

Research (14 points)

Research details the purpose of the project, any research methods and types of research (i.e., primary or secondary) that you used, as well as the impact of research on the project. While it does not need to be formal, research should detail information you've gathered that helps you 1) understand a situation, 2) check assumptions about target audiences and perceptions, and/or 3) check public relations consequences of an action. Research might include, but is not limited to: focus groups, surveys, interviews, tracking, media analysis, content analysis, observations or field reports, or complaint reviews.

Ask yourself:

- Is the purpose of this project clearly stated?
- Did I detail research methods and types of research I used?
- Did I include information about how research affected the creation or implementation of this project?
- If no research was conducted as part of this project, did I detail why? Did I explain how this project might have been improved with research? Alternately, did I detail research done at this project's conclusion to improve similar projects in future?

Planning (30 points)

Strategic planning is a core component of successful public relations campaigns and tactics, encapsulated by the Research, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation (RPIE) process. In the planning section, state the target audiences of the project as well as the goals, objectives and tactics that went into the creation and implementation of your project. Remember: goals, objectives and strategies are NOT the same thing. Goals spell out the overall target outcomes of a project. Objectives support goals. Objectives are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely (SMART). Strategies are concepts or approaches that are intended to help achieve objectives.

Ask yourself:

- Did I clearly state this project's RPIE process?
- Did I clearly state my target audience(s)?
- Did I clearly identify the project's goal(s)?
- Did I clearly state the project's objective(s)? Are they SMART?
- Did I clearly identify the project's strategies?

Implementation (30 points)

Implementation is the actual execution of a plan or project. It's the communication, the finished project and/or the activities and methods used at an operational level that implement your declared strategies, objectives and goals. Keep in mind that we ask you to include your budget, even in integrated communications categories. Budgets can include a number of resources, including cash, staff time, volunteer time and other expenses for materials, fabrication, transportation, etc.

Ask yourself:

- Did I list the implementation (start and end) date(s) of the project?
- Did I clearly state tactics, or the specific ways that resources were used to carry out strategy and to work toward objectives?
- Did I explain how each tactic was used to help meet objectives?
- Did I reference a budget and explain how different types of resources were used?
- Did I describe any additional challenges, internal or external, that were overcome during implementation?

Creativity (15 points)

Additional points are awarded to tactics that are creative in technical quality or aesthetics, content and writing and overall uniqueness or appeal.

Ask yourself:

- Did I use proper grammar, punctuation and style throughout this project (and in my award entry, hint)?
- Did I detail how this project's design targeted its specified audience? How the design helped achieve objectives in order to reach goals?
- Did I include samples of the project that highlight its attractive composition, artistic design or overall presentation?
- Did I detail or include samples of the project that demonstrate that it is unique, creative and/or was used in a unique or creative way?

Evaluation (11 points)

Evaluation is measuring the effectiveness of your project against your previously-stated objectives. Evaluation may include measurement methods similar to research, including (but not limited to): surveys, interviews, content analysis, media analysis, tracking and/or focus groups.

Ask yourself:

- Did I clearly state if my objective(s) were met, exceeded or not met? Did I explain why, or why not?
- Did I describe the specific measurement methods I used to evaluate objectives, and did I provide examples of that measurement in comparison to my objectives?
- Did I offer clear examples of lessons learned, or ways that I might improve this project if it were to be done again?