Gathering Information and Interviewing

J202: Week 5

Information literacy

- when you need it
- where to find it
- how to evaluate it
- how to use it

Information failures

- when false is believed
- when true is not covered
- when discussed = important
- when manipulation is unseen

Evaluating sources

- how did you find source?

- what are motives?

- how did the source get the info?

- info recent?

- info relevant?

- how have you affected your source?

- what info might strengthen this?

- other sources?

Information sources

- primary vs. secondary
- primary
  - public documents
  - private documents/research
  - interviews
  - observation
- secondary
  - previously published pieces

Useful sources

- previously published pieces
  - filtered information
  - starting point
  - quality questions
  - perception, errors, ethical breaches
  - adopt only generally accepted info
  - almost never use for quotes, facts in dispute (unless fact-checking)
  - report source

Useful sources

- public documents
  - maintained to do the public's business
  - Wisconsin Open Records Law
  - record = anything in final form

Useful sources

- private documents
  - generated outside the public sector
  - institutions, organizations, individuals
  - press releases
  - backgrounders, briefings
  - correspondence
  - publications
  - research (don't give up!)

Useful sources

- observation
    - participant
    - non-participant
    - unobtrusive/undercover
    - key for description
    - key for insights
    - ethical questions

Useful sources

- interviews
  - info from the horse's mouth
  - credibility
    - in person
    - phone
    - e-mail

Strat Comm Information Use

- situation analysis

- competitor assessment

- key consumer insight

- concept generation

- concept testing

- strategy support

- strategic vs. placement vs. evaluative research

Useful sources

- secondary research
  - industry trade publications
  - previously published pieces
  - past campaigns

Useful sources

- primary research
  - Simmons - massive database of consumer research
  - MRI - Mediamark Research, Inc.
  - http://www.gfkmri.com
  - self-conducted
    - focus groups
    - surveys
    - expert interviews
    - insights unavailable to competitors

Evidence

* anecdotal vs. scientific

    * surveys

    * experiments

    * interviews

    * observation

        * participant

        * non-participant

        * unobtrusive

Focus groups

- when to use:
  - test concepts
    - The Most Interesting Man in the World
  - test mockups
  - develop questionnaires
  - generate ideas
  - position product
  - assess usability

Focus groups

- techniques
  - dials
  - in-depth interview
  - product tests
  - ranking exercises
  - comparison games
  - role-playing
  - free-form discussion

What is an interview?

* A chance to learn

* simultaneously

  * listen

  * observe

  * inquire

  * respond

  * record

Who should you interview?

- people with
  - key information
  - new ideas
  - perspective you don't have
  - expectations you'll interview them

How do you find interviews?

* common sense

* contact points

* expert databases

  * www.news.wisc.edu

* interest groups

* previous work of yours or others

* avoid people you know

  * let them lead you

Why interview?

- gather facts
- get quotes
- get anecdotes
- understand situations, trends
- find interpretations
- confirm, refute
- show you were there

Basic techniques

* develop shorthand

* draft questions

* note keywords

* organize research

* recording

* using your notes

Conducting yourself

- make appointment

- seek in-person

- introduce

  - self

  - reason for interview

  - agenda for interview

- begin by verifying name spelling

- polite, open body language

- conclude with what you've missed

During interview

- relax

- show concentration, interest, empathy

- note

  - gestures, nuances, expressions

  - physical surroundings

  - shifts in conversation

  - connections between points

- listen actively

During interview

- pre-check technology

- show ignorance

- avoid arrogance

- reconfirm euphemisms, jargon

- parrot

- end deftly

- most importantly: shut up

Bad questions

- cliches

- leading

- yes-or-no

- absolute

- cross examination

- offensive, insulting, off-putting

- interruptions, detours

- rambling

Good questions

- how, why

- define terms

- viewpoint, perspective

- qualified to answer

- separate from criticism

- some you know answer to

- segues

- not too controlling

- follow-ups

Follow-ups

- clarify:
  - limits to define answer
  - either/or choice
  - restate answer to verify or define

Follow-ups

- expand:
  - enlarge on specific
  - "why do you say that?"
  - seek example
  - seek chronology
  - elicit feelings
  - redirect question
  - consider what hasn't been said

What you can use

- on the record

- not for attribution

- off the record

- seek on the record at all times, except:
    - extremely important info
    - only way to get it
    - sure you won't use it

- agree to terms at outset

Law vs. ethics

- what you can do vs. what you should do
- cannot:
  - change wording of direct quotation
    - ums, likes, ya knows
  - act fraudulently to obtain quotes
  - libel/slander
  - break off-the-record contract

Law vs. ethics

- should not
  - record surreptitiously
  - use others' quotes without credit
  - pay for interviews
  - sensationalize
  - select unrepresentative bits
  - jeopardize source
  - interview those unaware of consequences
  - use foul language recklessly