

HOW TO BECOME A STRATEGIC PLAYER

Becoming a truly strategic asset to management is one of the most challenging aspects of the communications profession. For the majority of practitioners, when they are finally allowed into the inner sanctum the boss tells them, "Here's what we have to say. Go and say it," or, "Get your buddies in the press to print this." This happens because:

1. The PR advice usually offered (and expected by management) is related to tactics (i.e., news releases, making statements, shaping words, and responding).
2. Advice given is focused around the "why" of communications rather than advancing strategic business issues.
3. Ideas presented are out of sync with the goals and operational needs of the business or simply too late in the process.
4. Managers see little or no strategic relevance.
5. On issues that matter, lawyers, human resources, other staff, and consultants have more "juice" with management.

BECOME STRATEGIC

Being a strategic player begins with becoming strategic yourself but from the boss' or client's perspective. Who should the boss listen to? Whose advice is acted on? Who does the boss call? Why should the boss call you? When bosses and corporate leaders talk about the kinds of support they need from those around them, a very interesting list develops. Bosses need people who:

- Listen, that is really hear and respond to what is heard and hear enough to respond appropriately before blurting out some solution.
- Are usefully intuitive (even the best managers can use more of that sixth sense).



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James E. Lukaszewski (loo-ka-SHEV-skee) advises, coaches, and counsels the men and women who run very large corporations and organizations. He is an expert in managing and counteracting tough, touchy, sensitive corporate communications issues. The fastest growing portion of his practice involves civil and criminal litigation. He is one of the few who can and truly does coach CEOs.

He is a prolific author (several books, hundreds of articles), lecturer (corporate, college and university), coach, and counselor. He is quoted in publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Miami Herald*, the *Harvard Business Review*, and industry trade journals. He is a columnist, advisor, or editor for almost every major public relations periodical. His 1992 book, *Influencing Public Attitudes: Strategies that Reduce the Media's Power*, remains a classic work in the field of direct communication. He is an internationally recognized speaker on crisis management, ethics, media relations, public affairs, and reputation preservation and restoration. Visiting his Web site, www.e911.com, is like attending the University of Crisis Management.

An accredited member of the International Association of Business Communicators (ABC) and the Public Relations Society of America (APR), Mr. Lukaszewski is a member of the PRSA's College of Fellows (Fellow PRSA) and Board of Ethics & Professional Standards. He served as a crisis communications advisor to the International Disaster Advisory Committee, Agency for International Development, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance from 1989 to 1992, and is a civilian advisor to several other federal agencies. He lectures annually at the U.S. Marine Corp's East Coast Commander's Media Training Symposium and was the second recipient of its Drew Middleton Award. He is the recipient of both Ball State University's 2004 National Public Relations Achievement Award and the 2004 Patrick Jackson Award for Distinguished Service to PRSA, and is among the winners of the 2005 *PR News* Lifetime Achievement Award. His name appeared in *Corporate Legal Times* as one of "28 Experts to Call When All Hell Breaks Loose," and in *PR Week* as one of 22 "crunch-time counselors who should be on the speed dial in a crisis."