

## 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...”*