

*PRD GIFT Winner AEJMC 2020*

**From Acronym to Application:  
PESO Comes to Life**

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**Editorial Record:** Submitted to AEJMC-PRD GIFT Competition by Feb. 21, 2020. A blind copy was peer reviewed by the PRD Teaching Committee, led by Chair Chris McCollough, and selected as a Top GIFT. Top GIFT winners were notified on April 1, 2020. First published online on August 15, 2020.

**Rationale**

Students in PR Research and Planning are given a semester-long assignment that asks them to develop an integrated campaign for a real client. Throughout the course, students are introduced to a variety of PR models and theories, including the PESO model. This model, created in 2014 by Gini Dietrich, author of *Spin Sucks* and creator of the PESO model certification, is a typology of the four types of media: paid, earned, shared, and owned.

This in-class PESO activity—which simulates a strategy session that would take place in an agency setting—is conducted following an introductory lecture on the PESO model. This activity helps students identify different paid, earned, shared, and owned tactics, as well as conceptualize campaigns from an integrated perspective, moving PESO from acronym to application.

This PESO activity was inspired by Frederik Vincx, a designer and entrepreneur, who created a “PESO Kit” based off of Dietrich’s model.

### **Student Learning Goals**

- Enable students to understand and effectively apply strategic communication planning processes, problem-solving strategies, and operational techniques.
- Give students hands-on experience preparing real public relations campaigns for actual clients.
- Enhance students' ability to design, carry out, and analyze professional-quality projects using current communication and media technologies to address client needs related to public relations and/or reputation management.

### **Connection to Public Relations Practice**

The PESO model was created for the purpose of communication planning. Since it was introduced in 2014, it has become widely adopted in practice. This activity helps students apply a model that is commonly used by practitioners.

### **Evidence of Student Learning Outcomes**

Below are selected testimonials from students, used with their permission:

“The PESO activity was a useful way to learn more about the PESO model. For me, learning visually is really important and helpful. Instead of just hearing about the PESO model, doing an interactive activity where I could physically organize types of coverage into a real PESO model helped me remember the differences and work through the specifics of the tool itself. It was also interesting to talk through the differences between the categories and how they all compare and contrast.” – Lizzy B.

“The PESO activity helped me recognize what kind of tactics fit it to the different areas of media. It also helped me realize the importance of using a combination of paid, earned, shared, and owned media when running

an integrated public relations campaign. It was helpful to have a visual of all the different tactics to give us ideas of what to use in our campaign.” – Colleen S.

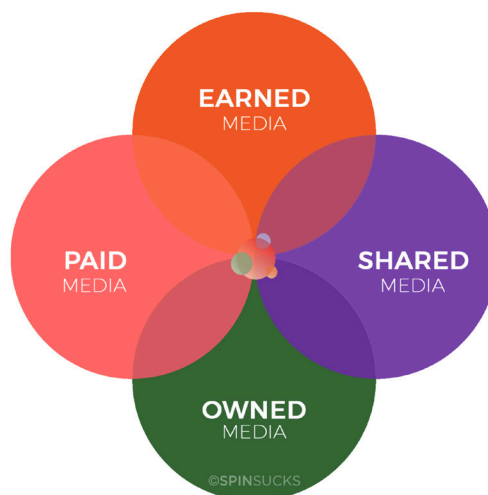
“The activity was a great way to put all aspects of media down and be able to truly define what they all stood for. It allowed us to decipher which ones would be most beneficial to implement into our campaign based on our strategies and target audience. [It] was a great way of collaborating with our groups and brainstorming how each medium would fit into our campaign.” – Kyle A.

### References

Dietrich, G. (2014). *Spin sucks: Communication and reputation management in the Digital Age*. Que Publishing.

### Appendix: From Acronym to Application: PESO Comes to Life Assignment

After students are given an introductory lecture about the development and details of the PESO model, they are then given the PESO Activity directions. Each agency (groups of 3-4 students) is provided with a poster-sized Venn diagram of the PESO model, along with a PESO menu, and corresponding physical PESO cards. They are asked to fill out



Graphic used with permission

the cards, identifying the tactics by media channel (paid, earned, shared, owned). They write the tactic on the card, then place the card on the Venn diagram. Additional directions below.

### **PESO Activity Directions**

Step 1: Using the PESO menu, identify the tactics by media channel (paid, earned, shared, owned). Write the tactic on the corresponding PESO card until you have a card for every tactic.

Step 2: Arrange the PESO cards on the PESO Venn Diagram poster according to media type.

Step 3: Take a photo for your files!

Step 4: Review your results and discuss any new ideas with your agency. What tactics would make sense to use for your campaign?

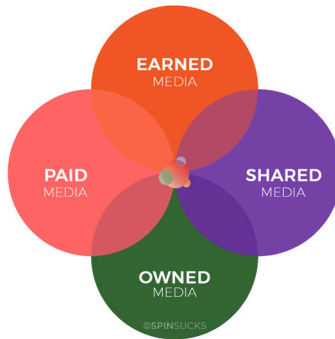
Step 5: Remove the tactics you don't want to use for your campaign. What's left should be a visual representation of your campaign.

Step 6: Take a photo for your files!

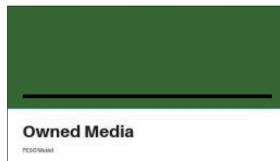
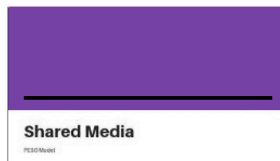
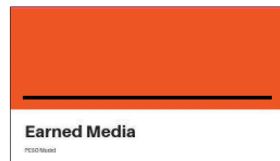
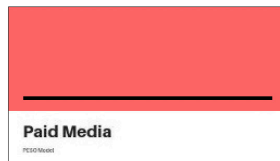
Step 7: Agency discussion: is this an integrated campaign? How will this help you achieve your objective? Have you conducted sufficient research? How will you measure success? What did you learn?

Have fun!

## PESO MENU



Sponsored Facebook posts	Print ad	Customer stories	Influencer outreach	Thought Leadership content	Employee stories	Curated event
Media pitching	Webinar	Sponsored Tweet	Email newsletter	Media tour	Native advertising	Brand ambassador
Blog post	Podcast	Instagram post	Slideshare or PPT presentation	Video (YouTube, Vimeo)	User generated content	Blogger event
Infographic	Brochure	E-book	Guest blog post	Sponsored LinkedIn "InMail"	Brand journalism	Charity tie-in



**PESO menu.** These examples of paid, earned, shared, and owned media give students a starting point for the assignment.

**PESO cards,** not to scale. They are about the size of a traditional business card. The cards are laminated and can be written on with dry erase marker. Students write each tactic from the PESO menu onto a corresponding PESO card. They then place the cards on the PESO Venn diagram poster.