

**Assessing Core Competencies for Health Communication Professionals  
Telephone Survey of Employers**

Hello, this is (INTERVIEWER) calling from Westat concerning a study we are doing for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. I would like to take about 15-20 minutes to ask for your views and opinions about the skills and training you think are important for employees who perform nine specific responsibilities.

You should have received two lists from us that will make our conversation easier, one of responsibilities and one of skills. Do you have the lists handy? (IF NO, SEE WHETHER R CAN FIND LISTS. IF NO, OFFER TO RESEND LISTS AND RESCHEDULE INTERVIEW.)

For each of the responsibilities on the list, I will ask you questions about the employees you hire or supervise who perform that responsibility. Let's begin with the first responsibility on the list.

1-10 COMPLETE RESPONSIBILITIES WORKSHEET

11. What is your current job title?

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you specialize in a particular health content area? If so, what is the area or areas?

YES ..... 1  
NO ..... 2

AREAS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. What term would you use to describe the profession you are in?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Codes for Academic Fields**

**(Question 7)**

BUSINESS .....	1
ENGLISH.....	2
JOURNALISM.....	3
LIBERAL ARTS.....	4
MANAGEMENT .....	5
MARKETING.....	6
MASS COMMUNICATION.....	7
MEDICAL SCIENCES.....	8
POLITICAL SCIENCE .....	9
PSYCHOLOGY .....	10
PUBLIC HEALTH.....	11
PUBLIC POLICY .....	12
RADIO, TELEVISION, AND FILM.....	13
SOCIOLOGY .....	14
SPEECH COMMUNICATION.....	15
ANY FIELD .....	16
ACADEMIC FIELD DOES NOT MATTER.....	17
DON'T KNOW .....	18

**Responsibilities Worksheet**

1. Do you hire or supervise employees in your organization who:	2. In the next 1-3 years, do you anticipate that your organization will have a need for people?	3. How many currently?	4. Do you yourself perform this responsibility?	5. In the next 1-3 years, do you anticipate that your organization will need more, the same, or fewer people to do this?	6. How important is it for employees who do this to have specialized knowledge in a health content area such as a specific disease or other health issue?	7. Do you feel that undergraduate training gives people the kinds of skills needed to perform this responsibility, or is postgraduate training necessary?	8. Which academic fields of study should prospective employees choose if they are going to perform this responsibility? (CODE FROM LIST)	9. In your organization, what level of job experience is currently in greatest demand for employees who perform this responsibility?	10. <b>FOR FIRST ONLY:</b> Now let's look at the list of skills we sent. This shows some examples of the kinds of skills employees might use on the job. There may be others you think are important that do not appear on the list. <b>FOR ALL:</b> In your own words, can you tell me what skills are most important to your employees as they (READ RESPONSIBILITY)? Be as specific as possible.
<b>a. Design programs, campaigns, or materials to communicate about health.</b>  Yes..... 1 (GO TO 3) No ..... 2 (GO TO 2)	Yes..... 1 GO TO 1b) No ..... 2 (GO TO 1b)		Yes ..... 1 No ..... 2	More ..... 1 Same..... 2 Fewer ..... 3	Very important..... 1 Somewhat important ..... 2 Not at all important ..... 3 ----- (FOR "VERY" OR "SOMEWHAT" ASK FOR EXAMPLE)  EXAMPLE: _____ _____	Undergraduate sufficient ..... 1 Training in graduate school necessary ..... 2		Entry level ..... 1 1-5 years experience 2 6-10 years experience..... 3 More than 10 years experience..... 4	
<b>b. Conduct research to develop programs, campaigns, or materials to communicate about health.</b>  Yes..... 1 (GO TO 3) No ..... 2 (GO TO 2)	Yes..... 1 GO TO 1c) No ..... 2 (GO TO 1c)		Yes ..... 1 No ..... 2	More ..... 1 Same..... 2 Fewer ..... 3	Very important..... 1 Somewhat important ..... 2 Not at all important ..... 3 ----- (FOR "VERY" OR "SOMEWHAT" ASK FOR EXAMPLE)  EXAMPLE: _____ _____	Undergraduate sufficient ..... 1 Training in graduate school necessary ..... 2		Entry level ..... 1 1-5 years experience 2 6-10 years experience..... 3 More than 10 years experience..... 4	
<b>c. Evaluate the effectiveness of programs, campaigns, or materials to communicate about health.</b>  Yes..... 1 (GO TO 3) No ..... 2 (GO TO 2)	Yes..... 1 GO TO 1d) No ..... 2 (GO TO 1d)		Yes ..... 1 No ..... 2	More ..... 1 Same..... 2 Fewer ..... 3	Very important..... 1 Somewhat important ..... 2 Not at all important ..... 3 ----- (FOR "VERY" OR "SOMEWHAT" ASK FOR EXAMPLE)  EXAMPLE: _____ _____	Undergraduate sufficient ..... 1 Training in graduate school necessary ..... 2		Entry level ..... 1 1-5 years experience 2 6-10 years experience..... 3 More than 10 years experience..... 4	

**Responsibilities Worksheet (continued)**

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<p><b>d. Administer health information consumer services, for example, through a clearinghouse, an 800 number, or in person.</b></p> <p>Yes..... 1 (GO TO 3) No..... 2 (GO TO 2)</p>	<p>Yes..... 1 GO TO 1e) No..... 2 (GO TO 1e)</p>		<p>Yes..... 1 No..... 2</p>	<p>More..... 1 Same..... 2 Fewer..... 3</p>	<p>Very important..... 1 Somewhat important..... 2 Not at all important..... 3 ----- (FOR "VERY" OR "SOMEWHAT" ASK FOR EXAMPLE) EXAMPLE: _____</p>	<p>Undergraduate sufficient ..... 1 Training in graduate school necessary ..... 2</p>		<p>Entry level ..... 1 1-5 years experience 2 6-10 years experience..... 3 More than 10 years experience..... 4</p>	
<p><b>e. Teach classes or provide training about health.</b></p> <p>Yes..... 1 (GO TO 3) No..... 2 (GO TO 2)</p>	<p>Yes..... 1 GO TO 1f) No..... 2 (GO TO 1f)</p>		<p>Yes..... 1 No..... 2</p>	<p>More..... 1 Same..... 2 Fewer..... 3</p>	<p>Very important..... 1 Somewhat important..... 2 Not at all important..... 3 ----- (FOR "VERY" OR "SOMEWHAT" ASK FOR EXAMPLE) EXAMPLE: _____</p>	<p>Undergraduate sufficient ..... 1 Training in graduate school necessary ..... 2</p>		<p>Entry level ..... 1 1-5 years experience 2 6-10 years experience..... 3 More than 10 years experience..... 4</p>	
<p><b>f. Organize coalitions around health issues, or act as an advocate.</b></p> <p>Yes..... 1 (GO TO 3) No..... 2 (GO TO 2)</p>	<p>Yes..... 1 GO TO 1g) No..... 2 (GO TO 1g)</p>		<p>Yes..... 1 No..... 2</p>	<p>More..... 1 Same..... 2 Fewer..... 3</p>	<p>Very important..... 1 Somewhat important..... 2 Not at all important..... 3 ----- (FOR "VERY" OR "SOMEWHAT" ASK FOR EXAMPLE) EXAMPLE: _____</p>	<p>Undergraduate sufficient ..... 1 Training in graduate school necessary ..... 2</p>		<p>Entry level ..... 1 1-5 years experience 2 6-10 years experience..... 3 More than 10 years experience..... 4</p>	

**Responsibilities Worksheet (continued)**

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<b>g. Develop health-related public relations.</b> Yes..... 1 (GO TO 3) No..... 2 (GO TO 2)	Yes .1 GO TO 1h) No ..... 2 (GO TO 1h)		Yes ..... 1 No ..... 2	More ..... 1 Same..... 2 Fewer ..... 3	Very important..... 1 Somewhat important ..... 2 Not at all important ..... 3 ----- (FOR "VERY" OR "SOMEWHAT" ASK FOR EXAMPLE) EXAMPLE: _____	Undergraduate sufficient ..... 1 Training in graduate school necessary ..... 2		Entry level ..... 1 1-5 years experience 2 6-10 years experience..... 3 More than 10 years experience..... 4	
<b>h. Market health-related products or services.</b> Yes..... 1 (ASK FOR EXAMPLE, THEN GO TO 3) No..... 2 (GO TO 2) EXAMPLE: _____	Yes..... 1 GO TO 1i) No ..... 2 (GO TO if)		Yes ..... 1 No ..... 2	More ..... 1 Same..... 2 Fewer ..... 3	Very important..... 1 Somewhat important ..... 2 Not at all important ..... 3 ----- (FOR "VERY" OR "SOMEWHAT" ASK FOR EXAMPLE) EXAMPLE: _____	Undergraduate sufficient ..... 1 Training in graduate school necessary ..... 2		Entry level ..... 1 1-5 years experience 2 6-10 years experience..... 3 More than 10 years experience..... 4	
<b>i. Obtain funding for communicating about health.</b> Yes..... 1 (ASK FOR EXAMPLE, THEN GO TO 3) No..... 2 (GO TO 2) EXAMPLE: _____	Yes..... 1 GO TO 11) No ..... 2 (GO TO 11)		Yes ..... 1 No ..... 2	More ..... 1 Same..... 2 Fewer ..... 3	Very important..... 1 Somewhat important ..... 2 Not at all important ..... 3 ----- (FOR "VERY" OR "SOMEWHAT" ASK FOR EXAMPLE) EXAMPLE: _____	Undergraduate sufficient ..... 1 Training in graduate school necessary ..... 2		Entry level ..... 1 1-5 years experience 2 6-10 years experience..... 3 More than 10 years experience..... 4	

*Materials forwarded to interviewees before the interview*

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[Date]

[Inside Address]

Dear :

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As the recruiter mentioned on the phone, the study is designed to identify the skills that are necessary for individuals in certain health-related professions and to predict the potential job market for these professionals.

As agreed on the phone, the interviewer will call you on \_\_\_\_ (day), \_\_\_\_ (month) \_\_\_\_ (date) at \_\_\_\_ (time). Your discussion will last about 15-20 minutes. As promised, I've attached two lists that you need to have in front of you during the interview. Each list provides you with a brief description of how the list will be used.

Again, we appreciate your willingness to lend your expertise to this project. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Study Director

## **Responsibilities of Employees**

This list of job responsibilities will be used for the first question of the survey. The interviewer will read down the list and ask if you personally hire or supervise employees who have these responsibilities. For each responsibility to which you provide a "Yes" response, the interviewer will then ask a series of brief follow-up questions.

### **Responsibilities**

- a. Design programs, campaigns, or materials to communicate about health.
- b. Conduct research to develop programs, campaigns, or materials to communicate about health.
- c. Evaluate the effectiveness of programs, campaigns, or materials to communicate about health.
- d. Administer health information consumer services (e.g., through a clearinghouse, through an 800 number, or in person).
- e. Teach classes or provide training about health.
- f. Organize coalitions around health issues or act as an advocate.
- g. Develop health-related public relations.
- h. Market health-related products or services.
- i. Obtain funding for communicating about health.

## List of Skills for Health Communication Professionals

Below is a reference list of some skills that health communication professionals might use in their work. Note that it is not complete or exhaustive, but it might be a useful starting point for the section of the interview where we ask about skills. If you have a chance, you may want to peruse the list before the interview.

### Oral communication skills

- Counseling
- Persuasive skills
- Interviewing skills
- Public speaking and presentation
- Intercultural communication

### Computer skills

- Ability to use at least one word processing package
- Graphics skills
- Spreadsheet skills
- Ability to use at least one statistical package
- Ability to use advanced telecommunications (e.g., databases, Internet)

### Leadership skills

- Consensus-building and collaboration
- Conflict management
- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Organizational skills

### Marketing skills

- Fundraising
- Promotional skills
- Program planning and design
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Audience analysis

### Media skills

- Media relations
- Using entertainment programming as a communication tool
- Media advocacy

### Project management skills

- Contract and budget management
- Strategic planning
- Ability to impose a process on a confusing situation
- Project planning and design
- Personnel management
- Team building

### Research and evaluation skills

- Questionnaire design
- Design and analysis of quantitative studies
- Design and analysis of qualitative studies
- Sampling design
- Analysis of secondary data
- Focus group facilitation

### Writing skills

- Academic writing/editing
- Technical writing/editing
- Journalistic writing/editing
- Copywriting/editing

### Health and medical skills

- Ability to apply knowledge of epidemiology
- Ability to apply health behavior theories
- Ability to apply knowledge of public health
- Ability to apply knowledge of health care delivery systems

### Other

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