

## Obituary Exercise/Mr./Ms. PBS

**Session time:** 1 – 3 hours

**Goals:** Energize the group with a creative exercise at the beginning of a retreat. This is an excellent exercise to get the group to think about the history of the station, accomplishments, and the “brand.”

**Materials needed:** Flip charts for each of the groups and multiple packages of color markers.

### Step 1.

Consultant tells the group “ Hi, on the way here today, I’m sorry to tell you but I ran over your station and its now dead. We’re now going to write the obituary.”

### Step 2.

Break into small groups. Exercise is best in small groups (4-5 people per group) or no more than 8 people in a single large group.

Each group needs to select an artist and note taker for each group.

Each group needs to select one person to describe the visual to the full group at the end.

Each group selects one person to stand up and deliver a dramatic reading of the obituary for the full group when all of the groups are finished.

Remind the groups to keep the story personal as though the station was Mr./Ms. (Station call letters)

The obituary should tell a story about who this person was and the impact they had in the community. Be concise with maximum one page.

Each group starts by drawing a stick-figure person that represents the station as a person.

The facilitator walks from group to group and helps the participants keep focused on the personality of the station and accomplishments as though this was truly a life story.

Ask the groups to have fun with the exercise and talk about Ms. or Mr. (insert Station Call Letters) in order to prevent the participants from talking about the station as though it is only a building or broadcast signal.

### Sample Questions:

First decide: What gender is your station?

How old were they when they died? (Date of death – date station was founded)

What did they accomplish in the community?

What was their personality? Warm? Cool? Did they want to bring the casserole to the families in need but they never had time?

If you walked up to this person in a coffee shop, were they approachable?

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## Obituary Exercise/Mr./Ms. PBS (continued)

Did they wear jeans or a suit?

Were they widely respected?

How would you describe their profession?

What meaning and value did they bring to the community?

What else could they have accomplished if they had lived longer?

Throughout the exercise the artist in the group should be drawing on the flip chart stick figure and creating a visual “personality” for the station.

**Conclusion:** Ask each of the groups to stand up and describe their visual drawing and then read their obituary to the full group.

As homework, you can have the groups merge the descriptions into one obituary.