

Communication Audit: Media Statements / Releases

Name: _____ Topic: _____ Rater: _____

A. Layout & Design: Make your media statement look like a news release

1. Include contact information at the top to allow reporters to contact the correct person.....	1 2 3 4
2. Provide a release date to tell reporters when the news story can be published.....	1 2 3
3. Write a story headline in bold (12-14 point) so reporters understand your primary message.	1 2 3
4. Select a readable-sized serif font for the body of your document.....	1 2 3
5. Limit sentences to 15 words to match the typical length used in the print media.....	1 2 3
6. Limit paragraphs to 2-3 sentences to match the typical length used in the print media.....	1 2 3
7. Use double spacing between lines in paragraphs to allow editors space to edit statement....	1 2 3
8. Type the print-media markers --MORE-- & --END-- at bottom center of 1st & 2nd page	1 2 3
9. Make margins 1+” & leave the right-hand margin unjustified to reduce reader eye strain....	1 2 3
10. Create a visual balance between your printed text and white space surrounding the text...	1 2 3

B. Writing Style & Tone: Adopt a direct, lean, positive and readable style

11. Use inverted pyramid style with most important info 1st because editor cuts from bottom.	1 2 3 4 5
12. Incorporate quotations whenever possible to add a human dimension to the story.....	1 2 3 4 5
13. Use the journalistic “objective” tone & style of writing (Can’t say: We think the loss is...)	1 2 3 4 5
14. Convey complete, but concise messages, deleting unnecessary words/phrases/sentences	1 2 3 4
15. Use the active voice, containing an actor or agency as the subject performing the action....	1 2 3 4
16. Use strong action-oriented verbs, replacing weak verbs like “is, was, are, have, has, be,”	1 2 3 4
17. Apply the conversational tone test: When reading sentences aloud, is it conversational?	1 2 3 4
18. Write ideas and content in parallel form (or structure like in resumes).....	1 2 3 4
19. Use positive language & favorable light--avoiding a negative slant, tone, or phrasing.....	1 2 3 4 5
20. Check mechanics: use only standard grammar, syntax, spelling, and punctuation.....	1 2 3 4

C. Content & Argument: A media statement sells YOUR view of the story

21. Open first paragraph of statement with a lead sentence that will grab reader’s attention....	1 2 3 4 5
22. Answer journalist’s 5-W questions A.S.A.P. (Who? What? When? Where? Why? & How?)...	1 2 3 4 5
23. Focus your story on the major news that promotes your company.....	1 2 3 4 5
24. Present your story in a favorable light to help media understand company views/positions	1 2 3 4 5
25. Support claims & assertions with proof, concrete examples, and/or quantitative info.....	1 2 3 4 5

Communication Audits model specific communication behaviors designed to strengthen communication abilities.

Total = 100