

Going Outside the Lines



The point of this exercise is to think quickly and to be creative. With a partner you will be creating original content, appropriate for the social media format given in the scenario. Take turns reading the scenarios and timing each other. This is free association exercise so don't worry about looking things up or getting things perfectly accurate. All scenarios are fictitious and any resemblance to real events is merely coincidence.

Scenario #1



Budget cuts have really taken a toll on many of the National Parks and many of the outreach and youth programs offered within them. Now you have just received word that Mt. Eisenhower National Forest and Summitt National Park are due to be the next on the chopping block unless membership increases by 75% and you are able to raise funds via Park Passes. Using Twitter create a campaign including as many usernames as needed and plan your tweets accordingly. How will you reach the public? What audience do you need to appeal too? Will you create a specific hashtag so people can follow the progress? Could you in fact plan a partnership with other tools such as your blog and have the tweets show up in a feed on that page as well? Remember that the character limit on Twitter is 140 (including spaces) and that includes any links you want to include. Creativity really counts when you have to be brief so put your thinking caps on for this one!

Scenario #2



You and your team are getting ready for one of the biggest events of the year, the Family Fun Day at Goose Hill Forest National Park. You are 2 months out from the event. Even though this event has always been well attended in the past, this year is special because it is the 25th anniversary of the park opening. You have been given the responsibility of creating a series of blog posts to promote the festivities. While you don't have to write out the posts, plan & outline your promotional campaign, making sure to include activities and logistical information. What can you do online that will make people want to interact with the posts? Will you solicit photos from year's past to celebrate the anniversary? Be creative and try to think of ways that will make the readers want to not only come to the event, but sign up for the blog, maybe even buy a family park pass.

Scenario #3



It's the driest season on record for the last 20 years and much of the forested land within several midwestern National Parks is either on fire or recovering/still smouldering. Despite your office's best efforts to keep the media informed (after all it isn't like you can hide this sort of thing) and staying positive about the prognosis for the park-lands recovery time, there has been negative press. All of this also happens to be coinciding with elections and the Forest Service is hoping a particular bill will be passed that will give them more money for park staff and maintenance. Not everyone is a fan of the bill or of how the Forest Service is handling the wildfires though and now somebody has uploaded footage of one of the fiery blazes to YouTube. The video also makes false statements that include claiming that the Forest Service is being negligent by not controlling the blaze, a result the video claims is due to having too few personnel in the field, a direct result of irresponsible budget cuts. The video ends with a shot of two deer backlit by the inferno with what seems like no escape and the voice-over asks you, the viewer "The Forest Service claims it cares for the land...yet they stand by and watch as millions of acres are destroyed. Now they want you to pay to clean up the mess. Show them you really care for the land and vote NO on House Bill 248."

How will your office respond to this? You and your partner have 10 minutes to create a response plan using YouTube. Using scratch paper you can be as creative as you like, drawing story-boards or improvising a script. You need to figure out who your target audience is, what approach might be best for reaching them, what time of day/night to premiere the video, and whether or not to include paid promotions.

