

Appendix L—Examples of Bridging Statements

Examples of Bridging

Personal Opinions

Q: “What do you know about X?”

A: “I don’t know about X, but what I can tell you about Y is...”

Q: “Critics say X about your organization.”

A: “I can’t speak for them, but I do know that...”

Q: “Agency X has said...Do you agree?”

A: “I can’t speak for X. What I can tell you is... (If you are not responsible for what the media is referring to.)”

A: “I agree that... (If you are responsible for what the media is referring to.)”

Guarantee/100% Assurance

Q: “Can you guarantee this will never happen again?”

A: “What I can guarantee is...Let me give you one (or two) examples.”

A: “We have conducted extensive...”

A: “We will do everything it takes to investigate...”

The Set Up

Q: “If it is determined that...will you pay for...?”

A: “I can’t speculate. Now, what I can tell you is...”, Our policy requires...”

Q: “What if your employees are found negligent?”

A: “A thorough review is underway right now. I can’t speculate on any causes right now.”

False Choice

Q: “Isn’t it better to be safe than sorry?”

A: “We take safety very seriously. For example...”

Hypothetical/Rumor/Speculation

Q: “What if...”

A: “I can’t speculate, but I can tell you that...”

A: “That’s a hypothetical question, but what we do know is...”

A: “Unfortunately, we don’t have a crystal ball. What I can say is...”

Q: "Isn't it possible that this could have been caused by..."

A: "Here's what we know right now..."

Q: "We've heard that there's a possibility that this was caused by..."

A: "What we know at the moment is..."

Multiple Choice (Pick Your Position)

Q: "So, what is your track record and have you in fact dealt with this problem before and do you accept responsibility for this?"

A: "Well, to answer your first (or second or third) question..." (Only respond to the questions that apply to your messages and pick the one you want to answer).

Foot-in-Mouth

Q: "So you would say (your organization) has a far better reputation than..."

A: "What I AM saying is..."

A: "What we are proud about is..."

A: "Our organization has accomplished..."

False Premise/Negative Allegation

Q: "There's clearly been a cover-up. Isn't it time you came clean with the local community?"

A: "We've been very open about our operations. In fact, we have..."

Q: "Didn't your organization lie about...?"

A: "We've been truthful about... For example..."

Q: "What if it is determined that...", "You intentionally..."

A: "What we are doing is..."

Speculate Based on Past Events

Q: "Didn't this happen before and was it due to operator error?"

A: "At this point, we don't know what caused this incident. That's why we are conducting an investigation..."

A: "We learned a lot from the past incident and made improvements..."

How to Defer to the Correct Person

A: "I know you want updated information. The person who can give that to you is..."

A: "I don't have the information you want. 'X' can give that to you. Here is the phone number."

A: "I'm 'x' and my job is to 'y.' The person who can help you is..."