

# imPRessions

A monthly MSU PRSSA newsletter

November 2008

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## Coming up this month

November 4: General Meeting  
November 6: Noodles & Co. Fund raiser  
November 7: Detroit Firm Tours  
November 11: Max and Erma's Fund raiser  
November 18: General Meeting

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



## President's Letter



Greetings members!

October was a great month for our Chapter. Even though we are quickly running out of time this semester, it is never too late to get involved. Our student-run firm, Hubbell Connections, is gaining momentum and I encourage you to take part in this ground-breaking task.

At the 2008 National Conference in Detroit, we had nearly 30 members participate in sessions, learn from professionals and network with students from across the country. It was a fantastic event, and I hope that you consider attending next year's conference in San Diego, California.

As we pull into the home stretch of the fall semester, I want to remind you about a couple upcoming events. First, PR Links, our career fair and alumni reception, will take place on Friday, February 13, 2009 at the Kellogg Center. The alumni relations committee recently grouped to start planning this event and it is going to be another great opportunity for our members. Also, CMU and Ferris State will be jointly hosting a Regional Activity on Saturday, February 28, 2009 in Mt. Pleasant. More details to come later.

I would like to congratulate our October Member of the Month, Melissa Hackett. She has been a very active member so far this year, having been a member of the PR ApPRentice Team and recently being selected to the 2009 Bateman Team. Keep up the great work!

As always, please contact any E-board members if you have any questions. It has been a pleasure to serve as your Chapter President, and I look forward to what the rest of the year has to offer.

Sincerely,

Nick Lucido  
Chapter President

### Stay Connected

Visit our Web site: [www.msuprssa.org](http://www.msuprssa.org)

E-mail us: [prssa@msu.edu](mailto:prssa@msu.edu)

Follow us on Twitter: MSUPRSSA

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

# BASIC TRAINING

By Jennifer Harrison

For anyone graduating in the next few months, entering the job market is a worrisome prospect. To counteract some of these concerns, the PRSA Detroit Student Development Committee hosted “PR Bootcamp” with the goal of helping current students get field ready for the public relations industry.

While undergoing training at PR Bootcamp, students from Wayne State University, Eastern Michigan University and Michigan State University connected with public relations experts from a variety of sectors. This included professionals from General Motors, Franco Public Relations Group, Comcast and Henry Ford Health System. Additionally, students participated in workshops focusing on writing for public relations and crisis communications, and

participated in a roundtable discussion focusing on the post graduation job search as well as current trends in public relations.

During the roundtable discussion, it was stressed that one of the key skills for graduates to develop is social media marketing. According to the experts, public relations is changing to be more dependent on blogging, micro-blogging and social networks, and recent graduates must be knowledgeable of the developments in the field. Exploring social media marketing now will give job seekers a competitive edge later.

Another important ability for job seekers that was mentioned is networking; very few of the professionals had ever found a job by cold-calling and dropping off their resume. Most had heard of opportunities through contacts in the industry. With this in mind, those

who don't have job offers yet should be cultivating their relationships and getting the word out that they are interested in available positions.

With the advent of texting and instant messaging, recent graduates don't always have writing skills that are up to par. Writing is a huge component of many jobs in the industry, so becoming a good writer before graduation will save rookies time and embarrassment at their first job out of school. It was advised that a great way to do this is to keep a blog, which would also help in becoming a social media expert.

Attending PR Bootcamp was a great way to get insights from public relations professionals that will help when it is time to find, and excel at, a first job after college.

## Chapter News

By Monica Fineis

### Three members take home four awards from National Conference

Congratulations to Monica Fineis, Jenni Lewis and Nick Lucido who were recognized at the PRSSA National Conference in Detroit at the awards ceremony on October 27.

Fineis, the Bateman Director, won the Altschul Champions for PRSSA Outstanding Internship Award; Lewis, Public Relations Director, took home a National President's Citation and a National Gold Key Award; and Lucido, Chapter President, was awarded a National President's Citation.

The Altschul Champions for PRSSA Outstanding Internship Award honors a PRSSA member who has achieved outstanding success in a public relations internship.

The Gold Key Award recognizes students who display outstanding academic excellence in public relations and leadership qualities in PRSSA.

The National President's Citation is given to members who go beyond expected service to the Society by contributing nationally or to chapters in a meritorious way.

### 2009 Bateman Team Announced

Congratulations to the 2009 Bateman Competition Team:

Liz Catalano, Senior  
Philip Bator, Junior  
Melissa Hackett, Junior  
Lindsay Bacigalupo, Sophomore

Director: Monica Fineis, Senior  
Professional Advisor: Amber Shinn  
Faculty Advisor: Russ White  
Client: Consumer's Banking Association- College Bound Aid

# PRofessional PRofile

As told to Nick Lucido

CEO of local public relations firm The Rossman Group, Kelly Rossman-McKinney, APR, Fellow PRSA was recently selected to be MSU PRSSA's second professional advisor.

## Q. How did you get started in the public relations industry?

A. I don't remember if there were any PR classes when I went to college at Wayne State, but my interest at the time was initially psychology, in which I majored. I had a great part-time job at channel 50 in Detroit, tho, and fell in love with TV so I added what was then called radio-tv-film as a second major. Turns out the combination is terrific for the PR profession. My career in TV was short-lived due to an early marriage and relocation to Battle Creek, but I ended up working at the Capitol and having several great jobs that included significant work in what I eventually realized was public relations. I tried a couple of times to get a job at the only PR firm in town at the time - Publicom, founded by our own Rick Cole - but never - repeat NEVER - got hired. MSU's own Ned Hubbell - for whom your chapter is named - was the first person who actually recognized - and helped me realize - that the work I was doing in state government was really public relations. He helped me pursue accreditation and was immensely helpful when I started my own firm.

## Q. What do you do in your current position with your firm?

A. A little bit of everything - but I still love client work the best. I don't do as much hands-on writing of basic communication tools - news releases, etc. - but I still write - or help write - most of the strategic plans and most of our pitches. I am also on the phone way too much, spend an awful lot of time e-mailing, or I am in meetings with clients or potential clients. Most of my real work - the strategic thinking - ends up being done after everyone else

goes home. There are certainly aspects of running a business that I have to attend to - but those responsibilities are more like chores than the client work will ever be!

## Q. What's your favorite part of your job?

A. Three things: crisis communications, pitching new clients, and public speaking. I really love the challenge of helping an individual or an organization navigate the sometimes treacherous waters when something bad happens to them. We've worked on all kinds of interesting crisis situations, from looming strikes to employee deaths to embezzlements to blown-up propane tanks - and lots in between. The challenge of helping figure out what a potential client needs - and how best to convince them that we are absolutely the best firm to help them (i.e. pitching) - still gives me a thrill, even though we've done it hundreds of times over the years. It's really fun trying to figure out what a client wants to accomplish and how to get them to the finish line. And last but not least - I love public speaking, whether it's a 20-minute keynote to a thousand people or a day-long workshop for 10 - it's energizing.

## Q. What do you do in your free time (if you have any!)?

Right now, I'm a total football bleacher mom. Although my oldest son is long out of the house (he is deputy director of the Senate Democratic Communications office), I still have three younger



kids at home. My sophomore son and 10 of his JV teammates got moved up to the Grand Ledge High School varsity team for the play-offs, so I'm at every game. Basketball and volleyball season are right around the corner, so I plan to hone my bleacher butt skills for the next several months!

## Q. What advice you would offer to students?

A. Depends on what students want to know, but in general, my advice is pretty simple - be curious, ask questions, pay attention to what's going on in the world, find your voice - and dress, speak and act like every encounter is a job interview - because it just might be!

If you wish to contact Kelly Rossman-McKinney or ever have any questions, feel free to reach her at:

[krossman@rossmangroup.com](mailto:krossman@rossmangroup.com)



# When I Grow Up...

As told to Courtney Sipperley

Andy Corner is an instructor in the Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Retailing at MSU. He teaches Media Writing/Writing for Public Relations and Public Relations Techniques. He is also involved in research to help determine the public relations industry's opinion on how prepared recent college graduates are for the writing expected of entry-level practitioners.

## **Q. Describe your experiences after graduation.**

A. I graduated in the late 1980s with a master's degree in public relations management. My first job was with a market research firm that measured satisfaction levels among recent buyers of cars and trucks, and farm and construction equipment.

After that, I spent nearly a decade in health care communications with the hospital that ultimately became Lansing's Ingham Regional Medical Center. The 1990s were a period of significant change in the hospital industry, characterized by significant consolidation. While at IRMC and its forerunner institutions I managed communications related to four different mergers. Two were successful, two were not; one of those two was a public relations disaster. It was incredibly stressful and demanding, but at the same time, an outstanding opportunity to learn crisis communications and media relations. My final position with IRMC was system manager of marketing operations.

I left IRMC in 1999 to become director of client services at Rossman Martin & Associates (now known as The Rossman Group). This turned out to be a terrific growth opportunity. While still serving hospital clients, I expanded my experience into multiple industries (education, transportation, recycling and nursing

homes, to name a few). I also had the opportunity to work with dozens of accomplished professionals throughout state government and in the advocacy community, and manage some promising young professionals who are now having significant impact on the local public relations business. During my time at Rossman I had the opportunity to be involved in a number of significant issues that impacted state politics and the future of various clients. But no experience there was ever as satisfying as helping a young professional develop their skills and get started in the business.

## **Q. What do you like most about being a professor? About MSU?**

A. MSU is my alma mater, and I grew up right next door so I have always bled Spartan Green. Being on the faculty is yet another unparalleled opportunity to help aspiring public relations professionals get started on their way to successful careers. Writing has always been my bread-and-butter skill, and it will be for every student who succeeds in the communications business as well. It is a privilege to be in a position to help students refine that skill and better position themselves for success.

## **Q. What has been the biggest challenge you have face thus far in your career field?**

A. I have faced any number of challenges, and all of them seemed big at the time. The most daunting situation was the third of four merger attempts made by Ingham Regional Medical Center, a proposed union between our local not-for-profit hospital and the giant Columbia/HCA system, a national, investor-owned, for-profit chain. This proposal, which took 18 months to resolve, drew national media attention after Michigan's attorney general sued to stop it. It was my first exposure to Michigan's high-stakes political envi-



ronment, and my first exposure to a long-term media relations situation.

In addition to skills in media relations and crisis communication, my greatest take-away

from that experience was that wrapped up in every challenge is an opportunity. Challenges may seem big while you are in them, but they are often a series of smaller things that lead to the big one. Paying attention, listening first for understanding, monitoring key audiences and recommending a reasoned, logical course of action – even if it's not the popular choice – is what sets a true public relations counselor apart. IRMC's board had signed a "non-disclosure" agreement, so all negotiations took place in secret, which seriously hamstrung our communication efforts. Time and again I found myself having to convince the president and his advisors that it was imperative we communicate with the media, against their strenuous objections. It was usually the only person in the room expressing this position. Having the personal strength to do the right thing, even if it's not the easy thing, is always my biggest challenge – and it will be for most PRSSA members, too, after they enter the profession.

## **Q. Any other thoughts?**

A. The most significant professional lesson I have been taught is a bit abstract, but equally profound. Professionals who seek to be of service experience far greater success than those who are simply in it for their own personal gain. We hear messages related to this all around us: "ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." People who look for ways to help others, and step up without hesitation when asked, are the people who are sought after for other opportunities. Unless the opportunity is unethical, illegal or clearly outside your ability, if you find a way to say yes — rather than figuring out a way to say no — success will find you.

## Notes from National Conference: Chapter Branding

By Aubrey Zimmerman

It seems silly to think a student studying communication would have to be told how important it is to creatively create brand awareness for a pre-professional club, such as PRSSA. Branding is a crucial element to the success of a company or organization. At the PRSSA National Conference in Detroit, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee presented tips and tactics they used to develop their innovative slogan, "doin' it in public." By brainstorming with peers, they were able to come up with a catchy tagline that was relative to the public relations industry. The originality behind their creation allowed them to brand the entire society by selling T-shirts, stickers, and even temporary tattoos. MSU PRSSA would greatly benefit from creative expansion in the branding field.

By keeping things consistent, people unfamiliar with the organization will be able to put "a name to a face."

As noted by UWM, branding is a six step process:

1. Host a branding workshop with local professionals
2. Discuss what makes your chapter unique
3. Select a member/committee to design a logo
4. Introduce and market your brand to the target: raise awareness
5. Promote! Promote! Promote!
6. Watch your Chapter grow

As important as branding truly is, it cannot be done without the help of every member. I challenge all executive board, general members, and myself to put some branding creativity behind the Ned S. Hubbell Chapter of PRSSA. Let's put ourselves out there and maybe next year we could be presenting on our successes at the National Conference in San Diego!

## In a Nutshell

### How to Thrive in the Public Relations Business

By Robert A. Kornecki



This book was distributed to attendees of the career fair on Monday during National Conference. It would be a great idea to pick up a copy of the book for more detailed explanations of the advice, but here is a preview:

### 35 Tips

1. Take initiative
2. Be thankful for a boss who is a thorough editor
3. Double check the spell checkers
4. Delicately balance work with family life
5. Laugh aloud and a lot
6. Don't settle for the status quo
7. Be honest to a fault
8. Earn respect
9. Listen up!
10. Obey the golden rule
11. Smile
12. Be upbeat and positive
13. Be pleasant persistent
14. Graciously accept defeat
15. Develop an area of expertise
16. Be seen and heard
17. Learn to prioritize
18. Accept that life isn't always fair!
19. Populate your rolodex
20. Be flexible
21. Cede control of the uncontrollable
22. Be selfless
23. Welcome diversity
24. Strive to exceed expectations
25. Be well informed
26. Work with a sense of urgency
27. Plan ahead for worst case scenarios
28. Rely on facts to authenticate decisions
29. Help grow business
30. Continually gauge your progress
31. Be grateful
32. Mine your mentor
33. Love what you're doing
34. Know yourself, be yourself
35. Protect and preserve your most prized asset- your reputation!

## Go for the Green! Homecoming 2008



Members pose for a picture while waiting for the 2008 MSU Homecoming Parade to begin.

# Member of the Month

October

Congrats to our October Member of the Month:

## Melissa Hackett!

Melissa has continually surpassed expectations this semester with her involvement in the Chapter. A communication and public relations junior from Traverse City, Melissa worked hard on the development of the PR ApPREntice proposal, has volunteered for numerous events and most recently was selected for the 2009 Bateman team! Melissa is interested in entertainment public relations but her dream job is to be an agent like Ari Gold in the show *Entourage*.



Keep up the great work!

## Notes from National Conference: Event Planning

By Courtney Sipperley

Event Planning: 10 Mistakes to Avoid  
Dennis Gaschen, APR, Public Relations Counselor, Professor,  
California State University, Fullerton

1. Forgetting to check dates
  - be sure to look at dates of religious holidays, campus events and sporting events as well as important dates before and after the event
2. Booking a site before you visit
  - always check out the venue at the same time and season that your event will be happening
  - look for extra benefits & guarantees
3. Failing to promote your event
  - there is never enough publicity!
  - remember that all events have competition
4. Failing to plan
  - event planning can never start too soon
  - be sure to build in contingencies
5. Not putting everything in writing
  - always utilize signed contracts
  - create a function book with phone numbers, times, schedules, and a detailed agenda that anyone can understand in case of an emergency
6. Neglecting to check reference
  - understand the difference between a vendor and a friend, a renter and a homeowner & a promise and a guarantee
7. Leaving things to the last minute
  - there will always be fires, so be prepared!
8. Letting someone else be in charge
  - everyone "knows" someone, although this person may be unreliable
  - always under-promise and over-deliver
9. Neglecting contingencies
  - what can go wrong, will go wrong
  - do not try to fool Mother Nature
10. Trying to save too much money
  - penny wise-pound foolish
  - negotiating price is key

### Fall 2008 Executive Board Members

President: Nick Lucido  
Vice President: Christina Capoferi  
Agency Director: Courtney Curran  
Public Relations Director: Jenni Lewis  
Secretary: Aubrey Zimmerman  
Finance/Fundraising Chair: Tony Willis  
Publication Director: Julia Wendzinski  
Alumni Relations Director: Courtney Sipperley  
Bateman Chair: Monica Fineis  
Webmaster: Angela Minicuci  
Sophomore Chair: Kristine Kendall  
Associate E-board Member: Whitney Geller

Academic Advisor: Russ White  
Professional Advisor: Jen Holton  
Professional Advisor: Kelly Rossman-McKinney  
Bateman Advisor: Amber Shinn

For E-board member contact information,  
check out the "Contact Us" tab at [msuprssa.org](http://msuprssa.org).

## Working on a PR project? Learning something interesting in class? Tell us about it!

Writing an article for imPReSSions is a great way to get published and have some material for your portfolio. Articles can be up to 400 words and the deadline for the December issue is Sunday, November 23. If you're interested or have any questions, feel free to contact Publication Director Julia Wendzinski at [wendzins@msu.edu](mailto:wendzins@msu.edu) or talk to her after a meeting.