

Chapter 1

Learning the Essentials

Early in my career, I remember wishing there was a resource or some type of guide with answers to the strategic, yet “in the trenches,” questions and answers that a communication professional faces on a daily basis. There are a lot of good books on the subjects of PR, marketing, social media, and how integrated communication affects a business. But, where are the essentials, or the “do this” and you better not “do that” guidance to survive as a modern communicator today? Do you have all the answers you need to your most pressing questions?

Sometimes you have questions and you don’t know how to phrase them or you don’t know who to ask. What about the dreaded “stupid” question? Did you ever have one of those? A question that is considered outside of the normal scope or just doesn’t fit what someone would expect you to ask? People have asked me publicly and privately, and pretty much daily, the questions that run the “communication gamut” and beyond. Now, I am sharing them with you. In my experience there are no stupid questions; maybe just “stupid” answers when people don’t really listen to what you’re saying or truly understand what you need.

Asking questions helps you to learn the essentials of your profession. The answers are critical to your role as a successful modern communicator. So, don’t ever stop asking your questions. Simultaneously, you need to gain access to many crucial practices and to have personal stories at your fingertips. When you are on the job, on your feet, or faced with an urgent situation, you’ll want to have quick answers to essential questions on hand and in an instant. No time to think or to research on Google. You have to move forward and know how to get your job done. One of the best ways to tap into the essentials is by learning through another professional’s experience.

Being a student in the physical classroom gave me a great foundation of knowledge. I wouldn’t trade my years at Glassboro State College (now Rowan University) or my MBA at Fairleigh