

imPRessions

A monthly MSU PRSSA newsletter

February 2010

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Coming up...

- February 2: General Meeting
- February 5: Professional Development Session
- February 12: PR Links
- February 16: General Meeting
- February 17: BDubbs Fundraiser
- February 27: Regional Activity

All general meetings are held at 7 p.m.
in 147 CAS

President's Letter

Welcome!

February is always the best month for PRSSA; there's so much going on. This entire month, the Bateman team will be implementing their campaign they've been working on since November. Our third annual PR Links career fair coming up in two weeks. There, PRSSA members (and non-members) will be connected with the area, state and region's best public relations professionals. At the end of the month, our Regional Activity, Expanding your PR Horizons happens. The one day conference is one of the many perks to being a PRSSA member. Amazing speakers from all over are coming to MSU, just to talk to us. Expect to meet students from other universities, as we are only one of 12 schools in the country chosen to host a Regional Activity this year. With that said, these are the perfect opportunities to learn and absorb a lot of public relations tips and tricks in 28 days!



Another reason to get involved in all these activities: executive board applications will be available in March. We get at least 20 applications for as few as four positions. Your involvement in PRSSA prior to applying is crucial! If you're planning on applying, start getting involved now if you haven't already. Make the most out of your time here by going to the CMPRSA events, volunteering for different events or committees and contributing to our blog and/or newsletter, ImPRessions.

PRSSA is one of the top Communication Arts and Sciences student organizations. We strive to becoming better and better each year. One of the ways we do that is periodical surveys. Tonight's survey is extremely important to us. Please give us your honest feedback and ideas. We can't continue to improve if we don't know what you'd like to be different!

Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone and try something now!

Warmly,

Christina
2009-2010 MSU PRSSA President

PRSSA
Public Relations
Student Society
of America

Stay Connected

Visit our Web site: msuprssa.org

E-mail us: prssa@msu.edu

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Join our Facebook group: PRSSA... it's a mouthful!

Become a fan on Facebook: Michigan State University PRSSA

Professional Profile

Bob Hoffman

Public Relations Manager, Wharton Center



Q. How did you get into PR?

A. I was recruited into PR. I was an anchor/reporter for the local CBS affiliate station but often would be assigned feature stories including what was taking place in local theatre. I befriended Wharton Center's former Executive Director, Bill Wright, and one day he called me to the Center because he "wanted to talk to me." He told me that the PR manager they had for the last five years was leaving but he knew who he was going to hire. He kept describing this person he was going to hire and it sounded a lot like me. I finally asked him, "Bill, are you offering me a job." He said yes. I told him, "You can't afford me." He said, "Try me." And here I am.

Q. Describe a typical day at the office.

A. A typical day in the office includes working on several different, upcoming, attractions at once. I maybe writing a press release for a show one hour and the next setting up interviews for another. There are so many things to do to get prepared for an upcoming show. I think the most important part of my job is the ability to stay organized. You never know when you are going to have to drop one thing and begin working on an-

other. You have to juggle a lot at once, but I like it. It's never boring!

Q. What's the best part of your job?

A. The flexibility! I don't have an expected set time when I come in or leave. It's very flexible. That's because so often I'm working late at night or early in the morning. I am ALWAYS working. All the reporters know my cell phone number and when you are dealing with press agents that are in different time zones you are working odd hours. I like the fact I'm not tied to a desk all the time.

Q. What's the worst?

A. Sometimes there is so much to do for a show I can become overwhelmed. Also, I don't think people know, unless they do PR, how much work goes into setting up interviews, writing press releases, organizing events. PR isn't always measurable, unlike marketing. Sometimes you work hard to get press for a show and your efforts aren't successful. That can be discouraging.

Q. Since entering the profession, what is the most important thing you've learned?

A. I've learned that I can juggle many different things at once and still pretend I'm not stressed. It's important

to NOT let the media know you are overwhelmed. They want to work with someone fun, that gets them whatever they need. When they call at the last minute and want an interview you can't say, "why they hell didn't you answer my call last week when I offered it to you" You have to put on a smile and try to get them the interview.

Q. Any advice to college students entering PR?

A. Get an INTERNSHIP in the field. The best way to learn is by doing! Try to find someone who is already working in the job you want and ask them if you can intern with them. PROVE YOURSELF, make yourself stand out among the rest. There have been several Wharton Center interns that are now working in the field because they proved themselves here. I'm going to want to hire someone I know can do the job versus someone who just looks good on paper.

AP Style Tip

Spot the Error

1. Aretha Franklin sang the National Anthem at the baseball game.
2. There were over 500 people in attendance.
3. Fans were enjoying popcorn, soda, and hot dogs.

1. You do not capitalize the N or A in national anthem. "The Star Spangled Banner", however, is capitalized.
2. Use "over" when referring to a place, such as, "The bird flew over the crowd." When referencing amounts, use "more than."
3. There should not be a comma after "and."

Some Winning Advice for Your Future Career

By Yue Lv

As future PR practitioners, I bet many of you have dreamed starting a day with sipping a cup of Starbucks, walking along with bustling traffic and crowded people and getting prepared for the work in a cozy office that lay in the heart of the city. How fascinating it would be, if that can really happen after we graduate. However, reality and fierce competition keep awakening us from this beautiful dream. Then, “how can we survive” becomes the question that comes to our minds. To solve this problem, I believe our future employers are the best candidates to lead a way for us.

Different from the firm tour in East Lansing, the Chicago experience was much more thrilling and overwhelming. Not only because we got the opportunity to get in touch with peers from DePaul University, but we also had an actual chance to find out what an international firm looks like and learn how we can fit in.

The three firms we visited were Leo Burnett, Ruder Finn and Fleishman Hillard. In each of them, we were all given an inspiring presentation and insightful suggestions on how to succeed in PR. But to me, the passionate speech made by Joseph Tateoka from Ruder Finn was undoubtedly the one which enlightened me most.

According to Mr. Tateoka, there were five Ps we need to equip ourselves with before we rush to the labor market. First of all is Preparation. As we all know, opportunity is always there for the ones that are well prepared. For us, preparation means good internships, certain interests and having a great mentor. Actually, many of us including me were found complaining about

how hard it is to find an internship under the current economic climate. But Mr. Tateoka held an opposite opinion. He said that we shouldn't confine ourselves merely in the realm of PR, by contrary; we should open ourselves to any fields, no matter if it's paid or unpaid, business or charity, government or NGO. And all of these experiences will be beneficial to help you handle clients in different domains. Meanwhile, explore an interest that you're really passionate about and begin to become an expert on it. This can become your value and shining point. It's also helpful to look for a trustful professor, a wise senior or a seasoned insider to be your mentor. Let them know your questions, talk to them your plans and discuss with them about your thoughts. Unknowingly, you will benefit a lot from those conversations.

The second P is Publicity. To be universally known, the main job of PR practitioners is communicating with media and the public. Therefore, advancing with the times is our responsibility. So today start to listen to more news on NPR, read carefully about those thorough commentaries in New York Times and pay attention to the focus on CNN. They may be not so entertaining as other recreations, but they are definitely intellectual wealth useful to accrue for your future.

Mr. Tateoka addressed the importance of Packaging as well. Although recently the social networking is burgeoning, AP style writing is still essential. Actually, it's never too much to highlight the value of written communication. Having superior writing skills is the ubiquitous requirement in any

agency. Moreover, always do a careful proofreading before you turn in any articles.

Making a good Positioning is a useful tool to stand out your resume. Today Human Resource departments have to sift through piles of applications. Hence, preparing a comprehensive portfolio and several writing samples could be outstanding among other competitors. And what is noteworthy to emphasize here is that your abilities in Word, PowerPoint and Excel in Windows7. Many employers will appreciate any knowledge in this program.

Last but not the least, you will derive a great deal of benefit from establishing a personal PR-related resource database. With the help of the internet, we have access to read PR professionals' blogs, keep an eye on what's new on the Web site of PRSA or even publish your own interpretations and opinions. At the end of the day, you'll find out all of these endeavors are worthwhile to your career.

Life is tough, but the victory is always reserved for whom insists on striving until the last minute. If we can work steadily and make solid progress everyday, even though there are various hindrances in front of us, we can still realize our dreams. So start now and get ready for your bright future.

Diversity Digest

By Patrick Goulet

This column was created to discuss the role of diversity in public relations, with the intended goal of creating awareness on certain aspects of public relations and how diversity affects our soon-to-be profession.

This will be my fifth entry and it finally dawned on me that I completely skipped over the core of this issue. Why are there so few diverse public relations practitioners?

I read an article recently on this same topic. It was written by the senior vice president and managing director at Ketchum PR- Midwest, Ron Culp. He wrote about his frequent trips to several Midwest universities to speak to aspiring public relations students. Culp mentions that when he scans through an audience he rarely sees more than one or two African-American students, if any minority students for that matter. When they approach him after to introduce themselves, he later discovers that these students have no intentions to pursue a career in public relations. They instead use the skills they learned from their PR classes to further their skill set in another profession.

Culp believes that the reason for the professions minute minority numbers stems from the fast-paced

work environment of agency public relations, particularly the hiring process. Unlike other forms of business, which will put out a notice and minorities will apply. Agencies hire on a need to basis, many of the times agencies are not given the luxury of picking and choosing from a big stack of applicants and are force to choose from a smaller applicant pool. Diverse applicants are chosen, mainly when a client insist upon it.

Even at our general meetings, if someone were to walk in and take one look around they would see mostly Caucasian females. This is not a bad thing, but begs the question; Why does a career in public relations resonate so much louder with one demographic than another?

This quote from Dr. Donald K. Wright, a professor of public relations at Boston University can help us start to answer that question. Dr. Wright says, "Since there are so few non-white people in public relations, understandably most of the senior-level jobs go to folks who look like ourselves," Dr. Wright asserts. "In light of that, younger minorities don't have many role models."

Many professionals agree that there is an urgent need to make minority

students aware of the opportunities available to them within a career of public relations. This idea starts with us, when we all decided to pursue a degree in public relations we unknowingly became advocates for the profession.

It is up to us, the next generation of PR stars to step out of our comfort zones, as hard as that may be and talk to others about what we are learning. You never know who that information gets passed on to. Who knows, that person may one day be your co-worker. I have stated before that a diverse work environment produces a more creative work environment. This in public relations is never taken for granted.

So tonight, start a conversation with someone here, preferably not the friend you came with and talk about why you chose this career over another. For what it is worth, this dialogue will at least help you better understand your decision and maybe help someone who is on the fence make theirs, which ultimately helps all of us.

**If I was down to my last dollar,
I'd spend it on
PUBLIC RELATIONS.**

- Bill Gates, Microsoft Founder

When I Grow Up...

As told to Melissa Hackett

Lia Simcina is a 2009 MSU graduate and PRSSA alumna. She is currently an Associate Account Executive at The Rossman Group, where she interned before being taken on as a full-time employee. During her time at MSU, Lia served as the Advertising and PR Chair for Greeks Going Green, and held the position of Public Relations Chair for Chi Omega.



Lia Simcina
Associate Account Executive
The Rossman Group

Q. Please explain your position with The Rossman Group.

A. As an associate account executive, I help manage a variety of different clients under the guidance of account executives and our senior staff. I'm also developing a marketing plan for the firm itself, so The Rossman Group is my "client."

Q. What experiences in PRSSA helped to best prepare you for your career?

A. Attending the PRSSA national conference and other student development conferences have without a doubt been the most valuable experiences. Take advantage of the opportunity

to hear advice from public relations professionals who have worked in the industry for years, and keep your notes.

Q. What is the most enjoyable project you have worked on for your job?

A. There are two projects in particular that I'm really proud to have been a part of: introducing a new electronic record system with the Capital Area Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO) and working with the Michigan Nonprofit Association to increase Census participation in hard-to-count communities.

Q. What have you found to be unique about working at an agency?

A. I enjoy being able to work with a variety of clients on a variety of different issues – every day is different, and I love that!

Q. What advice do you have for current PRSSA members?

A. Take advantage of every opportunity to network! Make business cards, even if it just has your name and contact information – you never know when you're going to meet the right person.



Saturday, February 27

You are invited to attend MSU PRSSA's 2010 Regional Activity: Expanding Your PR Horizons! This is a day-long conference that will feature speakers from many of the diverse areas of PR including fashion, consumer, restaurant, sports, entertainment, healthcare, international, corporate, agency, non-profit and more! There will also be a case-study competition with a real client! The conference is open to all PRSSA Chapters so there will be students from across Michigan and the Midwest attending.

Registration is open until February 6 so hurry up and register because spots are limited. Registration is a budget-friendly \$25 for paid PRSSA members and \$30 for non-members. To register visit the Regional Activity Web site, msu-prssaregional.webs.com, and click on the "Registration" tab. If you have any questions feel free to e-mail the conference directors Julia Wendzinski or Katie Heck.

We hope to see you at the Regional Activity, come expand your PR horizons with us!

