiction of the difference in the product these thinking styles produce.

The linear thinker's result is symmetrical, it adds up, has balance, and to a certain degree resembles the original problem.

The intuitive solution is the classic "silver bullet."

The strategist's solution often looks very little like the original problem. And, in fact, while utilizing elements of the original problem, a distinct and unique solution is the result. A strategist's goal is to transform the problem prototype into a command opportunity, a command strategy, a series of actions leading to a powerful result or series of results.

Clearly, good managers and decision-makers, even staff people, are situational thinkers. They can be intuitive. They can be strategic. But, for an organization to execute a strategy there must be a process by which strategy is developed and then translated into language and action plans that everyone can understand and support.

In the next issue of strategy, I'll talk specifically about how managers make strategic decisions and how intuitive thinkers and strategists can structure advice and counsel in ways that make both more understandable, acceptable, and usable for management.

(For more information on this subject, contact the author by Email at jel@e9II.com or explore his Web site at WWW.e911.com.)
LET'S GET SERIOUS ABOUT STRATEGY

Strategy is a driving force in any business or organization. It's the intellectual force that helps organize, prioritize, and energize what organizations do. No strategy; no energy. No strategy; no direction. No strategy; no momentum. No strategy; no impact.

Strategy is a unique mixture of mental energy, injected into an organization through communication, which results in behavior that achieves organizational objectives.

For public relations practitioners, being strategic is the difference between being just another member of the support staff and being an essential participant on the management team with the ability to make strategic contributions to the overall management process.

Strategy. Sometimes I think there's more talk, wishful thinking, and disappointment over this topic than almost any other in the field of public relations. Practitioners suffer enormous anxiety and frustration over not "being at the table," "guiding the boss," "just being heard," or "just getting invited to strategy meetings."

So, let's have a serious, candid, and useful discussion about two essential elements of the strategy – 1) What it is and 2) Your strategic mindset.

WHAT IS STRATEGY?

Strategy is, first of all, a state of mind, because a strategist is relentlessly and pragmatically results oriented. Strategy is the combination of attitudes, purposes, possible actions, and decisions bundled together as options for decision and implementation by management. Strategy can:

- Give energy and momentum to a series of actions.
- Deny or drain energy and momentum.
- Draw attention.
- Confuse, obfuscate, and blur.
- Distract and disinform.
- Focus and intensify.
- Motivate and move people to action.
- Surprise, overwhelm, and dislocate.
• Ignore all previous assumptions, but still create a win.
• Create new directions by recombining old assumptions with new insights.

IT'S ABOUT HOW YOU THINK

Strategy begins in the mind. It's a mental set. It's a method of thinking before it becomes a style of action. To be a strategist, it's essential to understand the three fundamental steps to creating strategy:

• A clear understanding of the issues, problems, or questions to be addressed.
• A method of analysis or pattern of recognition.
• A translation process that enables management to understand and act on the insights and advantages of the strategic approach they will select from the options presented.

GETTING TO THE TABLE

If you're one of those who is frustrated or anxious about being out of the loop, don't feel alone. I have some first-hand news from the front lines of management. During the last 14 months I've made presentations and conducted workshops about strategy for security directors, HR managers, corporate counsel IS managers, financial officers, purchasing agents, plant managers, and hundreds of public relations practitioners.

The news? Every single one of these groups has as its top priority getting to the table, which means advising the boss and playing a key strategic role. There is a nearly constant corporate staff rush hour, with everyone heading towards the boss' office or to wherever the organization's strategic decisions are being made.

Ironically, in the past few months I've also had the opportunity to advise and make presentations before groups of chief executives. They have a rather surprising point of view — something like this: "Please spare me from another amateur corporate strategist — the person who doesn't have a clue about how the company operates, my goals, or our critical strategic needs; but who yaps at me every day and calls it strategy. What I'm hearing is 'Appreciate my work,' 'Recognize what I do,' or 'Give me a leg up on the other staff functions because I'm loyal.'"

While you may feel that the boss "really needs to understand what you do," to the boss that's just more yap yap yap, whine whine whine. Translation? When you can truly help the business in some substantive way, you will make it to the table. But if all you offer is how to get a news release out or the standard tactics from the pr tool kit, you're not going to be invited to the table — at least while the discussions and decision making are taking place.

HELPING MOVE THE ORGANIZATION

Bosses expect good staff work. The question is, does your staff work help those who actually know the business to do the business better, every day, from their perspective. If that's not what you have to contribute, your limited value as an advisor to management will be quickly discovered and you'll be excluded from the table.

I'm continually asked to review public relations plans and "strategies." It's striking to note that the vast majority of these activities have absolutely nothing to do with the strategic goals of the organization — at any level. But, they are interesting and sometimes even award-winning public relations projects.

Bosses need to be with revenue producers, cost managers, business operations strategists. These areas are of greatest concern to them. Does the boss ever want to hear from staff executives about their concerns and strategies? Of course, if what is shared provides:

• Valuable, useful, applicable advice beyond what the boss already knows;
• Well-timed, truly useful intuitive insights; and/or
Advanced warning and options for managing trouble or opportunity, and their unintended consequences.

WHERE MANY PRACTITIONRS FAIL

Staff functions like public relations are not constant players at strategy meetings for some rather obvious reasons:

- Public relations solutions aren't necessarily a critical part of every business decision.
- Whining about the importance of the media has only limited value.
- Discussions about releasing information before the facts are known are disconcerting.
- Rarely are media concerns the first priority in any management decision.
- Spilling your guts is not a strategy.
- Public relations isn't viewed as a bottom-line function – because it isn't.¹

STRATEGIES MUST MEET THESE TESTS

1. Does it help the boss achieve his or her objectives?
2. Does it advance the purposes and goals of the entire enterprise?
3. Is it truly necessary, even if the answers to 1 and 2 above are yes?
4. Will the business or some aspect of the business fail or not succeed without it?

In most strategic environments what is most important is the ability to do and recommend less – but make what is suggested substantive and very important.

One clear lesson: dump the cynicism about management and get on the team. If your boss' team won't have you, find a team that will.

SO MANY "STRATEGIES" FAIL BECAUSE THEY:

- Don't serve a genuinely strategic interest.
- Don't have sufficient support and management "lift."
- Are developed without input and participation from the boss or someone the boss trusts.
- Usurp territory of others.
- Aren't related to those currently controlling the business.
- Are poor, unconvincing advocacy.

¹ I know this point of view is upsetting, but it's absolutely correct. Why do public relations and communication activities take the first hit every time a CEO wants to cut expenses or bump up the stock price? Why is it that so many corporate public relations departments have been decimated or that even those with operating and marketing divisions are small? The answer is the boss doesn't believe that public relations is a bottom-line function, and we've never been able to conclusively demonstrate the bottom-line impact of this staff activity.

Besides, it's the wrong argument. Any time a staff function within an organization argues that it's a bottom-line function, it will be judged that way. If you live by the bottom-line function argument, you'll die by the bottom-line function argument. If management truly believed that staff functions were bottom-line issues, corporate staffs would be enormous, and we wouldn't be "wasting our time" trying to figure out how to be strategic. This argument is a lousy strategy for convincing the boss to do anything unless, like operating departments, you can prove it.
HOW MANAGERS MAKE STRATEGIC DECISIONS

Each year an astounding number of books and articles appear around the world on the subject of management decision making, leadership, goal setting, and achieving victory (or at least management success).

No matter which prescriptions or labels from creative management gurus you choose, there is a recognizable pattern of management decision making. The model that emerges has six important components with an optimum order. For decisions that matter, all six components will come into play. Omitting or skipping a component or changing the order is how mistakes happen, damage occurs, careers as well as companies get redefined.

Each of the six components has three powerful common elements:

1. **Factual basis**: What we actually know, can count on, trust, or see.
2. **Real-time**: On issues that matter, ideally there is a very small gap in time between decision and action. The larger the separation between decision and action the greater the likelihood that significant factual change may make a portion or all of the action less than optimum.
3. **Outcome focus**: Strategic decision making is always about the future. The past can only be re-imagined, reconfigured, rewritten, relived, and reinterpreted. It can’t be changed. Looking forward allows us to set the past aside and deal in today and tomorrow. This is a much more positive and controlling approach.

THE IDEAL PROCESS

In theory, management decision-making goals are easily identified: decisions are *rational*; reasoning is *logical*. If the process can achieve rationality and logic, the decisions made and actions taken will be *unemotional* and *incremental*.

Management decisions achieving this level of clarity will seem *well motivated* and *effective*.

THE REALITY OF THE PROCESS

If you’re having trouble recognizing the ideal as being consistent with how you see managers make decisions in your work environment, that’s because, of course, reality is quite different. More typical managerial decision making is *incident driven*; management has little choice in the size, the scope, sequence, or timing of events.
Situations are often so underfactualized that logic is very difficult, if not impossible. Information is always insufficient.

Often the more important the decision, the more likely it will be pushed off until it has to be made on an urgent (panicky?) basis where management has little choice but to invest enormous amounts of emotion and energy into the execution and rationalization of decisions and timing. Real communication is either non-existent, via the grapevine, or defensive.

Results are inconclusive. What is achieved is not nearly what was contemplated. So, the exact same process gets repeated, several times.

Decision making this way shows management to be insufficiently prepared. Management won’t like it, but move on to the next set of decisions.

CHAOS = OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

This chaotic decision-making approach is the opportunity environment for the strategic public relations advisor. The challenge is translating what we so easily and intuitively arrive at into a fact-based, real-time, outcome-focused approach management can actively absorb. Your contribution to the decision making process will insert your knowledge into the selection of a course of action. And, you could be asked to stick around to help with other issues, too.

In strategy No. 2 the public relations practitioner was described as an almost purely intuitive thinker. Understanding thinking styles of managers and those who advise them illustrates the need to appropriately transform information so its true value can be absorbed into strategic objectives, and to help manage some of the chaos, too.

Since most managers are predominately process thinkers and linear decision makers, information coming their way that doesn’t neatly fit into some part of their thinking style is noted, but is then discarded or becomes quickly irrelevant.

PROVIDING STRATEGIC INPUT

How information is structured when presented to management is very important. No matter how bold the solution proposed, its obvious commonsense, or its absolute applicability, managers can’t absorb it unless it fits into their processing capacity, builds on their intuitive skills and experience, and allows them critical space to assimilate. If it also happens to be brilliant and creative, that’s okay but often not essential.

Brevity is crucial. Figure 1, Strategic Decision making Worksheet (see pg. 4), is a valuable tool on one side of a single sheet of paper. Remember, were talking strategy here, not planning. Avoid overkill. Other good reasons for brevity are:

- There will be just a few minutes to explain it (600 words or less).
- Concentrated, well-structured information is easier to include and more likely to achieve ownership by others.
- Most critical decisions are made based on experience, intuition, and some recently gathered facts.
- If the information is provided in a manual with 10 tabs and says “Plan,” before the strategy and goals are even read, they may have to be re-done and will probably be ignored anyway.

THE MANAGEMENT DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The public relations practitioner can easily master all six elements. If the “strategy” can’t be adequately addressed in this structure, it’s probably not a strategy:

1. **Situation:** A brief description of the nature of the issue, problem, or situation that requires decision, action, or study. This is the factual basis or “Here’s what we know now.”
2. **Analysis/Assumptions:** A brief description of what the situation means, what its implications are, and how it threatens or presents an opportunity to the organization. Include the one or two key assumptions that validate the analysis.

Managers always need to know why, but not in great detail. They’re also interested in the intelligence you’ve gathered or know about that supports your analysis and assumptions.

3. **The Goal:** A clear, concise statement of the task to be accomplished (sometimes the reason or purpose for accomplishing it) or the target to be reached and why.

Goals keep everyone focused. Useful goals are understandable, achievable, brief, positive, and time/deadline sensitive.

4. **Options:** Provide at least three response options for the situation as presented and analyzed.

This is the area where intuitive thinkers fail frequently. They focus on the silver bullet. If you have only one recommendation and there are even a couple of questions about it, it will die and you’ll be out of the discussion for the duration.

For example, what if you’re asked, “What if we do nothing?” Doing nothing should always be an option in every strategy, and thoroughly examined. Recommend your optimal choice and recommend things you can and will do. Be prepared to do something in between the things you’ve recommended.

5. **Recommendation:** This is specifically the choice you would make among the options presented. The recommendation is usually selected on the basis of which option will cause the least number of unintended negative consequences.

This is where you earn your paycheck. The boss always wants to know what you would do if you were in his/her shoes. Be prepared to walk through a similar sort of analysis for each of the options proposed.

6. **Justification:** These are the reactions or circumstances that could arise resulting from the options you suggested or by doing nothing. Every management decision or action has intended and unintended consequences that can be forecast. Inadequate provision for consequences is what sometimes can sabotage an otherwise useful strategy.

This is a strategic approach. It leads to productive, focused planning. Use it and you’ll get to help managers at every level in their strategic decision.

(For more information on this subject, contact the author by e-mail at jel@e911.com or explore his Web site at www.e911.com.)
**FIGURE 1: STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING WORKSHEET**

KEY ISSUE: _____________________________________________________________

**SITUATION:**
A brief description of the nature of the issues, problem, or situation that requires decision, action, or study.

**ANALYSIS/ASSUMPTIONS:**
A description of what the situation means, what its implications are, and how it threatens or presents an opportunity to the organization.

**GOAL:**
A clear, concise statement of the task to be accomplished.

**OPTIONS:**
Provide at least three response options for the situation as presented and analyzed.

**RECOMMENDATION:**
The choice you would make among the options presented. The recommendation is usually selected on the basis of which option will cause the least number of unintended consequences.

**JUSTIFICATION:**
Positive or negative unintended consequences, reactions, or circumstances that could arise from the options you suggested or by doing nothing.
HOW TO BECOME A STRATEGIC PLAYER . . .
GETTING MANAGEMENT’S ATTENTION

Becoming a truly strategic asset to management is one of the most challenging aspects of the communications profession. For the majority of practitioners, when they are finally allowed into the inner sanctum, the boss tells them, “Here’s what we have to say. Go and say it,” or, “Get your buddies in the press to print this.” This happens because:

1. The PR advice usually offered (and expected by management) is related to tactics (i.e., news releases, making statements, shaping words, and responding).
2. The advice given is focused around the “why” of communications rather than advancing strategic business issues.
3. The ideas presented are out of sync with the goals and operational needs of the business or simply too late in the process.
4. Managers see little or no strategic relevance.
5. On issues that matter, lawyers, human resources, other staff, and consultants have more “juice” with management.

BECOME STRATEGIC

Being a strategic player begins with becoming strategic yourself, but from the boss’ or client’s perspective. Who should the boss listen to? Whose advice is acted on? Who does the boss call? Why should the boss call you? When bosses and corporate leaders talk about the kinds of support they need from those around them, a very interesting list develops. Bosses need people who:

- Listen, that is really hear and respond to what is heard and hear enough to respond appropriately before blurting out some solution.
- Are usefully intuitive (even the best managers can use more of that sixth sense).
- Give useful feedback, promptly:
  - Data feedback—new information.
  - Feeling feedback—the emotional temperature of an organization or its constituents.
Intelligence—information derived from surveillance and monitoring of issues and ideas critical to the organization.

- Inspire and add useful emotional and psychological energy to the management process and other people.
- Are trustable (they can keep their mouths shut).
- Bring instant insight (they have the ability to distill useful lessons and value from the contrast of ideas, information, and experience).
- Are complete thinkers (see Strategy No 3).
- Are pragmatists (individuals who can make useful, positive, constructive suggestions — on the spot).
- Understand the dollar value of time, are brief and to the point with a bias for action: Do it now, fix it now, repair it now, and ask it now.
- Understand the difference between strategy, planning, and tactical action.
- Provide useful advance information.

BEHAVE STRATEGICALLY

Here are some behaviors I’ve observed time and again that make an individual strategic.

1. **Altitude/Perspective**
   A strategist views and analyzes issues, problems, and situations from a mental altitude sufficient to disconnect assumptions, preconceptions, and observes the patterns.

2. **Momentum/Motion**
   The strategist can take a given goal or series of targets and develop an integrated set of forward-moving steps to achieve them.

3. **Pragmatism/Reality Checks**
   There are always immovable objects, ideas, patterns, turf politics, habits, and customs that need to be avoided, overcome, overturned, accommodated, or eliminated. The strategist evaluates the most doable courses of action among all and the consequences of various approaches.

4. **Engagement/Adaptability**
   Strategy is dynamic. Once action begins on any strategy, every move has the potential to require whole new approaches. A strategist is there observing, analyzing, revising, anticipating, guiding, and coaching.

ANALYZE YOUR APPROACH

Can you be an effective strategist in your organization? Answering these questions will help you assess yourself.

1. Can you separate yourself from your own predisposition and habits to truly look at situations and issues dispassionately?
2. Do you add positive energy and purpose to management action, even when decisions are made that ignore, seriously change, or are the opposite of your strategic advice?
3. Can you routinely get very different organizational constituencies (lawyers, engineers, operators, managers, etc.) to listen to you and use what you recommend?
4. Do you get the organization to move in productive directions and, once moving, stay the course?
5. Does management routinely expect truly strategic contributions from you, whether they solicit them or not?
6. Does the boss call you before thinking begins on making a tough decision?
7. Do you wait for the boss to call?
8. When bad news happens, do you get it to the boss quickly with on-the-spot impact analysis and action options?

BE AN AGENT OF TOMORROW

One of the most interesting strategic techniques for providing advance information to management was devised by Jerr Boschee and Scott Meyer while they were at the
Control Data Corporation some years ago. They called it “Exposure Reporting.”¹ We have since reconfigured their concept into “Exposure Management and Surveillance.”

EXPOSURE MANAGEMENT AND SURVEILLANCE

Exposure Management and Surveillance is the purposeful monitoring of key corporate exposure sources and issues.

The goals of exposure management and surveillance are to:

- Provide a snapshot of the corporation’s current exposures;
- Send an early-warning signal identifying issues or corporate actions that could lead to significant public attention;
- Alert management to possible threats and opportunities;
- Anticipate planned and unplanned visibility;
- Prepare management to act promptly, conclusively, pragmatically;
- Mitigate, early, problems and threats;
- Estimate the potential organizational impact and exposure from threats, opportunities and circumstances; and
- Suggest an outline of actions and options being taken to manage the impact of both current and future exposures.

The information rarely exceeds three typed pages and is so valuable and vital that its distribution is limited to very senior management.

The report lists key events in six categories:

- Areas of sensitivity;
- Significant media contacts;
- News releases, high-profile events scheduled;
- Other major exposures (such as speeches, testimony, customer visits, etc.);
- Future events of note (beyond two weeks); and
- Chatter about us in various forums.

BENEFITS TO MANAGEMENT

The Exposure Management and Surveillance process provides a number of important strategic benefits to the organization’s leadership and the communications function.

- These critical reports demonstrate to senior management that the public relations/communications function was capable of managing problems and crisis rather than simply reacting and reporting;
- Senior management is put squarely in the middle of the strategic planning process; they receive options for consideration and the ability to question strategy and tactics before the organization acts or reacts;
- Those in communications and key staff functions redefine their jobs and job purposes in terms of vulnerabilities and contingencies;
- More problematic scenarios rise to the surface and get more thoughtful, early consideration (e.g., the death of a key executive, plant explosion, drug bust, pandemic, or employee violence);
- Response time is improved because readiness is enhanced so dramatically;
- Management will tolerate interruptions from communicators and, perhaps, other staff functions more readily because they have been sensitized by the information they received earlier in exposure reports; and
- This tool can change the behavior of line managers to thinking more about vulnerabilities, response strategies, and contingency plans; in the best case, they are driven to call their communications advisors and counselors more quickly, and perhaps even rely more on their advice.

¹ Private correspondence between the author and Scott Meyer.
Over time, the exposure report and surveillance process may begin to reveal even larger numbers of potential vulnerabilities as managers and leaders become more sensitive to the real-time nature of visibility management requirements; and

The communications function is enhanced because it is now in a position to help executives obey a fundamental law of managerial survival—no surprises, in combination with getting ready more correctly, the first time.

**ISN'T THIS JUST ISSUES MANAGEMENT?**

Senior executives often associate Issues Management with the charts, phases, and complexity that are perceived as soft, with little immediate impact and value, although there may be significant long-term value.

Exposure Management and Surveillance focuses on current high value topics and the direct relevance of threats, perceptions, actions, and risks from the perspective of the manager and leader. Where used, it gets acceptance because it fills a key void in management information needs. The approach is helpful, positive, insightful, early, and relevant.

The array of issues and subjects that are monitored in the typical exposure management and surveillance program are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

(For more information on this subject, contact the author by e-mail at tlg@e911.com, explore his Web site at www.e911.com, check out his blog at www.e911.com/crisisgurublog.html, or connect with him through LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/in/jameslukaszewski.)

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### FIGURE 1

**EXPOSURE MANAGEMENT AND SURVEILLANCE PROCESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase I</th>
<th>Identify Specific Corporate Exposure Sources, Issues, and Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Identify Actions, Decisions, Events, and Activities to Be Monitored (Select those with special significance for impact and threat analysis in ‘B’.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activist demonstrations/threats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry neighbors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive breakthroughs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional testimony</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate liability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal investigations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee stress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive speeches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government investigations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hazardous waste</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-profile litigation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>International sanctions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Key executive public appearances</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Labor negotiations or actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major site — specific issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk management plan (RMP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious environmental cases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant news interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website/media exposures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whistleblowers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| B. Forecast Impact/Threat Level |
| 1. (Score each of these items a value of 1-10, where 10 equals the highest level of impact) |
| Adverse court decisions |
| Angry employees |
| Anti-corporate action |
| Congressional hearings |
| Cyber attacks |
| Emergency potential |
| Emerging issues or problems |
| Envirotech threat |
| Involvement of managers or employees |
| Internal documents leaked |
| Major management decisions |
| Major media story |
| New media charter |
| Plant closing |
| Product problems |
| Prosecution |
| Protests |
| Regulatory problems |
| Takeovers |
| Whistleblowers |

### Phase II

**Combined Score**

(Add the impact and threat numbers together to determine a combined score. List up to five issues with the highest scores here—in descending order of highest score to lowest). These are your highest priority issues for exposure management, surveillance and readiness activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue or Threat (up to five)</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Phase III

**Issue Confidential Limited Distribution Exposure Reports**

(Write a synopsis for each of the issues or threats listed in Phase II. Each synopsis should explain why the issue or threat is of utmost importance to the organization, the specific impact to be expected, and the consequences failing to be ready.)

- Number all copies.
- Prohibit any duplication, faxing, further e-distribution.
- Collect copies after 72 hours.
- Revise surveillance and exposure goals and adjust readiness plans and strategies to reflect new information, and current situation, quarterly.

### Phase IV

**Meet Quarterly for Exposure Review**

- Identify new vulnerabilities and risks
- Eliminate old vulnerabilities and risks
- Provide direct feedback for revisions to readiness plans

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THE STRATEGIC POWER OF POSITIVE LANGUAGE

One of the great epiphanies for communicators is the recognition of how destructive negative language is and how powerful, controlling, and strategic positive words are.

Contrary to popular belief and much PR mythology, negative stories and headlines are generally driven by the negative language, stories, and examples spokespersons use verbally but also in writing. You might have noticed that even the best interview often results in a story with a negative slant simply because a single negative phrase was used. Reporters and adversaries habitually and intentionally phrase their questions and information requests in negative ways that demand negative responses.

Another negative speech habit is to talk in double and compound negatives, perhaps because spokespersons mistakenly assume that more than one negative creates a positive result: “It wasn’t our intent to not seem sensitive.” “You can’t believe that we didn’t care.” “Don’t be silly; he won’t really care.” “No problem, it won’t be any trouble at all.” “Certainly not. Please don’t hesitate to call.” “We had no idea it wouldn’t work.” “I don’t disagree.” “Change doesn’t come without a price.”

The critical reality of positive language is that if you wish to establish a pattern of long-term improvement in relationships, and control the conversation and the environment in which communication takes place, it is positive language that gives you control of your destiny, your opposition, and the distractions on your way to victory.

What is it about negative language that makes negative words so destructive?

1. **Negative language is non-communication**

If I say to you, “That’s not how we do it,” or, “That’s meaningless,” what have you learned? I’ve probably put you off because the answer is somewhat accusatory, like you should have known more than you did.

2. **Negative language is destructive**

If I say to you, “You’re wrong,” you are now a victim. I haven’t provided information that would help you know what is right. Even if I follow that comment with some useful, positive information, chances are that you’ll have difficulty hearing it because I have seriously insulted or hurt you, and you are licking your wounds, not listening to me.
3. **Negative language causes defensiveness (yours)**

Once I’ve told you, “That’s not the way we do it,” or, “It won’t work,” if I care about you at all, I know I haven’t communicated, I know it’s not what you wanted to hear, therefore I feel that I must now do something to overcome my non-communication. This is what defensiveness is, a feeling of inadequacy brought on primarily by incomplete, negative, stupid, or erroneous communication.

4. **Negative language drives communication out of control**

As soon as I say, “That’s not the way we think,” what are your options as a victim responder? You’ll ask me why not, why isn’t it, and why won’t we? These are all negative responses, which drive communication even further off any positive, productive track. Your situation is now sliding into the verbal ditch. You are out of control, and you can feel it.

5. **Negative language causes a kind of intellectual deafness**

Reporters, protestors, activists, and angry opponents seem to need negative language. In fact, the fulfillment of their mission revolves around the use of it. When they get negative language in response, the communication immediately becomes driven by it and its power to continue, even expand conflict. It is impossible to be positive enough to punch through the negative shield, once it has formed.

The news media especially use negative language as a means of balancing almost any positive news or information:

- Religious Icon Rises From The Dead, Relationship With Prostitute In Previous Life Under Investigation

6. **Negative language never brings closure**

Negative language is used in the mistaken belief that a negative response somehow brings closure to allegations, assertions, and negative questions. The actual affect is just the opposite.

Besides, when challenged or insulted, we tend to want to strike back because it feels so good. I refer to this as testosterosis, an emotional state affecting both men and women when their favorite ideas are assaulted, questioned, or impugned.

While negative language can seem responsive, the recipient automatically understands and senses important aspects of who you are, where you are, how you are feeling, and whether or not you can actually win the argument. You are uncomfortable, defensive, non-communicative, and have no idea how to accommodate or win.

7. **Negative language never achieves victory**

Victory is supposed to be a positive event. If you haven’t defined victory, there is no language strategy that will get you there. Or, to say it positively, define victory and you’ll be able to structure a verbal and written strategy to achieve it.

8. **Negative language weighs more than positive language**

Risk communicators have learned that characterizing serious issues and topics in negative language, even if just a little, is almost impossible to overcome no matter how many positive words, phrases, and thoughts are used. Verbally, it seems, negative words weigh five times as much as positive words weigh. Negativity is memorable.
WHAT IS THE POWER OF POSITIVE DECLARATIVE LANGUAGE?

To build better employee relationships, resolve labor problems, and get a labor agreement, sooner or later one has to resort to positive, useful, productive language to strike a deal, get a contract, end the dispute, and to hear. It’s harder if you begin by waging verbal warfare. If you want to win an argument, the verbal struggle, you’re going to have to come up with useful, positive, helpful examples that illustrate the proof of your own assertions and assumptions.

If you wish to control the dialogue, you’re going to have to drive the discussions forward using meaningfully specific, positively stated examples, verbal illustrations, and stories that teach, illustrate, draw others toward your point of view, and persuade.

TOXIC RETORTS KILL IDEAS & ENERGY

Ideas, concepts, and forward thinking are often controlled or destroyed by the use of toxic retorts. These destructive, negative responses generally end discussion and kill concepts.

Here’s my favorite list of toxic retorts.

- I don’t like that idea
- I don’t see the connection
- I wouldn’t say that
- It can’t be done
- It didn’t happen that way
- It didn’t work before
- It won’t work now
- It’s against company policy
- It’s never been done before
- It’s not my responsibility
- It’s not affordable
- Let’s not over-react
- It’s too much trouble
- No comment
- Not my job, unfortunately
- Not that again
- Our boss would never buy it

- Our customers wouldn’t like it
- Our people would never do that
- That isn’t our problem
- That won’t build our product
- That’s impossible
- That’s not a good question
- That’s not our fault
- We aren’t that bad a company
- We can’t change that fast
- We can’t talk about it
- We couldn’t have known
- We did all right without it
- We didn’t know
- We don’t care
- We don’t have enough studies
- We don’t have the resources
- We don’t have the time
- We won’t have the money
- We can’t because we’re just too busy
- We’re not ready for that
- What you’re not saying is . . .
- Why won’t you use everything I say?
- You didn’t talk to me about this
- You’re mistaken
- You’re wrong

OVERCOMING TOXIC RETORTS & NEGATIVE LANGUAGE

There are two techniques for overcoming negative and toxic language: Using positive declarative language and power words.

Positive Declarative Language

Here are some examples of converting negative approaches into positive declarations.

1. Negative: I don’t believe it . . . or you.
   Positive: Here’s what I believe. Here’s what we believe.

2. Negative: It won’t work; it never worked.
   Positive: Here’s how it might work. Here are some suggestions to make it work.

3. Negative: That’s a lie.
   Positive: Check the facts more carefully and you’ll find . . .

4. Negative: That’s not our style.
   Positive: We’re known, even respected for . . .
5. Negative: We don’t do that.
Positive: Here’s what we actually do.

6. Negative: We don’t invest in benefits our employees won’t use.
Positive: We have three categories of employees, each with distinctly different needs.

7. Negative: We’ve never done that.
Positive: Here, specifically, is what we do . . .

Positive: Let’s look at the facts . . .

POWER WORDS

Power words add energy, thickness, and momentum to the conversation. Power words are critically important for confronting color words*, words that are emotionally negative in nature, words like ashamed, afraid, worried, frightened, embarrassed. Color words grab the spokesperson or an audience by their guts. Use power words to make important statements and to manage the emotional power of color words:

1. Was it a bad or stupid choice?
2. Power response: In their place, I would have made different choices.
3. It sounds like they hate your plan.
4. Power response: As we emphasize solutions, they’ll be more positive about what we’re doing.
5. Will this problem destroy your reputation?
6. Power response: These matters are certainly urgent, and we will do our best to deal with them.
7. Shouldn’t your company be ashamed of its performance?
8. Power response: We’re surprised at the public response, but intend to respond powerfully and aggressively to the public’s concerns.

Other power words include:

- Energize
- Exciting
- Fascinating
- Great
- Hopeful
- Legitimize
- New
- Powerful
- Surprised
- Sympathize
- Tough
- Unique
- Unusual
- Urgent
- Value

POSITIVE LANGUAGE POSTULATES

1. Say less; make what you say positive, powerful, and therefore more important.

2. Saying nothing can be very powerful and positive (because in some cases the other side just wants to be heard).

3. Peace, success, and victory are won only with positive language.

4. Compassion and empathy sometimes use negative color words such as:

- Ashamed
- Concerned
- Disappointed
- Embarrassed
- Failed
- Humiliated
- Mortified
- Regrettable
- Shocked
- Tragic
- Unfortunate
- Unhappy
- Unintended
- Unnecessary
- Unsatisfied

Be very careful how you express empathy. Empathetic sentiments can cause toxic retorts.

5. The positive responder controls the level of negativity of any verbal or written exchange.

* For more information and lengthier discussion on this subject and a more complete list of color words, contact the author by E-mail at tlg@e911.com or explore his Web site at www.e911.com.
BECOMING A STRATEGIC COUNSELOR

Advising others on the issues, problems and situations that truly matter is one of our most challenging professional activities. It takes a special breed of individual to counsel those who do important work affecting the lives, lifestyles and well being of other people, organizations, cultures, even societies.

Because it’s useful to examine the principles and behaviors that drive the advice these unique counselors and consultants provide, let me distill my observations of these special people into some serious guidance and key principles to help the staff who coach, counsel and befriend those having operating responsibilities.

THE COUNSELOR’S PRIME DIRECTIVE

The prime directive in all advice, counseling and staff work is to serve others first – for their benefit and from their perspective. The primary role of staff functions is advisory and consultative.

Supporting that directive is the commitment to provide simple, sincere and sensible advice and counsel.

- **Simple counsel** means doing only the important things, the most crucial things, first. It means striving for the successful forward increment rather than the global solution. Incremental progress is far more readily achievable than either the silver bullet or big idea.

- **Sincere** means providing advice and counsel you can talk about with others with a straight face, that you know works based on your experience and the experience of others, and that other powerful forces can endorse.

- **Sensible advice** means fundamentally sound advice. This is advice that at first glance, second glance and third glance is unchallengeable and unassailable. It makes sense, even though it may infuriate some or seem over-simplified to others.
There are three tests useful advice meets. Such advice is practical, pragmatic and purposeful.

- **Practical advice** means just that – tasks that are achievable, positive in nature and that employees and even critics can endorse to some degree.

- **Pragmatic advice** recognizes that only certain outcomes are possible, that no matter how spiffy, creative, or exciting your ideas might be, those affected by the advice as well as those acting on the advice will look at it from the perspective of whether it can actually work in their real world.

- **Purposeful advice** has self-evident forward focus and positive momentum. Counselors and consultants are strategic operational assets. When activated, strategic assets are fundamentally positive and energize the organization and its constituencies.

There are lots of distractions in consulting, and lots of clients who have great difficulties, problems, shortcomings and blind spots. The consultant’s obligation is to identify and provide candid, constructive advice that fills those deficiencies, while stabilizing or moving the organization ahead. Only advice that moves the organization in a forward direction is actually helpful.

**CLIENT EXPECTATIONS**

From the client’s perspective, the expectation is that consultants will contribute frequently; provide focused, useful information; be forceful enough to move their recommendations through the organization; and be fair in the application of their ideas and concepts.

- **Frequent contribution** means the successful consultant is the individual who makes frequent incremental, often unsolicited recommendations and suggestions.

- **Focused advice** means just that, advice that is understandable, shows the way, helps the client or customer think and act in the future tense, and works toward a few (or one) important goals everyone recognizes.

- **Fair advice** means that which is politically acceptable (as opposed to factionally correct) and politically useful (as opposed to politically disruptive). It provides information that is politically useful (as opposed to manipulative).

**SPECIAL TALENTS**

- **To successfully serve others** requires special talents: initiative, intuition, ingenuity, inspiration, imagination, urgency and loyalty.

- **Initiative**: The most common criticism I hear about outside and inside advisors is that though ideas abound, few seem capable of picking up an idea, developing it and moving it forward without prompting or specific direction.

- **Intuition**: Those who run organizations, especially large organizations, have a limited tolerance for intuitive solutions and recommendations. Ration your intuition. Build support for what you intuitively believe or suspect. Present intuitive recommendations using a process approach so that you can be understood and your ideas acted upon by those you counsel.

- **Ingenuity**: Everyone, especially clients, loves nifty approaches and interesting ideas. Ingenuity comes from using already known information to develop new and different approaches to resolve old and persistent issues or problems.
• **Inspiration:** This is a quality that can be learned and developed. Those who inspire help others see (from their own perspectives) truths and choose beneficial behaviors and beliefs. Identify those who inspire you. Learn how they do it. Focus on how they do it. Then use that knowledge to develop your own inspirational style. Inspire others.

• **Imagination:** Louis Pasteur, the great French scientist, was reputed to have said, “Chance favors the prepared mind.” How prepared are you to hypothesize useful ideas, alternatives and insights about the issues, concerns, problems and work of those you coach and counsel? Do you read the publications they read? Do you consume information of the same type and nature that those you counsel do? Can you hold a conversation on an operating topic that informs the other person?

• **Urgency:** Can you bring substantive intensity to your work? Can you drive issues, questions and individual forces forward? More importantly, can you give useful information on the spot, every time? If you need time to think things over or to develop or refine a document, you have yet to become a truly strategic staff person.

• **Loyalty:** Advising at very senior levels automatically makes you the eyes and ears of those you counsel within the organization. Advising and coaching senior people means being utterly candid. Do you observe and report, or hide and ignore?

**THE COUNSELOR’S WORK STYLE**

Serving others requires a work style that is:

1. **Independent,** but able to act and think aggressively.

2. **Cooperative,** but focused on the goals of those you serve.

3. **Goal and accomplishment oriented** on a daily basis.

4. **Systematic and positive** in approaching tasks, work and problems.

**THE COUNSELOR’S COMMITMENT**

Those who successfully serve others have a work attitude that says:

1. When I am here; working for you is number one.

2. I plan to be here a lot and, if necessary, available the rest of the time as well.

3. I am committed to independent reading, discussion, issue sensitivity and personal learning that is of value to those I coach and counsel.

4. I will take the initiative to help those I coach and counsel move in useful new directions and rely far more on foresight than hindsight.

5. I recognize that going even a small extra distance will be the difference between mundane and magnificent results. Extra effort, extra sensitivity, extra focus is what makes the difference from the client’s perspective.

6. I am committed to relentlessly pursue personal positive incremental progress every single day, for myself and for the clients I coach and counsel.

7. I will provide information beyond the client’s knowledge, on the spot.

**THE COUNSELOR’S VERBAL TOOLBOX**

Leaders lead through their ability to verbalize the future, explain a direction, and describe a destination. The counselor also works in real
time to help leaders lead in real time. The counselor’s verbal skills should be models the client can learn from and imitate.

**The counselor has six powerful verbal tools:**

1. **Facts.** This means data and authoritative information, developed and delivered appropriately and promptly, verbally.

2. **Stories:** These are structured verbal examples leaders use, which take audiences through ideas, concepts, problems, or situations vicariously, yet teach lessons, morals, or self-evident truths audiences can use to their benefit.

3. **Questions:** These are questions the leader can use to help engage others in discussions or conversations that move the organization forward. (It’s also helpful to provide suggested answers.)

4. **Comparisons:** This could be a best practice discussion or, more importantly, sharing your perception of how another leader or leaders handled similar problems from different perspectives.

5. **Recommendations/Options:** The currency of consulting and counseling is recommendations. Unless the way is absolutely crystal clear, it’s often helpful to propose a choice of options ranging from doing nothing, to doing something, to doing something more. Recommending options is a process that keeps clients and consultants engaged with each other. Recommending a useful series of actions along a timeline allows clients to generate momentum and forward motion.

6. **Constructive Confrontation:** Better to challenge thinking, ideas and concepts promptly. The ability to constructively change an individual’s direction, for their own benefit, is one of the most refreshing and important achievements a counselor can obtain. It is also one of the most challenging tasks.

Lots of mistakes are made in coaching and counseling. But, if you focus on those techniques and practices that do work and are helpful to clients, you won’t have much time to make mistakes and you’ll be invited back time and time again.

**RESOURCES**

Here are five extremely useful resources for learning about consulting and coaching CEOs and leaders:


- **Control Your Destiny or Someone Else Will,** Noel M. Tichy and Stratford Sherman, Currency Doubleday, copyright 1993

- **Power Vision: How to Unlock the Six Dimensions of Executive Potential,** George W. Watts, Business One Irwin, copyright 1993

For more information on this and other communication management topics, visit the author’s Web site at [www.e911.com](http://www.e911.com).
“Who are they? Who are these people who come to work here every day? What are they about? Why can’t we communicate with them? Why won’t they listen? Why won’t they just do what they’re told to do?” – the words of countless frustrated managers.

Getting through to workers to influence their behavior, attitudes, and work habits is one of the most frustrating aspects of organizational management. How can senior executives, supervisors, and managers generate enough loyalty, motivation, and focus to move the organization forward each day despite rumors, uncertainty, “failed opportunities,” abrupt shifts in direction, obvious mistakes in decision making, and the daily sense that there really is no one in charge, no plan, or no strategy in place to meet future contingencies.

The greatest continuing area of weakness in management practice is the human dimension. In good times or bad, there seems to be little real understanding of the relationships between managers, among employees, and interactions between the two. When there are problems, everyone acknowledges that the cause often is “a communications breakdown.” So now what?

Enter the management communications strategist whose objective is to rethink, refocus, and then restructure the goals and objectives of this critical part of effective organizational management. The strategist might use these steps.

**STEP 1: IDENTIFYING AND CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS**

The analysis begins by challenging some of the more closely held assumptions that appear to underlie modern employee communications theory.

1. Employee communications is a staff function owned collaborative (or combatively) by public relations and human resources.
2. More communication is better.
3. Message uniformity and consistency are key ingredients to effective delivery and reception.
4. The manager’s role is to run the business.
5. Just tell the story right and don’t molly coddle employees.
STEP 2: RETHINKING THE ORGANIZATIONAL MIX

Redefine who comes to work each day based on actual behavior. Look for useful, insightful ways of drawing management’s attention to how it can achieve success by productively reassessing the nature of the human forces it has at its disposal and by looking at the business from a more employee-driven perspective.

Employee behavior in any organization of 50 or more can be divided into up to six behavior categories:

1. Those who Work To Live (WTL), 50%.
2. Those who are Disengaged, but still Work To Live (DWTL), 20%.
3. Those who Live To Work (LTW), 15%.
4. Those who are Dysfunctional, but still Live To Work (DLTW), 7%.
5. Self-Appointed IN or Near The Source (SAINNTS), 4%.
6. The Disheartened, Disgruntled, Disoriented, Unconvinceable Victims needing a Victory over something (D³UV²s), 25%.
   - 12.5% Permanent
   - 12.5% Temporary

Yes, yes, yes – those of you who are mathematical eagles will recognize that there may be a mathematical anomaly here, but remember that this is a strategic exercise. Our analysis of these categories will resolve this apparent discrepancy.

1. **Work To Live (WTL)**

Those who work to live comprise the largest portion – often half or more – of the workforce. These are the folks who genuinely make the organization successful. That’s because no matter what, they come to work on time; no matter what, they get it done; no matter what, they pretty much follow directions; no matter what, they will do what is asked of them – provided they can understand it. And they go home on time.

They ask for very little in return. Don’t ask them to join company parties; don’t ask them to stand up and cheer; don’t ask them for great outbursts of loyalty; don’t ask for or mandate their involvement. When such opportunities arise, some of these employees may take part, but it will be on their terms, at their discretion, and in their own time. For these individual’s life begins outside the plant gate at quitting time.

Work is their mechanism for having a life. That’s why it’s hard for management to appreciate these employees’ true motivations. Actually, they have only one – to go home on time, to get back to their real lives.

2. **Disengaged, but still Work To Live (DWTL)**

These employees have personal or work-related problems so devastating that they are unable to function effectively. But, they show up on time every day and are surprised that no one has noticed their problems or kicked them out the door.

3. **Live To Work (LTW)**

Undoubtedly, those who are reading this analysis are among those who live to work – the folks who come early, stay late, and work to move the organization forward. LTWs are on the program, work hard to understand what the boss and management are looking for, and try to make it happen every day of the week. LTWs often resent anyone who goes home on time. LTWs are the forces of tomorrow in the organization.
4. Dysfunctional, but Still Live To Work (DLTW)

The DLTWs also come early and stay late. But their goal is to prevent or stop the WTLs from accomplishing anything meaningful. That’s because the DWTLs love today just the way it is. DWTLs especially want yesterday to stay just the way it was. DWTLs resent progress. DWTLs are the forces of yesterday, and they are very powerful.

5. Self-Appointed IN or Near the Source (SAINNTS)

Usually a group no larger than 4% of the entire organization, often just a handful of knowledgeable people, working independently, who have appointed themselves the official interpreters for what the bosses do and what they mean. SAINNTS come in all sizes and shapes, and from all parts of the business.

6. The Disheartened, Disgruntled, Disoriented, Unconvinceable Victims needing a victory over something or someone, probably you (D³UV²s – pronounced doves)

Perhaps as high as 25% of the workforce, these people bring powerful, negative energy to every situation. They assure the failure of most positive ideas and concepts put forward by management or by others trying to be helpful. New ideas or concepts are put to death by management or by others trying to be helpful. New ideas or concepts are put to death by management or by others trying to be helpful. New ideas or concepts are put to death by management or by others trying to be helpful. New ideas or concepts are put to death by management or by others trying to be helpful. New ideas or concepts are put to death by management or by others trying to be helpful. New ideas or concepts are put to death by management or by others trying to be helpful. New ideas or concepts are put to death by management or by others trying to be helpful.

DO THE NUMBERS ADD UP?

Even though my ratios add up to 121% of the employee base, this analysis works because the D³UV²s’ victim driven negativity is at least twice as powerful, per person, at stopping or choking off progress as any positive concept could ever be. The D³UV²s are committed to getting nothing done and to seeing to it that no one else gets anything done either. D³UV²s question or challenge continuously.

POSTULATE #1:
Overcoming Organizational Deafness Is a Prerequisite to Effective Action

The value of this new perspective is how it helps us better understand why organizations have so much trouble getting things done. Each employee group has a limited ability to hear what management is saying. In good times, each functional group has a hearing efficiency of only 1:3. They get every third word. Even those who work to live fail to hear every message correctly the first time. This is why management’s relentless quest for efficiency and effectiveness is always off the mark and why demands to get it right on the first day are nearly impossible to achieve. Even lifesaving messages have to be repeated.

When trouble is in the air, when change is on the horizon or coming into an organization, hearing efficiency is reduced to about every fifth or seventh word. Change creates fear, uncertainty, and doubt. When these are present, the listening efficiency can drop to 1:12 or worse. People who feel like victims don’t hear the facts. They can be moved only by appeals to their emotional state. This is why unconvinceables remain unconvinceables.
why the disaffected remain apart, and the disillusioned will not be reclaimed. Their ability to hear facts or useful information is blocked by their internal monologue and their constant public questioning.

POSTULATE #2:  
The Most Important Employees, Those Who Work to Live, Require Recognition, Acknowledgement, and Very Little Else. (Avoid Blocking the Gate at Quitting Time.)

For communication to occur there must be someone on the correct frequency with his or her receiver turned on. For the WTL employees, it means answering two nagging questions they have about their work:

1. Does anyone know I’m here?
2. Am I doing something that is important or relevant to something that’s meaningful? Am I making a difference?

This is the group management wants to keep comfortable, peaceful, and healed. It’s these people who make the business run. They make ideas work. When management withholds information or simply doesn’t communicate, the WTLs become uncomfortable and begin to worry. The place they go for information is to the D³UV²s, rather than management.

The D³UV²s generally have only one major constituency, the WTLs.

When periods of uncertainty arise, if management is slow in answering the questions, the D³UV²s will combine with the WTLs. That means that up to three-quarters of the employee base is in turmoil and not ready to move forward in positive ways. These are optimal conditions for organizing activity, high turnover, increases in workplace accidents, violence, and quality issues. It is management’s fault.

COROLLARY #1:

Surveying employees to determine if they “like” where they work is not a useful measure. Even during change, employees honestly say that they like where they work. That’s because employees have learned how useless surveys are. Liking or not liking the work may or may not have anything to do with whether or not anything useful gets done, because employees have learned to game the survey process.

POSTULATE #3:  
Real Time Communication Can Overcome Lack of Facts and a Poor Strategy.

Functional employees require very little information to stay focused on their jobs, but they need positively, useful, candid information promptly. They need answers to the questions.

Increasingly we’re recommending, for example, that even in good times company management meetings be held in real-time using teleconferences at least once a month. When problems occur we increase the frequency to two-to-four times per month. Modern technology allows hundreds, sometimes thousands, of people to attend these telemeetings. Just being included is a form of acknowledgement and recognition, which is so important to WTL employees at every level.

Hearing useful information from the boss, in real time, just as everyone else hears it, is a powerful tool for focus and clarification of goals. Real-time communication is the best way to control and disempower the D³UV²s. D³UV²s need delay and denial, negativity and emotional responses to keep up the confusion, fear, and uncertainty they cause.
POSTULATE #4:  
The Only Effective Local Conduit for Communication With Employees Is Through a Source the Employees Respect and Recognize – Their Supervisor.

We reconfirm a well recognized but still poorly executed axiom: the immediate supervisor is the workers’ information source of choice – the most trusted, the most important and most powerful communication resource for individual employees – whether those employees are functional or dysfunctional. The public relations practitioner’s knowledge of the entire environment of the organization should drive the coaching, teaching, and development of supervisory communication skills. And, it may be useful to consider installing two functional supervisors within each working group in the organization – one who shares how the work is to be done and the other who both helps workers understand what’s going on in the business and collects information and worker questions to make sure that there is adequate feedback from within the organization so that questions are answered promptly.

BECOME AN EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIST

Employee communications strategies involve helping managers master the human dimension and find new ways to understand how employees approach their work. Remember the critical roles of the strategist:

1. Think aggressively.
2. Challenge assumptions.
3. Question cherished patterns.
4. Strive to master the human dimension.
5. Recommend useful, doable options.
6. Anticipate the unintended consequences of strategic action.

(For more information on this subject, contact the author by e-mail at jel@e911.com or explore his Web site at www.e911.com.)

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<th>Employee Communication Analysis</th>
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<tr>
<td>12.5% D^UV² – Temporary</td>
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50% WTL: Work To Live  
20% DWTL: Disengaged Work To Live  
15% LTW: Live To Work  
7% DLTW: Dysfunctional Live To Work  
4% SAINNTS: Self-appointed IN or Near The Source  
25% D^UV² – Temporary/Permanent: Disheartened, Disgruntled, Disoriented, Unconvinced Victims needing a Victory  
121%
INTRODUCTION

Presenters often say that the easy part of presentations is handling questions and answers during and at the end of their talks. This enthusiasm is tempered severely when they encounter situations that are extremely difficult and tension filled, usually when the questioner is emotional, irritating, or intentionally trying to embarrass the presenter or disrupt the proceedings. Handling emotional questions is often grueling and gut wrenching.

Emotional questions and emotional responses are most likely when the issues being raised involve health and safety; property values; and quality of life issues such as peace of mind, freedom from fear, and pride in community or family. These issues are mostly emotion driven.

The questions themselves may be relatively straightforward. It is the emotionalization of the question, or bringing up sensitive topics, that leads to presenter discomfort and, perhaps, a feeling of inadequacy, even fear, in dealing with these situations.

A SEVEN-STEP PROCESS

Remember, every question is important since communication occurs only when someone asks a question and there is an opportunity to answer. Use this seven-step process to respond effectively, humanely, and appropriately to emotionally charged situations. It’s a process because the steps impose a purpose, order, and helpful structure for the presenter’s answers and, like most process approaches to communication, tend to de-emotionalize the situation.
Step One: Manage the Emotional Dimension First

React to the people, animal, and living system dimensions of the question first. If questioners are angry, acknowledge their anger; if questioners are fearful, acknowledge their fear; and if questioners are upset, acknowledge their discomfort.

Examples: “That’s an important question.” “We all can understand why you’re so concerned.” “Health issues are among the most important concerns for each of us.” “I’m sorry you’re so uncomfortable; let me see if I can provide some useful information.” “I’ve heard this truly important question asked and answered a number of times; let me see if I can be of some help.” “Let’s talk it through.”

Step Two: Give Control to Others

Emphasize restrictions, controls, regulations, monitoring, oversight, and continuous disclosure ahead of other issues and concerns, or the typical corporate self-forgiving, self-congratulatory language.

Examples: “This may be among the largest facilities of its kind, but it will be one of the most heavily regulated, observed, and monitored.” “The controls, restrictions, and regulations imposed on our operations will be monitored by outside, independent organizations for compliance.” “Independent monitoring combined with public disclosure will provide everyone who’s interested with moment-to-moment information.” “As time passes, we fully expect tough new regulations and even more rigorous restrictions and controls to be imposed.”

Examples to Avoid: Anything that begins with, “We are proud of,” “The facts are,” “This is the only way,” “There are no alternatives,” “It’s only an isolated incident,” “There’s no reason to be fearful,” or “There will be no difference.”

Step Three: Find a Few Useful Positive Facts / Obligate Yourself

One of the key lessons of managing emotional situations is recognizing that facts are of only limited value. The inclination of most business people and managers is to pile on the data, believing that objectively produced information, which would convince any rational person, will convince someone in an emotional state. The rule is that data is important but only effective when you can balance the emotional component. Yes, facts and data are important but far less so than dealing directly and empathetically with the emotional issues being faced.

Examples: “There are studies that acknowledge the issue you raise and provide helpful information, such as . . . ” “Our experts have been telling us . . . ” “We have really looked into this question deeply, and the information we have developed says . . . ” “This is independent information that shows . . . ” “We’re responsible for explaining everything we’ve proposed.” “You can count on us because it’s our obligation to . . . ” “When you have questions or issues, we’re just a phone call or
visit away.” “We will find an answer to your question.”

**Step Four:**  **State a Useful Positive Benefit, Gently**

Emphasize how important your information may be to the individual’s situation and, perhaps, other sources that might help the individual feel better and have more information.

**Examples:** “While this will be among the largest facilities of its type; it will also be one of the most heavily regulated and controlled facilities of its type.” “As a condition of obtaining permission, there will be permanent oversight by independent, outside individuals and organizations to ensure that promises made are promises kept.” “Questions like yours have triggered enormously helpful and serious research to find answers.” “This permit or public decision will be made only after the community is satisfied that it has imposed sufficient restrictions, regulations, oversight, and controls.”

With limited enthusiasm: “Some jobs will be created in . . .” “The economic benefit will be substantial.” “The local economy will benefit by . . .”

**Step Five:**  **Tell the Truth / State or Acknowledge the Negatives:**

Address the health, environmental, and community issues forthrightly.

**Examples:** “From our perspective, we are doing everything we can to address the issues you are raising, and the proof will be when we . . .” “Yes, the trains will be longer; there will be more emissions in these areas, but there will also be fewer pollutants by thousands of tons.” “Overall mercury will decline 37 percent; however, the use of Western coal will raise the emission of mercury by about X pounds per year over present levels.”

**Step Six:**  **Make Credible Comparisons**

Accommodate personal feelings; try to avoid analogies by instead comparing “appropriate” and “like” situations and facts. “What other information can we provide?”

**Examples:** “A plant of similar size, but gas powered, employs 34 people versus 120 people for coal-fueled units.” “Comparing coal-fueled plants to gas-fueled plants: The coal-fueled plants cost more to build, but the operating and expense elements are approximately the same. It’s the extraordinary spiking and relentless growth of gas prices that makes coal the better choice.”

**Step Seven:**  **Consensus/Solution (Optional)**

If you are particularly successful in communicating with the individual or group on the emotional issue, you could move toward an acknowledged mutual understanding...
by suggesting positions or answers the emotional, adversarial questioner might see as mutually beneficial or that would move the process ahead.

Examples: “Have I responded to the issues that were making you uncomfortable?” “What was most important from your perspective?” “Has what I said been helpful?” “Was there anything that you found especially useful?” “If we modify X or Y in the manner you suggest, would that help you feel less concerned?” “What specifically would resolve your questions?”

SOME GENERAL THOUGHTS

1. **Focus Forward:** Always answer the question as though it was the first time you have heard it, even if you just answered the same question a few minutes before. Rather than directing people back to the content of your presentation or remarks, treat the question as if it were brand new and answer it from the standpoint of now, and what’s next. This will help you avoid the use of negative language.

2. **Stay Positive:** The greatest emotional trigger in adversarial situations is the use of negative language or negative responses such as: “That’s not true,” “I never said that,” “That’s not what I meant,” “You weren’t listening,” “That’s not our fault,” “We didn’t mean it that way,” “That couldn’t happen,” and “We would never do that.”

   Find the positive alternative in every case, or you stoke the fires of emotion and antagonism.

3. **Put Yourself in Their Shoes Every Time:** The ability to have this level of empathetic response is one of the most important aspects of moving through an emotional questioning situation.

4. **Control Your Own Emotions:** Avoid taking inflammatory language and emotionally charged words, such as “ashamed,” “embarrassed,” “humiliated,” “bad,” “ugly,” “weird,” “worried,” and “scum,” personally. They are just words. Instead, move to answer the question and counteract your emotional reaction by focusing on a positive declarative response.

5. **Always Worry When They Throw Sticks and Stones:** Words rarely hurt unless you let them.

6. **Defuse the Situation:** “Let’s talk it through.” “Let’s look at the situation step-by-step.” “Let’s examine your question systematically, one element at a time.”
CONTROL YOUR OWN DESTINY:
CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

Giving interviews is necessary but can be risky. One of an interviewee’s greatest frustrations, especially with print news stories, is what the reporter and editor may do with the answers he or she gives. With broadcast stories, it’s what reporter leaves out that is of most concern. With critics, competitors, and complainers, it’s how much confusion, emotion, and allegation they can get into a story about you.

- What if the reporter makes a mistake?
- What if the reporter leaves really important things out of the story?
- If the reporter does make errors and mistakes, how do you effectively correct them? Or should you?
- What do you do about unrelated, confusing, negative, sensational, or competitive ideas that creep into the story?
- What if the story is just plain wrong?

We advocate a Web-based technique we call “Corrections & Clarifications” where a print story or the transcript of a broadcast news story is laid out in such a way that it can be effectively corrected and clarified. These corrections and clarifications are then put on a Web site, and often also e-mailed to key stakeholders and stakeholder groups. This approach allows us to avoid the restrictions that letters to the editor, op-eds, and other media-dominated or controlled response mechanisms tend to place on our ability to have correct information on-the-record and available promptly to the publics we care about. This response technique works equally well with flyers, letters, news releases, video news releases, and white papers from those who oppose us in critical high-profile situations.

Why do this? As neat as this idea is, when first suggested, almost every client wants to know why anyone would put bad stuff, of any kind, up on the Web, for any reason. Their question is, “Won’t this just make it available to lots more people and critics?” Here are five reasons why you should do this:

1. Your record is your responsibility. The public perception of your record is also your responsibility. This strategy manages both the public perception and the record.
2. Constructive approaches tend to control the tone of debate, discussion, and differences of opinion.
3. Your constituents expect you to do this.
4. Honorable people can, and should, answer any and all questions.
5. The technique tends to script everyone – constituents, critics, the media, and commentators.

Face it, the media can use very little of what you give them, and they will choose what they want to use. Often the reporter or editor will leave the most important information out of the story. Control your own destiny.
Step One: Analyze the article, transcript, or document and highlight the words, phrases, or statements that need correction and clarification.

Step Two: Reformat the article, transcript, or document (if you can) so it will appear as a single column of text in paragraph format on the left side of the page or Web-site screen.

Step Three: Use a bold typeface to highlight the words, phrases, or statements on the left side of the page that you wish to correct or clarify.

Step Four: On the right side of the page, directly across from the words you highlighted on the left, insert approved, corrected, or clarified response language.

Step Five: As new issues arise or new subjects appear, develop approved language to clarify and continue the process.

The models that follow are all taken from real-life stories and situations. Careful comparison of article text to the clarification will show you why this dispassionate technique, hammered home again and again, can be so successful in managing difficult, very public situations.

Always follow these general guidelines for all corrections and clarifications:

1. Use positive, declarative language. Avoid or eliminate all negative and emotional words and phrases.
2. Keep your cool. All statements should have a positive, declarative tone. The approach here is to correct and to clarify rather than to debate and counterpunch. This is where our real power comes from.
3. Categorize officially approved statements into specific topic areas. While time consuming and somewhat cumbersome at first, soon you will have more than enough pre-approved positive material to respond quickly to new articles or other information released by the media or those who hope to discredit you.
4. Constantly remember that the primary goal here is to script those who are interested in keeping the record straight with useful, helpful, and correct information.

Keep in mind that the groups most likely to visit your Web site frequently are reporters, opposing attorneys, your universe of audiences, and other self-appointed, self-anointed outsiders who have an interest in your issue or situation. The largest single group of visitors, however, will be your employees and those directly affected by the situation or circumstance at hand. Experience demonstrates that Web placement rarely enlarges an audience base, but does build trust and neutrality in the base audiences you care about.
Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation (KTEC)

Post Audit Analysis Response to the
House Economic Development and Tourism Committee

Economic Development: Determining the Amounts the State
Has Spent on Economic Development Programs and the
Economic Impacts on Kansas Counties

Introductory Comments

In reviewing the work of the post audit staff, several interpretive comments are in order to put the
report more carefully in context with how KTEC actually operates, including its goals, aspirations and
expectations. In many respects, attempting to fit all of the economic development programs for state
investment into one analysis template tends to present a less clear picture then had the programs been
separately discussed. The comments here are designed to clarify, correct and comment on the audit
results strictly from the perspective of KTEC. Others included in this report speak for themselves.

Note: Information developed and distributed by others about KTEC and our work often requires
amplification, correction, clarification, and sometimes commentary. Analyses like these ensure that an
accurate, complete, and balanced perspective is available to those who are interested in, engaged in,
and care about our work and purpose.

Text in bold in the left column is the subject of clarification, correction, or commentary in the
right hand column.

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<tr>
<th>Post Audit Analysis</th>
<th>Corrections, Clarifications, or Commentary</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Economic development in Kansas has been funded primarily from Lottery proceeds and</td>
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<td>gaming revenues. Each year, the first $50 million in gaming revenues is placed in the</td>
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<td>State Gaming Revenues Fund and any amounts over $50 million are placed in the State</td>
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<td>General Fund. From the Gaming Revenues Fund, 85% of the money is transferred to the</td>
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<td>Economic Development Initiatives Fund. The Economic Development Initiatives Fund has</td>
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<td>been used primarily to help fund the budgets of the States’ three main economic</td>
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<td>development agencies – the Department of Commerce, Kansas Technology Enterprise</td>
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<td>Corporation, and Kansas, Inc.</td>
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2 Within the past few years, the Legislature has passed two other major pieces of legislation aimed at spurring economic development in the State. One was the Bioscience Authority Act in 2004, which created a Bioscience Authority. The funding for the Authority comes from withholding taxes on the wages of certain employees in biosciences industries. The other major piece of legislation was the Kansas Expanded Lottery Act in 2007, which provided for up to four State owned casinos in Kansas, and allowed for gaming devices to be placed at pari-mutuel tracks in the State.

3 Recently, legislators have expressed an interest in knowing what programs fund economic development activities in Kansas, and how much State, federal, and local money is spent for economic development purposes. They want to know what past audits and current literature show about the effectiveness of spending for economic development activities, and what types of results can be shown in Kansas for the money that has been spent to date. This audit will answer the following questions:

1. How much State, federal, and local government money has been spent on economic development programs during the past five years?
2. What have past audits and recent literature shown about the effectiveness of economic development programs?
3. **What results can be seen from State spending for economic development in Kansas?**

An independent study of KTEC was conducted recently by Research Triangle Institute (RTI). RTI is a nationally respected tech-based economic development authority. RTI concluded that, “Overall, KTEC operates highly effective programs that generate positive outcomes for Kansas. This is accomplished through its collaborative network, on-target programs, institutional respect, and ability to provide strategic assistance to partners.”
KTEC has a 20-year successful history in technology-based economic development (TBED).

A clear distinction should be made between the focused, technology-based economic development (TBED) that KTEC practices and general economic development activities.

Since inception in 1987, KTEC investments have created:

- 16,200 jobs
- $1.75 billion in increased sales
- An additional $541 million in federal investment
- An additional $410 million of private capital investment

(Note: KTEC was fully funded by the legislature for the first time in 1995.)
**DISCUSSION DRAFT**  
4/10/2008 1:31 PM EDT  
JEL/BBL Edits

**Corrections, Clarifications, and Commentary**

**Nestlé Waters North America**

**“A Town Torn Apart by Nestlé”**  
As Published in *BusinessWeek*  
Thursday, April 3, 2008

**Note:** Information developed and distributed by others about NWNA and our work often requires amplification, correction, clarification, and sometimes commentary. Analyses like these ensure that an accurate, complete, and balanced perspective is available to those who are interested in, engaged in, and care about our work and purpose.

Text in **bold** in the left column is the subject of clarification, correction, or commentary in the right hand column.

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<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Corrections, Clarifications, or Commentary</th>
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<td><strong>Commentary</strong></td>
<td>In our judgment, three things are missing from this article and a major credibility defect:</td>
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<td>1. <strong>Missing:</strong> A much stronger emphasis on the science and investigative aspects of what’s happening in McCloud since, for the time being, this is an exploratory process for Nestlé in the hope of finding a suitable spring site for a water harvesting plant. The aquifer being explored and tested is one of the most prolific in the western United States.</td>
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<td>2. <strong>Missing</strong>: Much of the language of this article, like its title, “Torn Apart by Nestlé,” reflects the hyperbole used, generally, by Nestlé opponents. The company provided a great deal of information, as well as face-to-face time, to talk about Nestlé’s activities, goals, and aspirations. In return, the author invents terms like “water hunters” and goofball concepts like, “a pall of aggrievement hangs over Nestlé Waters’ headquarters.”</td>
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<td>3. <strong>Missing</strong>: This article fails to inform the reader in some detail (this is a long article) of what goes into the search for an effective spring water well and the high level of restrictions, rules, regulations, laws, and oversight required of Nestlé (or any other company) before public permission to build a manufacturing facility is given.</td>
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<td>4. <strong>Critical Credibility Defect</strong>: The <em>BusinessWeek</em> account differs markedly from the tone of other national news accounts of the same situation. It makes one wonder whether <em>BusinessWeek</em> was visiting the same city as the <em>Associated Press</em>, who has also done recent reporting on Nestlé’s project in McCloud.</td>
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<th><em>BusinessWeek</em></th>
<th>According to the <em>Associated Press</em>:</th>
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<td>By Michelle Conlin</td>
<td>“. . . McCloud is hoping to turn things around by exploiting the other natural resource in abundance along the icy flanks of Mount Shasta — water.”</td>
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<td>Thursday, April 3, 2008</td>
<td>“. . . others in town are growing frustrated by the delays and want to see something, anything, to replace the lumber mill that was driven out of business by the logging restrictions that have hurt the timber industry across the Pacific.”</td>
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1 **How a deal for a bottled water plant set off neighbor against neighbor in struggling McCloud, Calif.**
One recent indicator of support for the project in the community is the 2006 elections for three (out of five) open seats on the McCloud Community Services District Board. In that election, six candidates ran – three were pro-Nestlé/economic development and three anti-Nestlé. The three pro-Nestlé candidates won (by about 60% to 40%).

Tucked into the foothills of Mount Shasta, the Northern California town of McCloud has no stoplights and one grocery store. A former logger’s El Dorado, McCloud fell on hard times in the 1980s when it started running out of trees to cut down. But with its drop-dead panoramas and crisp, clean air, the burg started to limp back in the 1990s. Today it is a world-renowned paradise for trout anglers, a respite for burned-out boomers looking to escape the status race, and a hotbed of New Age seekers, some of whom jet in from Japan to meditate and chant in what they regard as a spiritual vortex.

It is here that Nestlé Waters North America (NWNA), a subsidiary of the Swiss food and beverage giant, plans to operate one of the largest spring-water bottling plants in the U.S. The 1 million-square-foot facility—picture five Walmart (WMT) supercenters strung together—is to rise on the site of McCloud’s defunct lumber mill, a 250-acre swath of land that bends around the base of the mountain.

Nestlé aims to draw 1,250 gallons a minute of water from McCloud’s glacier-fed springs.

The proposed Nestlé Waters North America (NWNA) plant will be situated on nearly 250 acres and be approximately 300,000 square feet initially, with the potential to grow to an estimated 1,000,000 square feet over ____ years.

Water Use

Our water use depends on many factors, including the type of source, spring or municipal supply, and the conditions at that particular source.

We only collect a small fraction of the available water. Before we determine an
The company would then pack 300 semi-trailers a day full of Arrowhead brand water, truck it as far away as Los Angeles and Reno, and sell it at prices that are as much as 1,000

| exact amount, we complete extensive analysis and testing. This includes the size of the aquifer, how much water is already being used, and the rate at which the water recharges. Our level of water use would depend on that information, and we’re happy to share the data with anyone.

We also actively monitor the surrounding water sources and environment on a daily basis. Those data are regularly reported to government agencies and are made available for public review. Based on the monitoring data, water collection may remain steady, be reduced or stopped altogether depending on environmental conditions.

There is also extensive oversight in the form of permitting and regulatory processes that require Nestlé to report a great deal of data and provide extensive compliance with regulatory and oversight processes.

Whatever impacts there are, and they will be extremely small, will be determined through extensive testing and monitoring prior to the construction of any manufacturing facility. These impact analyses also take into consideration draught conditions, should they occur.

Our business depends upon the health of the water supply. We must protect it during times of drought in order to ensure its continued, long-term availability.

**Traffic and Trucks**

The potential impacts from the proposed truck traffic (300 trucks per day at maximum build-out) will be fully analyzed through the CEQA process.
News Times Editorial

March 2, 2007

Iroquois, Second Compression Station Proposed for Brookfield

Note: Information developed and distributed by others often requires amplification, correction, clarification, and sometimes commentary. Analyses like these ensure that an accurate, complete, and balanced perspective is available to those who are interested in, engaged in, and care about our work and purpose.

Text in bold in the left column is the subject of clarification, correction, or commentary in the right hand column.

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<th>The Iroquois Gas Transmission System plans to build a second compression station in Brookfield, an announcement that comes just two months after the first station won the approval of federal regulators.</th>
<th>Here’s what happened. Iroquois held an open season in September 2006. This is a process where the company seeks commitments for their services. As a result, several companies requested Iroquois services. After negotiations Keystan was the only entity with serious intentions. From October 2006 to date, Iroquois has reviewed KeySpan's request for 200,000 Dth/d and determined what facilities would be necessary to service this requirement, where the facilities would be located, and if it was feasible, from an engineering perspective, for the company to provide the services being requested. At the same time, the commercial terms of the deal were being developed. Both the feasibility and terms of the arrangement became defined enough to announce the proposed project in late...</th>
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<td><strong>Brookfield First Selectman Jerry Murphy says Iroquois officials told him they didn't know they would need a second compression station until a month ago when Iroquois was approached by KeySpan Corp. to obtain additional sources of natural gas.</strong></td>
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<th>The notion that Iroquois didn't know its investor would be doing more business with it doesn't pass any sort of test for credibility. But, as Brookfield has learned, this is how Iroquois does business.</th>
<th>The problem is the perception that the idea just emerged in February when in reality it was being discussed and developed dating back to September 2006. Somehow this series of events fell out of the explanation, the news coverage, and the subsequent statements of a lot of people. We should have communicated this better than we did. As you’ll see, answering questions is something we intend to get very good at. Very shortly we will be opening a new page on our web site filled with specific information, answers to questions and easily accessible information the communities we serve need to have.</th>
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<td>KeySpan is the fifth largest distributor of natural gas in the United States and the largest in the Northeast. It also is the largest electric generator in New York state. And, let us take note, KeySpan is an investor in the Iroquois Gas Transmission System.</td>
<td>At public hearings on the proposal for the first compression station, Iroquois officials expressed surprise that Brookfield residents were so suspicious of that plan as well as future plans for Iroquois' property on High Meadow Road.</td>
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<td>How could they be surprised? The company is never forthcoming about its plans, and officials appear well-schooled on how not to answer questions.</td>
<td>We understand the skepticism that Brookfield residents may have about Iroquois being forthright and upfront. Business, contract negotiations are confidential and are carried out in private. Also, many times information (such as exact location, cost and timing) only becomes available after we complete a required process of reaching out for public comment which influences and often changes both interim and final project details.</td>
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<td>Why would a company operate like that? Because it can. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, under regulations approved by Congress, regulates natural gas pipelines.</td>
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that allow regulators to disregard local opposition. In addition, Brookfield has the bad luck of being the place where the Algonquin and Iroquois pipelines come together. Iroquois owns a 65-acre parcel on High Meadow Road where the pipelines intersect and the compression stations will be built. The property is in the middle of a residential area and near Whisconier Middle School.

Despite opposition by Brookfield and state officials, FERC approved the first compression station. It is part of a $1.04 billion interstate pipeline project that involves five companies. There was never much doubt that the first compression station would be approved, and the likelihood that this second compression station will win FERC approval is even greater.

The Northeast needs access to a good supply of energy, and natural gas is a clean fuel. But there should be room for discussion about the right place to build a facility like a compression station. As federal regulations now stand, Brookfield residents never had a chance to have their objections seriously considered.

As for Iroquois officials, when they show up in Brookfield for a hearing on the second compression station, they know the audience won't be friendly -- but they won't care. Federal regulations allow them not to care what Brookfield residents think. Yes, we will show up as required, but our intent is to help Brookfield residents become more familiar with us as a company and as a neighbor. We will be present with courtesy, respect and a sincere desire to make everyone more comfortable with what we are proposing.
DISCUSSION OUTLINE

Developing the Mind of a Strategic Advisor:
Getting to the Table Earlier and With More Personal Power

Friday, April 11th, 2014

If those who attended this program with you would like to have a follow-up discussion, here are some questions to begin the conversation:

1. What do you know now that you didn’t know when the program began?
2. What’s the most important concept or idea you learned from this program?
3. What questions has the presentation raised for which you need to find answers?
4. What key skills, ideas, or knowledge did this program confirm for you?
5. Based on what you learned and heard today, what is the first thing you’re going to do when you return to your office?
6. What’s the second thing you’re going to do?
James E. Lukaszewski (loo-ka-SHEV-skee) advises, coaches, and counsels the men and women who run very large corporations and organizations through extraordinary problems and critical high-profile circumstances. The bulk of his practice is in the U.S., Canada, and South America although he has clients from many parts of the world.

He is an expert in managing and reducing contention, counteracting tough, touchy, sensitive corporate communications and institutional issues. He counsels leaders facing serious internal and external problems involving: activist counteraction; community conflict and grassroots campaigns; corporate relations failures; reputational threats; employee relationship building; ethics/integrity/compliance; litigation visibility; Web-based attacks; and threats to corporate survival. His broad-based experience ranges from media-initiated investigations to product recalls and plant closings, from criminal litigation to takeovers. He is frequently retained by senior management to directly intervene and manage the resolution of corporate problems and bad news. The situations he helps resolve often involve conflict, controversy, community action, or activist opposition. Almost half of his practice involves civil and criminal litigation.

He is a teacher, thinker, coach, and trusted advisor with the unique ability to help executives look at problems from a variety of sensible, constructive, principled perspectives. He teaches clients how to take highly focused, ethically appropriate action. He has personally counseled, coached, and guided thousands of executives in organizations large and small from many cultures representing government; the military and defense industry; the agriculture, banking, computer, financial, food processing, health care, insurance, paper, real estate development, and telecommunications industries; cooperatives; trade and professional associations; and non-profit agencies. He is a coach to many CEOs.

Jim helps prepare spokespersons for crucial public appearances, local and network news interviews including 20-20, 60 Minutes, Dateline NBC, and Nightline, and for financial analyst meetings, and legislative and congressional testimony. He also provides personal coaching for executives in trouble, or facing career-defining problems and succession issues.
He is a prolific author (six books, hundreds of articles and monographs), lecturer (corporate, college and university), trainer, counselor, and public speaker. He is an editorial board member of most of Public Relation’s important Journals and serial Publications. His book, “Why Should the Boss Listen to You?” was published by Jossey-Bass in 2008.

His newest book, “Lukaszewski on Crisis Communication, What Your CEO Needs to Know about Reputation Risk and Crisis Management,” was published March 11, 2013. It was named one of the 30 Best Business Books of 2013 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries. It is available now on Amazon.com.

An accredited member of the (IABC) International Association of Business Communicators (ABC) and the (PRSA) Public Relations Society of America (APR), Mr. Lukaszewski is also a member of the PRSA’s College of Fellows (Fellow PRSA); Board of Ethics & Professional Standards; a member of ASIS International, where he serves on the Crisis Management and Business Continuity Council. He has lectured annually at the U.S. Marine Corp’s East Coast Commander’s Media Training Symposium from 1987 to 2009.

Lukaszewski received his BA in 1974 from Metropolitan State University in Minnesota. He is a former deputy commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Economic Development and assistant press secretary to former Minnesota Governor Wendell Anderson. He founded Minnesota-based Media Information Systems Corporation in 1978. Prior to founding The New York based Lukaszewski Group Inc. in 1989 he was senior vice president and director of Executive Communication Programs for Georgeson & Company and a partner with Chester Burger Company, both in New York City. In 2011 He joined St. Paul Minnesota based Risdall Public Relations as president of its Lukaszewski Group Division. Risdall is ranked as the third largest PR firm in Minnesota and 182 out of the top 250 U.S. local firms ranked by the Holmes report.

His biography is listed in 30 editions of various Marquis Who’s Who in America (including the 2014, 68th edition), The World (including 2014, 31st edition), Finance and Government. The story of his career appears in, “Living Legends of American Public Relations,” (2008) Grand Valley State University. His name was listed in Corporate Legal Times as one of “28 Experts to Call When All Hell Breaks Loose;” and in PR Week as one of 22 “crunch-time counselors who should be on the speed dial in a crisis.” In 2013 and 2014, he was named one of the “Top 100 Thought Leaders in Trustworthy Business Behavior” by Trust Across America. Googling James E. Lukaszewski yields more than 51,000 entries.

James E. Lukaszewski, ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA
President, The Lukaszewski Group Division, Risdall Public Relations
550 Main Street, Suite 100, New Brighton, MN 55112
Jim's Office: 651-286-6788 (with voice mail)
Cell: 203-948-7029 (24/7 with e-mail, voice mail and texting)
E-mail: jel@e911.com