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MEMO

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Subject: Ethics and Professionalism

PART I: The Ethical Advocate

The matter of whether a public relations practitioner can communicate ethically while advocating for a client or organization is difficult and varied. While some say that taking on an advocacy role introduces prejudice and the possibility of manipulation, it is critical to understand that ethical communication does not inevitably clash with advocacy.

To begin, it's crucial to recognize that public relations professionals frequently operate as advocates for their clients or organizations, striving to represent their interests and successfully deliver their messages. This advocacy function is essential to the profession and does not always violate ethical standards. Ethical communication entails transparency, honesty, and respect for other viewpoints, all of which can be maintained even within an advocacy framework.

Furthermore, successful communication frequently entails adopting a stand and fighting for it passionately. This does not constitute manipulation if the messages conveyed are genuine, transparent, and consistent with ethical principles. PR professionals can advocate for their clients while preserving integrity and following professional norms of behavior.

In addition, ethical decision-making in public relations requires assessing the broader influence of communication acts on stakeholders and society. PR practitioners must strike a balance between their customers' interests and the public's, ensuring that communication efforts are responsible and socially useful.

Finally, while PR practitioners' advocacy roles may present obstacles, they do not prevent ethical communication.

PR practitioners can effectively advocate for their clients while adhering to ethical values, being upfront about their advocacy position, and considering the broader societal ramifications of their actions.

Reference: Wilcox, D. L., Cameron, G. T., Reber, B. H., & Shin, J. (2017). Think Public Relations (2nd ed.). Pearson.

PART II: Professional Codes of Ethics

ADVOCACY: As a public relations professional, the value of advocacy is aggressively advocating and furthering the interests of your client or organization. Crafting convincing and appealing statements in a press release or media pitch to effectively communicate the client's perspective on a specific topic, ensuring that their point of view is appropriately portrayed in the media, is one example of this value in action.

HONESTY: Honesty in public relations entails providing accurate and truthful information to the public. One example would be to openly state any potential conflicts of interest when representing a client, so assuring transparency and developing trust with the audience. This involves giving pertinent information, even if it is not beneficial to the customer.

EXPERTISE: PR experts are required to deliver knowledgeable and skilled communication advice to their clients. Staying up to speed on industry trends, understanding the media landscape, and applying that knowledge to create strategic communication plans that correspond with the client's goals and objectives are all examples of exhibiting expertise.

INDEPENDENCE: Independence entails delivering objective and unbiased advice. For example, when providing advice on a client's campaign or strategy, a public relations practitioner should emphasize the public interest and avoid compromising their professional judgment due to personal or organizational pressures, ensuring that the advice is objective.

LOYALTY: While loyalty to the client is important, it should not contradict with ethical norms. A public relations practitioner can exhibit loyalty by working persistently to further the client's interests while adhering to ethical guidelines and avoiding behaviors that could jeopardize the practitioner's integrity or the public's trust.

FAIRNESS: Fairness necessitates treating all people involved with justice and dignity. In public relations, this could involve providing equal access to information to diverse media outlets or stakeholders, as well as ensuring that multiple perspectives are considered and reflected in communication efforts to ensure fairness and balance.