



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH - INTERVIEWS**

### ***Gender differences in communication styles and their influence on workplace communication and the practice of public relations in the United States***

You are invited to participate in a self-funded research study organized and conducted by Ph. D student, Amelia Reigstad from the School of Media, Communication and Sociology at the University of Leicester. Results will contribute to a thesis as part of graduation requirements.

Before you decide on whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to take part.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

The aim of this study is to explore whether or not gender and different communication styles of men and women influences workplace communication and how public relations activities are performed within public relations firms and internal PR departments. It sets out to demonstrate that gender and the manner in which men and women communicate with one another can affect workplace communication and the process in which a PR project/campaign is developed, therefore potentially affecting the end result of a project. It will also aim to discover the relationship between the performance of gender and communication styles.

#### **STUDY DESIGN AND DETAILS OF PARTICIPATION**

The research involves participating in one-on-one interviews with the researcher answering questions about gender in the PR industry, gender communication, feminism, different communication styles and how this may influence workplace communication and public relations activities. Participants have been chosen based on their roles as public relations practitioners employed either within an internal PR department or PR firm within the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. A maximum of 40 participants will be involved in the interviews. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part.

Participants only need to participate once for an hour to an hour and a half unless further information is required. This however, is not anticipated and participants will have the opportunity to not be involved further if they so wish.

The interview can take place wherever the participant is most convenient, whether his/her office, coffee shop or participant place of choosing.

Interview questions will be both open and closed questions and participants should be able to discuss the topic of communication styles and public relations in-depth and gender differences in the workplace more broadly.

If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. You do not have to give a reason.

### **POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES, RISKS AND BENEFITS**

There are not any potential risks, disadvantages or harm to you for your involvement in this study. Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will bring light to the public relations industry, how gender differences and workplace communication influences the practice of PR and will encourage you to reflect on your own experiences.

### **WHAT INFORMATION IS BEING SOUGHT**

The information that is being sought is how participants experience communicating and interacting with the one another in a workplace setting and exploring whether they feel that gender influences the practice of public relations. The information being sought will hopefully answer the following questions:

- How is communication socially constructed and gendered within the public relations industry?
- How do differences in the way men and women communicate within the public relations industry influence the practice of PR activities?

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All the information that will be collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. All recordings, data, etc. will be stored on a password-protected laptop. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications.

The results of the research will be used in a Ph. D thesis with the goal of final submission in fall of 2019 and you may request and obtain a copy of the published results once available. Results may also be used in shorter pieces of writing and submitted to academic conferences and journals and the data collected during the course of this project might be used for additional or subsequent research. Confidentiality is assured.

The data generated in the course of the research must be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of five years after the completion of a research project.

### **RECORDING OF INFORMATION**

The audio recordings of your activities made during the interviews will only be used for analysis and for illustration in thesis, conference presentations, publications and lectures. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings. Storage will be contained on a password protected, personal laptop and/or smart phone.

### **CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please contact Amelia Reigstad at [ar392@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:ar392@leicester.ac.uk) or 651.747.7950.

***Thank you for taking the time to read the participant information sheet. You will receive a copy of this and a signed consent form for your records.***