

CIPR PROFESSIONAL PR DIPLOMA

UNIT 2 ASSIGNMENT

The aim of the assignment for Unit 2 PR Content, Communications and Engagement is to enable you to demonstrate competence in strategic communication and stakeholder engagement through production of a thought leadership article.

What is thought leadership?

While there can be different definitions and interpretations of the notion of thought leadership, you are encouraged to consider the perspective of McCrimmon (2005) below as general guidance:

Thought leadership can be shown by example, logical argument, factual presentation, or an emotional appeal where necessary. It is simply the championing of new ideas laterally to peers or upwards to superiors. Thought leadership is based on innovation but they are not identical. Some thought leaders are quiet innovators who, lacking influencing skills, must demonstrate the merits of their ideas. Other thought leaders are not personally creative but they are early adopters of new technology or new ways of doing something, and hence, quick to champion new ideas. (p. 1066).

McCrimmon, M. (2005), "Thought leadership: a radical departure from traditional, positional leadership", *Management Decision*, Vol. 43 No. 7/8, pp. 1064-1070.

Topic of inquiry

You will apply professional judgement in identifying as your topic of inquiry a suitable current campaign, communication activity or other aspect of strategic practice for a specific organisation and/or sector. This could be based on your own experience or broader public relations practice.

It is expected that the assignment will be of practical value to you or a specific organisation as well as enabling your knowledge, skills and understanding to be assessed.

Example topics:

- The ethics of social media: is it time to log off?
- Intellectual property protection needs an image overhaul
- Enhancing a safety culture within the ports sector through persuasive communication

You are advised to check with your tutor that your chosen topic is suitable before you begin work on your assignment. Some topics may involve matters that are strategically or commercially sensitive for the organisation concerned, in which case it is your responsibility to obtain their agreement. It is acceptable to resolve confidentiality issues by using a fictitious name for a genuine organisation, so long as you have obtained your tutor's approval before you submit the assignment.

Submitting your assignment

You are strongly advised to discuss your chosen topic and target publication with your tutor at the beginning of the process. You should also ensure you have familiarised yourself with the CIPR policy on plagiarism and that your assignment is run through suitable anti-plagiarism software **before** it is finally submitted to your teaching centre for marking.

You should submit:

1. a 1,000 – 2,000 (maximum) word thought leadership article that is:
 - o written for a named publication, such as a reputable trade journal targeting PR professionals (e.g. PR Week, Influence) or a trade publication relating to your own sector of activity (e.g. Third Sector if you are operating within the charity context);
 - b Suitable for publication by that named journal;
 - c Structured and written in a professional style with points and arguments supported by reference to the chosen campaign, communication activity or aspect of strategy practice;
 - d Effective in communicating an expert perspective on the chosen topic with reference to relevant concepts, models or theories.

Note: This is not an essay or academic journal article and does not require formal academic references.

2. A statement of personal reflection (2,000 words +/- 10%) which:
 - includes your rationale for selecting the topic of inquiry;
 - applies one or more models of reflection relevant to PR practice.
3. A completed CIPR cover sheet (which should be incorporated as the first page of your completed assessment).

Word count

A substantive response is necessary to meet the requirements for a Pass.

Bibliographies and footnotes are not included in the word count. Footnotes must not contain appendices or be used to include additional text that should have been in the main body of the work. The word count must be recorded in the appropriate space provided on the cover sheet and at the end of the text in the main document.

You are allowed a +/- 10% leeway on the **total** word count for the statement of personal reflection and you need to ensure you **DO NOT** exceed the +10% tolerance. Anything above this allowance will result in the indicative mark being reduced by one grade. No grading reduction will be implemented if you are below the -10% word tolerance but remember that it is very likely that your paper will fail because you will not have adequately addressed the tasks.

No tolerance is allowed for the thought leadership article which **MUST** be within 1,000 to 2,000 words.

Referencing

You should attribute any sources you have used accurately and consistently using a style that is appropriate for a business document. You should refer to you teaching centre for guidance on referencing conventions.

| Unit 2 Assignment checklist | | Completed? ✓ |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| To achieve a Pass in Unit 2 PR Content, Communications and Engagement you must produce a thought leadership article and statement of personal reflection in which you: | | |
| 1 | 1,000 – 2,000-word (maximum) thought leadership article that is: | |
| 1.1 | Suitable for publication by a reputable business or trade title | |
| 1.2 | Structured and written in a professional style with points and arguments supported by reference to the chosen campaign, communication activity or aspect of strategy practice | |
| 1.3 | Effective in communicating an expert perspective on the chosen topic with reference to relevant concepts, models or theories | |
| 2 | Supporting statement of personal reflection (2,000 words +/- 10%) which: | |
| 2.1 | Includes your rationale for the chosen topic of the thought leadership article, the target magazine and the article content | |
| 2.1 | Applies one or more models of reflection relevant to PR practice | |

The Performance Descriptors below will be applied to make a holistic judgement as to whether your assignment has reached the required Pass standard.

| Clear Fail | Fail | Quality of Performance | | Pass | Good Pass | Excellent Pass |
|------------|------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------|----------------|
| | | Research | a Collects data and information using a range of secondary research methods | | | |
| | | | b Identifies and examines a range of relevant sources | | | |
| | | Analysis and Insight | c Evaluates collected data and information using appropriate methodologies | | | |
| | | | d Assesses topic of enquiry using a range of relevant models, theories, tools and methods | | | |
| | | Communication | e Article is in format appropriate for the target audience and tasks meet specified word count | | | |
| | | | f Presents a coherent, well-structured article that EITHER presents expert knowledge supported by evidence and reasoning OR presents a persuasive perspective | | | |
| | | | h Style of language is suitable for purpose and for the intended audience, and spelling, punctuation and grammar are error-free | | | |
| | | | i Attributes any sources accurately and in an appropriate style | | | |
| | | Reflection | j Demonstrates critical thinking in applying one or more models of reflection | | | |