THE ARTHUR W.
PAGE CENTER
for integrity in public communication

Student's Guide to Standing the Test of Time and Technology:
Principles of Public Relations Management in the Age of Social Media

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Lessons from the Arthur W. Page Center for Ethics and Integrity in Public Communication

Rationale and Overview

The social media revolution has changed everything… or has it? This module is designed for you to apply ethical theory and lasting principles of good public relations as our media landscape changes dramatically. You will read an essay about the Page Principles and chapters from your textbook. Using knowledge about classic principles of ethics, you will engage an organization via social media before taking a quiz on the readings and asked to reflect on your online experience and how the ethical and public relations principles apply in social media contexts.

Module Instructions

This social media module is open for one week. Read first. Then use most of your time to engage at least one organization online using social media. Your understanding of the readings will help you identify online public relations activities and social media examples. The last part is a "quiz" with a series of questions that include multiple-choice questions based on the readings as well as five open-ended activity questions.

Learning Objectives

- Identify classic principles for public relations management.
- Identify organizations using social media for public relations.
- Engage at least one organization using social media for public relations.
- Apply classic principles of ethics to public relations actions observed online.
- Evaluate principles of public relations as they apply in social media contexts.

Key Concepts

The key concepts for this module include: golden rule, golden mean, categorical imperative, utilitarianism, veil of ignorance, and discourse ethics

Material Needed: Readings

- Chapter 2: Media Literacy and Ethics in the textbook *Converging Media* by John Pavlik & Shawn McIntosh (or any other overview of classic ethical principles and theories).

- *Arthur W. Page: A Man of Vision, Valor, and Values*, by Pamela Jo Brubaker (available online from the Arthur W. Page Center).

- Chapter 9: Social Media and Web 2.0 in the textbook *Converging Media* by John Pavlik & Shawn McIntosh (or any other overview reading on social media).

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Which of the following is NOT one of Page's principles for public relations management?

   a. Tell the truth.

   b. Prove it with action.

   c. A company's true character is expressed by its people.

   d. Public perception of is determined mostly by what the organization says.

   e. Manage for tomorrow.

2. According to the text, what did Comcast do to improve customer relationships after being rated low in customer satisfaction and being insulted on sites such as ComcastMustDie.com.

   a. filed law suits for libel

   b. outsourced their customer-support functions to better trained technicians in Canada

   c. monitored and responded to bloggers engaging them in conversation

   d. hired an actor to play a sleeping Comcast technician in viral YouTube videos

   e. edited negative information out of references to their organization in Wikipedia

3. According to the text, when Internet users apply folksonomies and tagging to serve as filters, classifiers, and reviewers of information, which social media function are they serving?

   a. conversation

   b. curation

   c. creation

   d. collaboration

   e. copyright

Activity Questions

1. In which social media format did you participate? With which organization did you choose to interact?

2. Name two of Arthur Page's seven principles that your experience illustrates (note: your examples may be positive or negative, meaning they can show how you think the principle was or was not applied well). Describe your experiences and explain how the principles you named apply.

3. Name two ethical principles that apply to your experience. Again, explain how what you observed either upholds these principles or serves as a negative example.

4. Arthur Page worked for AT&T from 1927 to 1955. Do all seven of his principles still stand? Why or why not?

5. How have social media changed the way professional communicators can apply these principles?

References

Brubaker, P. J. (2010). Arthur W. Page: A Man of Vision, Valor, and Values. Retrieved from the Page Center website: http://pagecenter.comm.psu.edu/index.php/about-the-page-center/the-page-principles

Pavlik, J. V., & McIntosh, S. (2011). *Converging media: A new introduction to mass communication* (2nd Ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.