What’s a Public Relations Person Anyway?

History of Public relations and the Evolution of the Profession
If asked on an interview to describe an ideal public relations person, what would say?

- What type of personality?
- What type of training?
- What specific skills?
- How should that person contribute to the organization?
Personality

- A public relations professional should be personable--and yes, he/she should like people.
- We are in the people business--relationship building. But, we are in a business--that means the company must turn a profit.
Training

- Is a liberal arts focus enough? Probably not.
- Public relations professionals should be trained in the social sciences
- They need to be skilled writers, expert planners, be able to think clearly and solve problems.
- They should also be “worldly”
Skills

Well, skills training should include a broad understanding of:

- journalism
- media research
- broadcasting
- research
- business
- psychology/sociology
What about academic training?

- Is a college degree a necessity?
- What about professional organizations?
- If I have a college degree--what should my major be? My minor?
- What about an advanced degree?
- Decisions, decisions, decisions.
What should my contributions be to the organization?

- Traditional ways of thinking state that the top four skills that public relations professionals bring to the table are:
  - 1. Writing
  - 2. Planning
  - 3. Research
  - 4. Problem Solving
However, public relations has continued to evolve

- Impact of IMC
- Technological revolution
- Growth of globalization
- Newest needs for business/politics/non-profits/health care, etc.
Now that we dealt with the present, let’s see where we came from

- Public relations in its earliest times
- The evolution of public relations from Ivy Lee, P.T. Barnum, Edward Bernays and others
- What types of organizations and issues require public relations support?
Contemporary view

If you were the public relations counsel for one of the major presidential candidates, what steps would you take?
Finally!

- Now describe the ideal public relations professional.
- What would that person be like? What skills would he/she have? What kind of future would he/she expect?