

Outstanding Examples of Criteria 3-6

Criterion 3: Superior Professional Capability

Example #1

Situation: Data from the Health Council of East Central Florida showed obesity was on the rise, fewer people exercised, and life expectancy for children was shorter than that of their parents. Concerned, a local health foundation wanted to implement a healthy lifestyle program in Central FL based on a new national initiative “America on the Move.”

Role: I was the leader of and strategic communications director for “Central Florida on the Move.”

Plan: I formed a county-wide committee of 18 health care leaders; secured an experienced health care reporter from a local network to be media/celebrity lead; created 20 lunch and learns for corporations; partnered with county health departments, hospitals, wellness centers, insurance companies, and healthy community organizations in over half of the counties in Florida. I engaged local political leaders to help carry the message and act as role models and found funding sources to sustain the initiative.

Results: The planned three-month campaign turned into a three-year, state-wide program that became a national model for eight other states. As executive director of “Florida on the Move,” I made over 250 presentations to a wide variety of groups. Over 24,000 people enrolled (most for any state) in the program and 500 new walking groups formed in 27 of the 67 counties of Florida. 60% of those who followed the program experienced weight loss and reported a feeling of “better well-being.” I created and led the first state-wide obesity summit in Florida with 300+ attendees. Local political leaders began wearing pedometers and participated in community-wide walk and talks. Locally, FL on the Move received a “Champion of Sustainability” award for its far-reaching impact and the number of community partnerships (20) that were formed. The local ABC affiliate produced two half-hour programs on obesity. Several state and local businesses and health-related organizations along with local healthcare systems and individuals contributed over \$175,000 to sustain the initiative. Governor Jeb Bush also recognized the strength of the program at a state-level cabinet meeting.

Contact:

What makes this an outstanding example?

- Format: *Situation, Role, Plan, Results* clear and concise
- Actions of applicant clearly showed professional capability
- Data: excellent use of % increase, #s enrolled, # attendees, # presentations, \$s raised to show results
- Use of “I” prevalent
- Objectives exceeded; how and why they were exceeded articulated clearly
- Merited recognition by Governor

Example #2

Situation: The Enterprise, a boutique hotel designer and builder, purchased the county courthouse to return it to its 1888 grandeur. The citizens of the town despaired that an “outsider” was “taking over” their cherished building. Distrust, uneasiness, and rumors grew. Resistance to the unknown developer was high, threatening to impede approvals, permits, and construction.

Role: I was in charge of all company and construction communications with external audiences, conducted all community outreach initiatives, and was the primary research strategist for the company.

Plan: My goal was to build trust and goodwill through frequent, consistent, and accurate information delivered personally. I traveled to this small town twice a month to scour historical records for design ideas, connected with city and county leaders, spoke at civic meetings, and attended city historical and fundraising events. In the empty ground-level stores, I established a rotating monthly storefront display schedule featuring the city’s non-profits. I wrote bi-weekly construction update columns for the local newspaper, held hard hat tour contests, engineered a community Christmas party for 3,000 at the construction site, and engaged nearby college senior art students to paint historical scenes on the construction panels.

Results: The city and county embraced the hotel. We had 18 months of positive press. The hotel was completed close to schedule, the needed one-way streets were established, and the hotel was kept on the National Historic Registry. The past three years, Conde Nast Traveler listed this hotel as one of the top hotels in the nation, while Fodor’s Travel and The Knot listed it as one of the best wedding destination hotels in the U.S. It carries a four-diamond rating from AAA. **Contact:**

What makes this an outstanding example?

- Format clear and concise
- Innovative strategies and tactics utilized
- Objectives exceeded
- Data was specific to back up results
- Use of “I” and “Me” prevalent
- Merited recognition in Conde Nest Traveler, Foder’s and four-diamond rating
- Effort produced excellent results long after completion of the initial effort

Criterion 4: Advancement of the Profession

Example #1

Company T: Demonstrating in one flush how PR directly impacts product sales

Situation: Several years ago, Company T – maker of bath fixtures – set out to eliminate what families hated most about their toilets, from overflows to expensive repairs. The solution: Company T’s new Power toilet with advanced flushing technology. I worked with a team to develop a PR campaign to support the Power’s launch *prior* to any national advertising – setting out to prove the power of public relations and show a direct correlation to sales. **Action:** I co- led our team in creating and executing the campaign with a mix of science, celebrity, humor and home improvement to drive sales. The launch focused on a New York City media event

featuring celebrity handyman Joe Handy and a highly-visual demonstration toilet that wowed newsroom producers and reporters. I wrote media messages, arranged celebrity home installs, and guided media relations. **Outcome:** Led by PR alone, 100,000+ toilets sold in the first nine months, 25% over forecast, to create the most successful product launch in Company T's history. Media placements and qualified leads exceeded goals. The Power launch campaign won a PRSA Silver Anvil Award, and I wrote the entry. The success led Company T's leaders to further invest in PR. Over the next two years, I planned and executed a consumer contest and a community toilet makeover (winner of a Silver Anvil Award of Excellence, which I also wrote).

Contact:

What makes this an outstanding example?

- Format: *Situation, Action, Outcome*- brief, clear and extremely concise
- Historical results; dramatic impact; excellent use of media and working the plan; exceeded goals
- Descriptive phrases to describe outcomes
- Further success of this project emphasized and highlighted by Silver Anvil Selection

Example #2

Company ABC: Identifying communications drivers to help leaders engage employees

Situation: Company ABC created a new corporate department that supported operations and training within its 15,000 retail locations. The department's employees came together from previously siloed teams and wondered how they fit into the new structure. In fact, an annual staff survey showed fewer than half felt they had the information needed to do their jobs. Department executives also questioned how they could better lead their teams. **Action:** At Company ABC, I partnered with a consultant to enhance the staff survey and identify leadership behaviors and actions that were *most likely* to drive communications improvements so busy executives knew where and how they should spend their time. With insights from a more comprehensive survey, I helped develop **individual communications plans** for each of the 10 department leaders, focusing on his/her specific team results and the identified key drivers of communications effectiveness: frequency (regular team meetings); line of sight (translating corporate goals for teams); and symbolic communication ("travel paths" around the office and spontaneous recognition). **Outcome:** Leaders took specific actions that gave them the **greatest return on their time** invested in communications. Employees receiving the information they needed increased from **35% to 80% over two years**. The value that executives placed upon internal communications also **multiplied dramatically**, leading to greater demand for my counsel. **Contact:**

What makes this an outstanding example?

- Format: *Situation, Action, Results* is clearly articulated and concise
- Key returns significant, quantified, easy to read, stand out
- Perception changed within a large corporate culture. How it was changed was articulated clearly
- Audience was impacted in large company with team goals exceeded. Impacts were clearly supported by data

Criterion 5: Service and Leadership

Example #1

Situation: My local Community Church formed a 10-member volunteer search committee to conduct a national search for an associate pastor. The search committee became embroiled in such divisive debate and internal politics that the congregation “fired” the entire committee. Several (35) members of the congregation left the church.

Role: I was asked to become the new search committee chair, to find an associate pastor, and to restore peace among the congregants.

Plan: I drew upon a communication best practices - Tuckman’s stages of group development (a model I had taught as well as used with other groups prior to this) - to use as our roadmap. Enlisting long-standing, credible parishioners to be ambassadors to each small group within the church, I helped the search committee move beyond the negative reputation of its predecessors and led the group to form its own norms and standards of civility and excellence.

Results: We met frequently, set clear objectives for how the team would work with each other and with the congregation, discussed our fears and aspirations for our work, and most importantly worked through how we would resolve conflict. Communication with each other and with the congregation was refreshingly free, open, and honest – and frequent. Almost a year after we had begun, we welcomed a new associate pastor. The committee received a standing ovation from the congregation as the minister was introduced. Over 20 of the 35 parishioners who had left the church because of the tension returned to membership.

Contact:

What makes this an outstanding example?

- Leadership and volunteer service outside of PRSA showed applicant’s passion and willingness to help in time of need
- Results utilizing PR practices, skills, and communication in local community service work were clearly defined and articulated
- Use of “I” prevalent
- Successful result shown with new pastor and happy congregation and returning membership

Example #2

Situation: My 27-yr-old assistant, Yvonne, a victim of domestic violence, was shot and killed by her former husband. Her senseless and tragic death motivated me to seek ways to help abused women and raise community awareness of this often-ignored issue.

Action: Join organizations/campaigns focused on raising community awareness about abuse.

Results: For twelve years I was a member of the Women’s Resource Center (WRC), a local nonprofit organization whose focus is women’s issues, particularly domestic abuse. The WRC led a community effort to create Rape Response, which provided sensitive, professional care and support to rape victims and their families. Rape Response evolved into a community collaboration that became the Sexual Assault Treatment Center (SATC). I served five years on the WRC Board; authored a monthly newsletter for 300 WRC members, raising awareness about women’s issues in the area while reinforcing membership benefits; and participated in

fundraisers and community projects to promote community education about abuse and partially fund the SATC. Further, I was tapped to serve on the Communications Sub-Committee of the mayor's county-wide Domestic Violence Commission comprised of 70 community leaders dedicated to sustained community awareness of and problem-solving for this issue.

Contact:

What makes this an outstanding example?

- Riveting situation defined
- Showed stellar results of community service for a relevant and important community issue
- Use of "I" prevalent
- Service outside of PRSA articulated
- Clear writing and outcomes
- Indicated how PR and communication skills can work toward solving difficult and complicated community issues

Criterion 6: Role Model

Example #1

Situation: For 40 years the Women's Executive Council (WEC), an organization of business leaders who strive to empower and embrace women, has recognized "outstanding women who make an impact and contribute to the vitality and richness of the area."

Result: On Oct. 21, 2011, I was presented a Women's Achievement Award in Communications/Media for "my exemplary leadership in the field of Public Relations and extensive involvement in the community." Among my many accomplishments mentioned in the award narrative, the WEC included my mentorship of new PR professionals, which included helping to connect them with community and professional resources and working with them to refine their resumes and interview skills. In addition, the WEC praised me for extraordinary volunteer service and for "serving as a role model for women" in my company, industry, and community.

Contact:

Example #2

Situation: The Local PRSA Chapter recognizes outstanding local ethical practices with its annual PRSA Patrick Jackson. Ethics Award, named after local public relations professional, professor and mentor Patrick Jackson.

Result: On December 8, 2011, my PRSA Chapter presented me with this coveted ethics award, citing my personal and professional integrity, long-time advocacy for ethical behavior, honesty in conversation and actions, fairness with all, the value I placed in the PRSA Member Code of Ethics, 14 years of active and vibrant leadership at the local, district, and national levels of PRSA, and my sincere willingness to share my knowledge, expertise, and resources with others.

Contact:

What makes both of these outstanding examples? As you can see, these candidates *did not follow the Situation, Role, Action, Outcome format. In this criterion, the format used is perfectly acceptable due to its personal nature. However, each award was explained and framed within public relations excellence.*

- Applicant did not just name awards. This candidate got deeper into WHY the awards confirmed the recipient was an excellent role model and HOW they achieved success
- Showed outstanding public and community service and mentoring relationships
- Use of “I” prevalent - applicants clearly touted themselves without exaggeration
- Good examples of role models inside and outside PRSA
- Clear, concise, specific articulation of PR desired goals

What makes all of these examples outstanding?

1. **Situation** clearly defined without extensive explanation
2. **Objective** for project clear, to the point, and highlighted
3. **Role and Action** defined and explained
 - a) Notice the applicant’s role is explained. Use of “I” prevalent.
 - b) PR strategies and tactics listed so that reader can see the knowledge, application, and success of public relations tools
4. **Results/Outcomes** clear, convincing, demonstrated
 - a) Numbers, percentages, impact shown
 - b) Objective met and exceeded
 - c) Sustainability and replication shown
 - d) Further success of this project emphasized and highlighted in various ways
 - e) The question of “so what” is clearly and repeatedly answered