

## ***JOUR 523 Planning Grid Assignment***

There are several ways to conduct public relations planning. Planning grids are one such method. For this assignment, each member of the group will complete a planning grid. You will use research developed from the research memo to determine appropriate goals for your client. Although group members are encouraged to collaborate on establishing meaningful goals for their client, each person is responsible for his or her own planning grid. So that the group gets the full benefit of this exercise, it is suggested that group members be assigned different goals in filling out their grid. Obviously, there will be some overlap: If there are four people in a goal and just three goals identified, then it would be ideal for two persons to be assigned each goal. However, the bottom line is that **this is an individual assignment that you are expected to complete (other than goal setting) on your own.**

### **The Client: The Lawrence Arts Center**

According to its Web site ([www.lawrenceartscenter.com](http://www.lawrenceartscenter.com)), the mission of the Lawrence Arts Center is to “enrich individuals and the community by nurturing love of the arts through education, exploration and expression.” The Center has a rich history and continues to be an important part of the Lawrence community. LAC released the following statement about its organization: “The Lawrence Arts Center was founded 35 years ago by Lawrence community members who wanted to foster a love of the arts in Lawrence and surrounding communities. Over the years, the Lawrence Arts Center has grown to serve 200,000 people annually in five areas: Visual Arts Education, Dance, Drama, Gallery Exhibition and an Arts-based preschool.”

To meet the needs of our client, student teams will be classified in this manner:

**Red Teams-** These teams will be asked to develop a public relations plan designed to increase awareness about the participation of LAC classes among adults in the Lawrence community. The current misconception is that the LAC is a glorified daycare and has little to offer adults; in fact, 60% of LAC’s art student population is adults. Another task of this group will be to educate the public about the funding stream for the Center. Currently there is a misconception that it is fully funded by the city of Lawrence.

**Blue Teams-** These teams will be asked to develop a public relations plan designed to increase awareness of the inclusive nature of the LAC. The misconception now is that the Center is elitist and caters to the wealthy. In addition, these teams will work on a plan to publicize the affordable pricing of classes and programs offered by the center.

## What is a public relations planning grid?

The public relations planning grid is a tool used in developing strategy. It is also a systematic approach to the planning process. This is what a planning grid looks like:

### Goal:

Publics	Stake	Message	Media	Timetable	Monitor	Budget

### How to use the planning grid:

**1 Identify a goal – just one goal -- you wish to achieve on behalf of your client.** A goal is a statement of the outcome your client hopes to achieve. Think of it as a destination. It is not the strategy or the tactics used in reaching that destination. *The above scenario suggests several goals.* For the purposes of this exercise, each student is required to complete the planning grid for only one of following goals: (1) To increase awareness of the LAC and its programming (both teams) (2) To increase participation in its reoccurring programs (Red teams) (3) To increase awareness of the affordable pricing of classes and programs offered by the center (Blue team). *To achieve maximum from this exercise, it is suggested that different members of the group do different goals. For example, in a group of five, two may choose goal one, three choose goal two and goal three. However, please remember that is an individual assignment. Beyond assigning goals, please do not collaborate with one another. That would defeat the purpose of the exercise.*

**2 Identify the five publics — just five publics — you consider most critical in meeting the client’s goal.** In any given scenario, there could be dozens of stakeholders. However, for the purpose of this assignment, you are required to list only five publics. Remember: You represent the management of your client organization. Do not target yourself. List each in a separate box in the column under the heading “Publics.”

**3 Identify each public’s single-most compelling stake as it relates to your client’s goals.** Stake is defined as a statement of each public’s self-interests. In any given scenario, there could be multiple statements of self-interest. However, for the purpose of this assignment, only one statement is requested. Pick the stake that best serves the needs of the client and public – creating a “win-win” situation. For purposes of clarity, it is recommended that this be stated in a complete sentence. It should be listed in the column titled “Stake” in rows assigned to an appropriate public. *It is understood that some statements of self-interest are appropriate for one more than one public. You are allowed to use the same statement of interest more than once when appropriate.*

#### **4 Identify the messages the you want to deliver to the targeted publics.**

These messages are both positioning statements and a call to action. They are designed to motivate specific publics to take a desired action. They should take into account both the client's goals and the audience's self-interests (stake).

- **For primary publics, the message should use parallel language that links the stake and goal.** Typically, its construction is along these lines: "I want this public to take an action that will advance my goal because it also advances that public's stake." *Example: KU wants an increase in state funding. It is targeting the legislature. It has defined the legislature's stake as: "Legislators want to be seen spending state tax dollars wisely." So, the message from KU to legislators is: "Increase KU's budget so you will be seen wisely spending taxpayer dollars."*
- **For intervening publics, remember that the goal has changed.** By definition, primary publics are the only people who are decision-makers who decide whether you can achieve your goal. By definition, intervening publics seek to influence the primary publics. Therefore, the construction of the message is typically along these lines: "Influence (primary public) to take an action that will advance my goal because it advances your stake." *Example: KU wants an increase in state funding. It is targeting students as an intervening audience who can influence the legislature. Students want to keep down the cost of tuition. Therefore, the message is: "Urge legislators to support increased funding for KU because it will help keep down the cost of tuition."*

In any given scenario, you may be required to deliver multiple messages. However, for the purposes of this assignment, only one message statement per public is required. For purposes of clarity, it is recommended that this be stated in a complete sentence. It should be listed in the column titled "Messages" in rows assigned to an appropriate public. *It is understood that some message statements are appropriate for more than one public. You are allowed to use the same message statement more than once when appropriate.*

**5. Identify the media appropriate for communicating with the target publics.** Identify the channels of communications you feel are best for reaching these publics. In any given scenario, there may be multiple channels appropriate for reaching a given public. However for the purposes of this assignment, only one channel (medium) per public is required. For the purposes of this exercise, you may not use public service announcements or advertising that is targeted toward each public. That's too easy and isn't always appropriate. Your choice of medium should be listed in the column titled "Media" in rows assigned to an appropriate public. *(It is understood that some media are appropriate for more than one public. You are allowed to use the same medium more than once when appropriate. HINT: Chapter 9 of your textbook details some of the tactics used in*

public relations. Table 9.1 on page 271 provides a useful summary of those tactics).

**6. Determine the timetable for delivering your messages using the media you have selected.** *You are not required to do this part of the grid.*

**7. Determine how you will monitor the progress of your plan.** This is the evaluation phase of the public relations process. *You are not required to do this part of the grid.*

**8. Determine the budget for the actions you have proposed.** *You are not required to do this part of the grid.*

### **Due date, grading and format**

This assignment is due at the start of class on **Monday, October 26**. This date will allow your professor to demonstrate the grid in class before it is due.

You will receive of a maximum of five points for the goal you articulate. That should be a given – they have already been articulated for you.

You will receive a maximum of five points for spelling, grammar and clarity of thought.

You are being asked to complete a total of 20 boxes on the planning grid. Each box is worth two points and will be graded in this manner.

2 points      The answer is satisfactory. *A satisfactory answer is one in which the selection of the public is appropriate to client or the selection of the stake, message or medium is appropriate to each public.*

1 point        You are being given partial credit for your answer. *Partial credit will be given when the logic of the answer has some merit, but is otherwise flawed.*

0 points        The answer is not satisfactory. *An answer is considered not satisfactory when either the selection of the public is not appropriate to the client or the selection of the stake, message or medium is not appropriate to each public.*

You can receive a maximum of 50 points on this assignment. (The planning grid assignment constitutes 10 percent of your grade in this course.) Although many word processing programs are well equipped to handle tables, some are not. For that reason, you may complete this assignment in a manner suited to your word processing capabilities. A couple of examples:

**Example 1 -- For use with word processing programs that have a table function:**

**Goal:** Write your goal here using a complete sentence.

<b>Public</b>	<b>Stake</b>	<b>Message</b>	<b>Media</b>
Able Company employees	Use a complete sentence to indicate this public's stake.	Use a complete sentence to identify the appropriate message.	Medium
Baker Corporation management	Use a complete sentence to indicate this public's stake.	Use a complete sentence to identify the appropriate message.	Medium
<i>Continue format for publics 3-5</i>	<i>Continue format for publics 3-5</i>	<i>Continue format for publics 3-5</i>	<i>Continue format for publics 3-5</i>

**Example 2 -- For use with word processing programs that do not have a table function.**

**Goal:** Write your goal here using a complete sentence.

**Public #1** – Able Company employees

**Stake:** Use a complete sentence to indicate this public's stake.

**Message:** Use a complete sentence to identify the appropriate message.

**Media:** Medium

**Public #2** – Baker Corporation Management

**Stake:** Use a complete sentence to indicate this public's stake.

**Message:** Use a complete sentence to identify the appropriate message.

**Media:** Medium

***Continue format for publics 3-5***

## Planning Grid Tips

These are based upon problems common to student planning grids:

- Goals should express only the desired outcome. They should not express the strategies and/or tactics used in achieving them. When you do this, you run the risk of muddying the message.
- Express only one goal and/or stake at a time. Clarity is the purpose of this exercise. If you attempt to jam in too many points, you run the risk of muddying the message.
- Be explicit when identifying publics. Remember, there is no such thing as a general public. For stake and message, it is recommended that you use complete sentences. A complete sentence is, by definition, a complete thought.
- Do not target yourself. You are representing the management of the client organization. While it is OK to target your client's employees or membership, do not target its management or board of directors. The assumption here is you already have control in these areas.
- When describing each public's stake, describe it in terms of that public's motivation – not your own needs. For example: Just because you need volunteers doesn't mean that the public's stake is "a need to volunteer." People volunteer for a reason. What is it? In other words, the stake needs to address the motivating force that volunteering would satisfy.
- Use precise, explicit language. While some goals, stakes, messages and media are self-evident and require little or no explanation, there are times where this is not always the case. If the meaning or context of your answer is not clear, it will be marked as being incorrect.
- Use parallel language: The message must reflect the language used in the goal and the stake.
- Don't confuse tactics with media. Media are the specific channels of communication used to carry out the tactics. For example, you may want to generate publicity in support of a goal. However, remember that "publicity," in and of itself is not a medium.