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Question: 1

Which of the following should be considered when creating a more effective corporate social media strategy?

A. How many impressions the corporate social media accounts receive in a particular time period
B. The data that are most relevant for the purpose of each platform and show engagement related to corporate goals
C. Any engagement with the corporate social media accounts
D. The volume of engagement with the corporate social media accounts

Answer: B

Explanation:
In strategic communication management, an effective corporate social media strategy is driven by relevance and alignment—not by raw volume metrics. Option B is the correct answer because it emphasizes selecting data that directly reflects the purpose of each platform and demonstrates engagement that supports corporate goals. Social media effectiveness is not measured by activity alone, but by meaningful outcomes tied to strategy.
Different social platforms serve different functions. Some are designed for dialogue and community building, others for thought leadership, employer branding, customer support, or issue monitoring. Strategic communication management stresses that metrics must be chosen based on the role each platform plays within the broader communication ecosystem. Engagement data should therefore be evaluated in context—focusing on indicators such as quality of interaction, message resonance, stakeholder sentiment, and behavior change.
Metrics like impressions or total engagement volume (options A and D) are surface-level indicators. While they show reach or activity, they do not explain whether communication is effective or advancing organizational objectives. High engagement may even be misleading if it reflects controversy, misunderstanding, or audiences that are not strategically relevant. Similarly, counting any engagement at all (option C) ignores the distinction between positive, neutral, or negative interaction and fails to account for strategic intent.
Strategic communication management prioritizes outcome-oriented measurement. Effective social media strategies connect engagement data to goals such as trust-building, reputation strengthening, issue awareness, recruitment, or stakeholder alignment. This approach enables communication leaders to refine content, adjust channel use, and demonstrate value to senior management.
By focusing on platform-specific, goal-aligned data, organizations move beyond vanity metrics and use social media as a strategic tool—supporting innovation, engagement, and long-term organizational effectiveness rather than simply generating noise.

Question: 2

An outside consultant has been hired to advise an organization on improving its public relations (PR) agency-client relationship. The company has a history of failed engagements with agencies that have resulted in gaps and inefficiencies in their PR activities, along with impacting their overall management reputation. The client explains that in the past they had to deal with poor agency performance while incurring significant costs. What is the BEST advice for the consultant to give?

A. Hire the best PR agency which has proven results with other clients, even if the cost is higher than expected, as performance will not be an issue.
B. Leverage the relationship dynamic between organizations and agencies to negotiate a contract upfront that is cost effective and beneficial for them.
C. Conduct a study to understand the client's needs and expectations. Discuss expectations based on market and industry standards, adjust them as needed, and develop a request for proposal (RFP) with specific criteria to determine an agency that would fulfill their requirements.
D. Suggest an internal reorganization of their communication department. Since the failed engagements have been numerous, it seems that the client side has a problem in managing PR agencies. A department restructuring and hiring a new communication manager may resolve the situation.

Answer: C

Explanation:
Effective management of agency–client relationships begins with clarity, alignment, and disciplined process. The best advice in this scenario is toconduct a thorough assessment of the client's needs and expectations, align those expectations with industry standards, and formalize them through a well-defined request for proposal (RFP). Option C reflects best practice in strategic communication management because it addresses the root causes of repeated agency failures rather than treating symptoms.
A history of poor agency performance often signals misalignment—unclear objectives, unrealistic expectations, vague scopes of work, or mismatched capabilities. Strategic communication management emphasizes that successful partnerships depend on shared understanding before contracts are signe By conducting a diagnostic study, the consultant helps the organization articulate what success looks like, what resources are required, and how performance should be measure This process also forces the client to examine its own role in managing agencies effectively.
Developing a detailed RFP with clear criteria ensures that agency selection is based on strategic fit, competencies, experience, and measurable deliverables—not reputation alone or cost pressure. It creates transparency, accountability, and a benchmark for evaluating performance once the relationship begins. This disciplined approach reduces inefficiencies, controls costs, and protects the organization's reputation.
The other options are flawe Hiring a high-profile agency without proper alignment does not guarantee success. Contract negotiation without strategic clarity repeats past mistakes. Blaming internal staff without evidence risks morale and avoids systemic issues. Strategic communication management prioritizes structure, governance, and expectation management. Option C provides the strongest foundation for rebuilding an effective, accountable, and sustainable PR agency relationship.

Question: 3

Which of the following is an example of a quantitative research method?

A. Longitudinal studies
B. Case studies
C. Narrative research
D. Interviews

Answer: A

Explanation:
In strategic communication management, quantitative research methods are used to collect numerical data that can be measured, compared, and analyzed statistically. Among the options provided, longitudinal studies are the clearest example of a quantitative research method because they involve systematic data collection over time using consistent metrics.
Longitudinal studies track changes in attitudes, behaviors, awareness levels, or perceptions across defined periods. In communication strategy, they are frequently used to measure the effectiveness of campaigns, shifts in employee engagement, reputation trends, or stakeholder trust before, during, and after communication interventions. Because the data is structured, numerical, and repeatable, it allows communicators to identify trends, correlations, and causal relationships—key requirements for evidence-based strategic decision-making.
The other options are primarily qualitative research methods. Case studies focus on in-depth examination of specific situations or organizations, emphasizing context and interpretation rather than measurement. Narrative research explores stories, experiences, and meaning, making it useful for understanding perspectives but not for statistical analysis. Interviews, while valuable for insight and diagnosis, rely on open-ended responses and subjective interpretation unless specifically structured and quantifie
Strategic communication management emphasizes the importance of quantitative research when accountability, evaluation, and measurement are require Senior leaders often expect communication outcomes to be supported by data that demonstrates impact against objectives. Longitudinal studies are especially valuable because they provide comparative benchmarks and reveal whether communication strategies are producing sustained change over time.
By enabling objective measurement and trend analysis, longitudinal studies strengthen strategic planning, support performance evaluation, and enhance the credibility of communication as a management function—making them a foundational quantitative research method in strategic communication practice.

Question: 4

A competitor's communication manager complains that a company's blog posts include numerous instances of spun content. In reviewing the blog posts with the editorial team, it is clear that about a third of the content in several posts is copied from other sources. Which of the following is the correct assessment of the situation?

A. Spun content is a form of plagiarism.
B. Since the spun content does not exceed 50% of the total content, this is not plagiarism.
C. Spun content is not a form of plagiarism because it is not referred to in the IABC Code of Ethics.
D. Spun content is not a form of plagiarism because this falls under the "fair use" rules.

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Answer: A

Explanation:
From an ethics perspective in strategic communication management, spun content is a form of plagiarism when it involves copying ideas, structure, or language from other sources without proper attribution. Option A is correct because ethical communication standards focus on intellectual honesty and transparency, not merely on the percentage of copied material or superficial rewriting.
Spun content typically involves rephrasing existing material to appear original while retaining the underlying ideas, arguments, or structure. Even if wording is altered, presenting another source's ideas as one's own—without citation—constitutes plagiarism. Strategic communication management emphasizes that originality and attribution are ethical obligations, particularly in public-facing content such as blogs, reports, and thought leadership pieces.
The incorrect options reflect common misconceptions. There is no ethical threshold—such as 50%—below which copied content becomes acceptable. Plagiarism is determined by the use of uncredited ideas, not by volume. Likewise, the absence of the term "spun content" in the IABC Code of Ethics does not make the practice acceptable. Ethical codes are principle-based; they address integrity, accuracy, and respect for intellectual property, all of which are violated by unattributed content reuse.
Invoking "fair use" is also inappropriate in this context. Fair use is a narrow legal concept that allows limited quotation for purposes such as commentary or critique, usually with attribution. It does not permit repackaging substantial portions of another's work as original content, especially for corporate communication purposes.
Strategic communication management stresses that ethical lapses in content creation can quickly damage credibility and reputation. By recognizing spun content as plagiarism, organizations protect professional integrity, uphold ethical standards, and maintain trust with audiences and peers.

Question: 5

Which objectives are MOST important when developing a communication strategy?

A. Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-sensitive
B. Safe, measurable, actionable, relevant, and targeted
C. Strategic, memorable, attainable, and task-oriented
D. Substantial, marketable, actionable, and time-sensitive

Answer: A

Explanation:
In strategic communication management, clearly defined objectives are the foundation of an effective communication strategy. The most important objectives are those that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-sensitive—commonly known as SMART objectives. These criteria ensure that communication efforts are purposeful, focused, and capable of being evaluated meaningfully.
Specific objectives clearly define what the communication strategy is intended to achieve, eliminating ambiguity for both communicators and stakeholders. Measurable objectives allow progress and impact to be tracked using data, enabling communication managers to assess effectiveness and make informed adjustments. Attainable objectives ensure that goals are realistic given available resources, timelines, and organizational constraints, which strengthens credibility and feasibility.

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Relevance is critical because communication objectives must directly support organizational strategy and stakeholder needs. Objectives that are not aligned with business priorities or audience expectations risk wasting resources and diluting strategic focus. Time-sensitive objectives introduce urgency and accountability, providing clear milestones and deadlines that support disciplined execution and evaluation.
The other options include useful characteristics but lack the completeness and rigor required for strategic planning. Option B includes "safe," which is not a strategic criterion, and does not emphasize achievability or timing. Option C omits measurability and time sensitivity, both essential for evaluation. Option D focuses on tactical appeal rather than strategic alignment and clarity.
From a strategy development perspective, SMART objectives enable communication leaders to move beyond activity-based planning toward outcome-driven management. They provide a shared understanding between leadership and communicators, guide message development and channel selection, and support evidence-based reporting. In strategic communication management, objectives that meet these criteria ensure that communication is not only well executed, but also demonstrably valuable to organizational success.

Question: 6

Benchmarking is a critical element of communication research because it:

A. identifies communication practices that can be easily introduced into the organization with minimal modification.
B. contributes to the improvement of communication effectiveness by identifying best practices.
C. can take the place of primary research methods.
D. can drive the adoption of new approaches by showing what best-in-class organizations are doing.

Answer: B

Explanation:
In strategic communication management, benchmarking is critical because it directly supports the improvement of communication effectiveness through the identification of best practices. Option B is correct because benchmarking is not about copying others blindly, but about learning systematically from proven, high-performing approaches and using that insight to strengthen one's own communication strategy.
Benchmarking allows organizations to compare their communication performance, processes, and outcomes against recognized standards or leading organizations. This comparison highlights performance gaps, strengths, and opportunities for improvement. By understanding what "good" or "excellent" looks like in practice, communication managers can set realistic targets, refine strategies, and improve decision-making based on evidence rather than assumptions.
Strategic communication management emphasizes that benchmarking should inform—not replace—internal analysis and primary research. While observing best-in-class organizations can inspire innovation, benchmarking alone cannot account for differences in culture, resources, stakeholders, or business objectives. Its primary value lies in identifying patterns of success and translating those insights into context-appropriate improvements.
The incorrect options reflect common misconceptions. Benchmarking does not guarantee that practices can be adopted with minimal modification, nor can it replace primary research tailored to the

organization's unique environment. While benchmarking may encourage adoption of new approaches, this is a secondary benefit rather than its core purpose.
By identifying best practices, benchmarking strengthens strategic alignment, supports continuous improvement, and enhances accountability. It enables communication leaders to justify changes, prioritize investments, and demonstrate progress over time. In strategic communication management, this evidence-based improvement function is what makes benchmarking an essential research tool rather than a trend-following exercise.

Question: 7

What is the difference between a communication strategy and a communication plan?

A. A strategy supports communication for an organization or a significant initiative or issue; a plan has less analysis and generally focuses on deliverables and a work plan.
B. A strategy is a more focused document that outlines the communication for a specific project or initiative; a plan is a more comprehensive document with in-depth considerations and analysis.
C. They are the same, and the terms are interchangeable.
D. It does not matter which term is used as long as the document considers both internal and external communication.

Answer: A

Explanation:
In strategic communication management, the distinction between a communication strategy and a communication plan is essential because each serves a different managerial purpose. Option A accurately reflects this difference by positioning strategy as the higher-level, analytical framework and the plan as the execution-focused document.
A communication strategy defineswhyandhowcommunication will support an organization, major initiative, or issue. It is grounded in analysis of the business context, stakeholder expectations, risks, opportunities, and desired outcomes. Strategy clarifies priorities, identifies target audiences, defines intended behavioral or perceptual change, and establishes guiding principles for communication. It answers fundamental questions such as what success looks like and how communication contributes to organizational goals.
A communication plan, by contrast, translates strategy into action. It focuses onwhat,when, andwho—detailing messages, channels, timelines, responsibilities, and deliverables. While a plan may reference analysis, it is primarily operational. Strategic communication management emphasizes that plans are only effective when they are clearly anchored in an agreed strategy; otherwise, they risk becoming lists of disconnected activities.
Option B reverses the relationship and is therefore incorrect. Strategy is broader and more analytical than a plan, not narrower. Options C and D overlook the managerial importance of precision in terminology. Treating strategy and planning as interchangeable weakens accountability and blurs decision-making authority.
Strategic communication management relies on this distinction to elevate communication from execution to leadership. Strategy provides direction and coherence; plans provide discipline and delivery. Together, they ensure communication is purposeful, aligned, and effective—but they are not the same.

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Question: 8

An important step in managing an organization ' s reputation is analyzing the relationship with stakeholders. Which statement below BEST describes why this is done?

A. To determine which stakeholders are a priority
B. To have a clear understanding of the diversity of stakeholders and risks associated with each
C. To determine the communication approach for each audience
D. To understand the attitude and engagement level each audience may have with the organization during a crisis

Answer: A

Explanation:
In strategic communication management, stakeholder relationship analysis is a foundational activity in reputation management because it enables organizations toidentify and prioritize stakeholders based on their influence, expectations, and potential impact on organizational outcomes. The primary reason for conducting this analysis is to determine which stakeholders matter most at a given time, making option A the best answer.
Organizations typically have numerous stakeholders—customers, employees, investors, regulators, communities, partners, and advocacy groups—but not all stakeholders exert equal influence or pose equal reputational risk. Strategic communication emphasizes the importance of prioritization, especially because time, attention, and resources are limite By analyzing stakeholder relationships, communication leaders can assess factors such as power, legitimacy, urgency, level of trust, and alignment with organizational goals. This allows leadership to focus efforts where reputational exposure or opportunity is greatest.
Once priority stakeholders are identified, other activities naturally follow. Understanding stakeholder diversity and associated risks, tailoring communication approaches, and anticipating attitudes during crises are all important—but they are secondary outcomes of the prioritization process. Without first knowingwhichstakeholders are most critical, these subsequent steps lack strategic focus and efficiency.
From a reputation management perspective, prioritization ensures that communication strategies protect and strengthen relationships that are most vital to organizational success and resilience. It also supports proactive issue identification and crisis preparedness by highlighting which stakeholder relationships require the most monitoring and engagement.
Strategic communication management positions stakeholder prioritization as a leadership function, not a tactical exercise. By clearly identifying priority stakeholders through relationship analysis, organizations make better decisions, reduce reputational risk, and allocate communication resources in a way that delivers the greatest strategic value.

Question: 9

Which part of the communication development process should be handled by in-house communication professionals?

A. Strategy and project management

B. Video production and web programming
C. Speech writing and newsletter writing
D. Crisis and emergency communications

Answer: A

Explanation:
In strategic communication management,strategy and project managementare core responsibilities that should be led by in-house communication professionals. These functions require deep organizational knowledge, access to senior leadership, and a clear understanding of business objectives, culture, risks, and stakeholder expectations—capabilities that external vendors typically do not possess at the same level.
Communication strategy defineswhatthe organization needs to communicate,whyit matters,to whom, andhow success will be measure In-house professionals are uniquely positioned to align communication initiatives with corporate strategy, leadership priorities, and long-term reputation goals. They also understand internal decision-making processes, resource constraints, and political sensitivities, enabling them to make informed trade-offs and provide sound counsel to management.
Project management is equally critical to keep communication initiatives coordinated, on schedule, and within budget. In-house teams are best suited to manage timelines, integrate cross-functional input, approve messaging, and ensure consistency across channels. They also serve as the central point of accountability when working with external agencies, freelancers, or technical specialists.
The other options represent activities that can often be outsourced without compromising strategic integrity. Video production and web programming are technical skills commonly handled by specialists. Speechwriting and newsletters may be shared or outsourced under strategic direction. Crisis and emergency communications, while strategically sensitive, still rely on internally set frameworks and leadership oversight rather than standalone execution.
Strategic communication management emphasizes that organizations should retain control over strategy and governance while selectively outsourcing execution. By keeping strategy and project management in-house, organizations protect alignment, accountability, and credibility—ensuring that all communication activities support broader business and reputation objectives.

Question: 10

The latest market research for an organization has revealed a decline in market share, particularly with the female customer. The chief executive officer (CEO) has asked the head of communication for advice on whether a stronger focus on communication would help correct this decline. Which of the following responses provides sound strategic counsel to the CEO?

A. “Since 45% of women use a social bookmarking tool, we should bolster our allocation of resources to that social media tool.”
B. “Many factors contribute to shifts in market share, and it is impossible to determine whether our communication efforts play a role in the decline.”
C. “Once we understand why our female customers are disengaging with us, communication could play a stronger role in correcting this downturn.”
D. “You will get better return on investment (ROI) by focusing on social media versus other marketing efforts.”

Answer: C

Explanation:
Advising senior leadership requires strategic insight, diagnostic thinking, and alignment with organizational objectives. In this scenario, the most effective response is to emphasizeunderstanding the root cause of customer disengagement before prescribing communication solutions. Option C reflects the role of the communication leader as a strategic advisor rather than a tactical promoter of channels or tools.
Strategic communication management recognizes that declining market share—especially within a specific demographic segment—can result from multiple factors, including product relevance, pricing, customer experience, competitive offerings, or brand perception. Communication alone cannot correct a business problem unless it is grounded in a clear understanding of what is driving stakeholder behavior. By recommending further analysis intowhyfemale customers are disengaging, the communication leader demonstrates evidence-based thinking and supports informed decision-making at the executive level.
This response also positions communication as a potential solution—but not a premature one. Once insights are gathered through research, communication can be designed strategically to address identified gaps, reposition value propositions, rebuild trust, or reinforce emotional connection. This approach aligns communication efforts with actual customer needs rather than assumptions.
The other options fail to provide sound strategic counsel. Channel-specific recommendations without diagnostic insight risk misallocating resources. Declaring the issue impossible to assess undermines the strategic value of communication leadership. Claims about superior ROI without evidence reduce credibility. Strategic communication leaders guide executives through structured analysis, not shortcuts. By advocating for understanding stakeholder disengagement first, option C reflects best practices in advising and leading management—ensuring communication strategy is purposeful, integrated, and capable of contributing meaningfully to reversing the market share decline.

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