

imPRessions

December 2010

A monthly MSU PRSSA newsletter

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Coming up...

Jan 18: General Meeting

President's Letter

Welcome members,

Every month as I sit down to write this note to you all, I'm tempted to begin with, "I can't believe it's already [insert month here]!" I'm sure you all feel the same way; this semester has really flown by.

Looking back at the last 15 or so weeks, I'm incredibly proud of all that this Chapter has accomplished. We have had some great speakers, professional development sessions and volunteer opportunities. Hubbell Connections has really taken off with their client work and the opportunities keep rolling in. Most recently our Paws with Claus fundraiser event with AnnaBelle's Pet Station in Lansing raised \$680 in total. We will donate half of that amount to the Ingham County Animal Control and Shelter.

To those of you graduating this December, I wish you the best in your future endeavors, whether it be graduate school or entering the professional world. Good luck and stay in touch!

I would like to give a special thank you to Nick Lucido who will be graduating this December. Nick was the very first person I talked to about PRSSA, and since then he has been a fantastic mentor to me and I'm proud to call him a friend as well. Thank you for everything you've done for MSU PRSSA, Nick!

As for everyone else who will be back next semester, we'll see you next year!

Happy Holidays,

Julia Wendzinski



PRSSA
Public Relations
Student Society
of America

Stay Connected

msuprssa.org

prssa@msu.edu

 @MSUPRSSA

 Michigan State University PRSSA

When I Grow Up...

As told to Emily Tschirhart

Laura Sauer is a Media Coordinator at Starcom MediaVest Group. She graduated from Michigan State in 2009 and before joining Starcom she was an internet marketing consultant at Spartan Internet Consulting.

Please describe your current position.

I started working in Starcom's Detroit office in September. In my role, I communicate with various departments internally as well as outside creative agencies to implement digital advertising for Chevrolet and GM Certified Used Vehicles. Previously, I was a digital marketing coordinator in Lansing (yes, this is my second job out of college!).

What advice do you have for PRSSA members looking for jobs?

Apply and interview as much as you can! Even if it doesn't seem like the ideal job on paper, you never know where it might lead you or how the job can be a true benefit. Every time you interview, even if you don't get the job, you just have more experience under your belt.

Don't be afraid to ask people you know to help! If they don't want to help you, they won't, but don't assume that because they can't help you they aren't willing to. My older friends and colleagues have helped me with everything from telling me "your address is working against you" on my resume, to one-on-one interviews with senior executives at an agency.

What steps did you take to end up in your current position?

During college, I had four internships (two in public relations, one in Internet marketing, and another in market research) that gave me a wide base of experience in writing for PR, pitching, solving issues in a tight squeeze and using various data tools for benchmarking my results. My first post-college job also provided a lot of background that helps in my current role. Even though I ultimately wanted to end up at a larger agency, the experience I gained learning SEO and other internet marketing tools is extremely helpful in the position I hold now.

I joined PRSSA my senior year (and wish I had been in it longer!) which helped a lot when it came to deciding what I wanted to do with myself after college. There are several careers, including the route I took, which I would not have known about otherwise. I also got a lot of great leadership experience within my sorority.

I applied like CRAZY and used my professional networks to help me; I asked all of my contacts working in the industry to pass along my resume and send me contact information for openings.



Laura Sauer
Media Coordinator
Starcom MediaVest Group

I looked on all the major job posting sites and myspartancareer. I also identified multiple agencies through LinkedIn/Wikipedia/Google searches to help me determine where I wanted to apply, then went to their corporate sites and applied there (a lot of bigger agencies don't post to outside resources). It took a lot of work, but you never know which posting or person is going to lead you to your new career.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Don't give up on the job/internship search - something, eventually, will work out.

What the hashtag?!

It's important to take advantage of every outlet you can to network and learn from other PR professionals. Hashtags are a great way to filter the chaotic world of Twitter and to connect with PR professionals, learn tips about the field and possibly get a job!

Listed below are some of our favorite PR hashtags.

• #EntryPR

• #prjobs

• #prstudents

• #printern

• #happo: This hashtag stands for help a PR pro out. #happo uses social media to leverage relationships and help connect job seekers with PR employers.

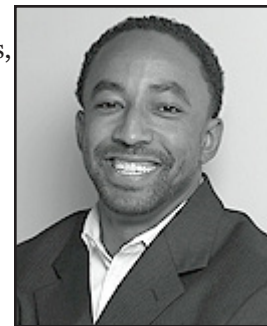
• #journchat: #journchat is a weekly conversation between journalists, bloggers and PR professionals. From 7-10pm every Monday.

● Professional Development Seminar Recap

by Olivia Gentile

● As members of MSU PRSSA we are very fortunate that CMPRSA allows us the opportunity to take part in their events for free. If you haven't already taken advantage and attended one of these events, it's definitely worth considering.

● One of the keynote speakers at the *Get Your Brand in Hand* seminar held this November, was Hajj Flemmings, the founder of Brand Camp University, an interactive conference that explores how social media has revolutionized the way individuals and companies position themselves personally and professionally.



Hajj Flemmings

● Flemmings describes a brand as a person's gut feeling about a product, service, or organization; making a great point that perception is greater than reality. He spoke about individual branding and how we can create the correct brand image for ourselves. Have you ever thought about how people perceive you? Think about that person in a group project that doesn't do any work, how do you perceive them? We must first decide how we want to be perceived and then make sure we take the correct actions to be perceived in that way.

● The best piece of advice Hajj gave was "Build it before you need it, online and offline." Make sure you have all the resources necessary to land your dream job now so when the opportunity comes along you are ready. Also, be able to manage your social media and of course use it to your advantage. You don't want to put an unfinished piece of work on the internet with your name on it if it's not up to the best standards.

● Flemmings also talked about how we can create opportunities for ourselves and gain experience without an internship. You can do this by interviewing someone in the field you are interested in, and then post your findings on your own blog. By doing this you are learning first hand about a career you might enjoy while continuing to enhance your writing skills.

Throughout the day there were opportunities to hear other professionals speak about non-profit marketing, tourism marketing, sports marketing and brand evangelism.

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Putting Yourself Out There

by Jessie Murningham

Advertising agency professionals like McCann Midwest, Leo Burnett Detroit and Doner filled the Max M. Fisher Music Center the night of December 1st. Brought together by Adcraft Club of Detroit, the fourth annual D-Show offered a unique look into Detroit's best in advertising design.

The advertising show awards Detroit-area agencies for their outstanding campaigns throughout the year. Best of Integrated Branding Campaign went to Leo Burnett Detroit for their "I'm In" campaign for Detroit Public Schools and Best of Print went to Team Detroit for their Wizard of Oz/Psycho advertisement, for example. Including a before and after cocktail event, I figured this would be a perfect opportunity to have a meet and greet.

As a student, it's exciting to hear about events like these because we're continuously taught to network. Even if you're not particularly interested in pursuing a career in advertising, it's important to take part in similar occasions because it will help to strengthen your communication skills for the future.

Although it can be a bit intimidating to walk into a room full of professionals, a little preparation can go a long way. Here are a few things I suggest:

- Look into what type of event it is to figure out appropriate attire. In the case of the D-Show, a cocktail event allows for more freedom - a sparkly dress is more appropriate than a suit.
- Walk up to the professionals; don't wait for them to come to you.
- If you're unsure of what to talk about, research the company! Think of a few questions to ask beforehand.
- Don't be nervous! Professionals love interacting with students.

My advice, be active! Whether you're volunteering at a local shelter or attending an event like the D-Show, you can always walk away having learned something new. The more you put yourself out there, the more you'll take in. If you'd like to hear more about the D-Show winners, check out www.thedshow.org

Silver Bells in the City—What Worked?

by Kristen Selasky



Hubbell Connections had the opportunity to assist Linking Lansing & U, a non-profit organization founded to get Michigan State students more involved in downtown Lansing life. When it came to Silver Bells, Linking Lansing & U did just what their name states. They literally linked students to Lansing by providing free bus rides to and from Silver Bells on Friday November 19, 2010.

The non-profit group had Hubbell Connections assist in promoting the free rides. On the day of the event, walking through the line of people that wrapped through the El Azteco parking lot and down Albert Street, Hubbell Connections team members were able to find out exactly what worked in educating the public of these free rides. We found the answer was social media.

It is important to remember your target audience when promoting. In this case, it was easy—students. Social media is one of the best ways to reach students, since most students are now acquainted with facebook, twitter or both. Hubbell Connections took a main focus towards social media with promotion, and their effort did not go to waste with rides given to more than 2, 000 students. Every year, students and community members rave about Silver Bells and this year deemed to be no different. Hubbell Connections is proud to have participated in promoting a terrific event.

OUTSIDE THE BOX: AN OPPORTUNITY OR A CHALLENGE?

BY YUE LV

In early October of this year, The Gap quietly switched from its iconic logo, the classic serif type on navy blue background, to a new blue exo-box which is a black Helvetica font with a small blue square at the right-hand corner. Since then, the former blue box, which has been known and loved for years, seemed to accomplish its mission. However, from the general public response, The Gap looks like the only one who is pleased with the switch.



As the launch of its new logo, immediately The Gap received a lot of “free” publicity from national networks to cable TVs, mainstream print media to social networking. Such intensive exposure seems to be a success in public relations. Unfortunately, the public expressed a strong dislike for the change. Many in the media question why Gap abandoned the classic logo, a move that ultimately might have made them lose their brand identity.

Bloggers say the change came because it was a prototypical brand panic move, which shows the struggle The Gap is facing. And the other general public expresses their anger on Gap’s Facebook page or Twitter account that the new logo just cheapens everything. It’s undeniable that the high public attentions, no matter online or offline do create the buzz for Gap. But the question is whether they are really the PR strategies Gap should take?

In fact, as a sign, which has been successfully dominating in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the old blue box embodied the valuable elements of Gap. Therefore, regardless of the debate on the effectiveness of the new one, it’s impossible for the company to assume the public could embrace the sudden change right away. Actually, if Gap wants people to perceive the new logo as more contemporary and modern, it should have laid a profound groundwork in advance.

Instead of quietly dropping the old blue box on its website, Gap could have done research to find out what people’s current understanding towards the brand; what they will expect of the brand, and whether they could accept a change of the logo, etc. After analyzing the data, the results might be able to give Gap a clearer roadmap to make public relations plan. Meanwhile, during the process of implementation, the company might need to pay close attention to the public responses, which not only could enable Gap to timely adjust its strategies; but also might give it a chance to step back to rethink whether it’s really beneficial for the future development of the brand. As a matter of fact, instead of being perceived as a clipart gallery image, take advantage of the change to bring Gap to another new milestone is worthwhile for all PR practitioners to ponder. And eventually, whether it’s an opportunity or a challenge for Gap to think “outside the box” may still be a question hard to answer right now.

Firm Grasp on the Future

by Veronica Kieffer

PRSSA members got a behind-the-scenes look into the real world of public relations, touring three different firms in the Lansing area. On Friday, November 2nd, the firms Martin Waymire Advocacy Communications, Marketing Resource Group, and Motion Marketing and Media welcomed MSU PRSSA students into their offices. Students were given the opportunity to tour the firms and witness firsthand the day to day workings of public relations professionals.

The tours also allowed students to network with PR professionals and gain knowledgeable insight for future endeavors. During round table discussion topics ranged from past campaigns to the current shift in political climate. Each firm had very unique business cultures and specialized in a wide range of clients specific to their specialties.

All three firms presented opportunities for future internship programs and what it takes to make it in their companies. Specifically they stressed the ability to be knowledgeable of the industry, whether through media relations or client jargon. Asking questions was also important to each of the firms, leaving your ego at the door to make sure the job is done right. However, it was stated multiple times that the single most important skill is ability to write well.

Firm tours present an invaluable experience for students hoping to enter public relations whether through networking or through expert advice. PRSSA members will find it in their best interest to make the most of firm tour opportunities.

Taking a social media connection *offline*

By Julia Wendzinski

The connections that students can make with professionals across the U.S. these days, thanks to social media, are seemingly endless. With a few simple searches on Google or LinkedIn, it's now possible to find the names of a few professionals that work at an agency you're interested in 500 miles away, search them on Twitter and strike up a conversation.

I've heard at many conferences and seminars recently that it's important to take these connections offline to truly take advantage of networking opportunities. Taking this advice to heart, I found myself in a situation where I was able to do just that. Here's how it happened.

Chris Kuechenmeister sent a tweet to the MSU PRSSA account that I noticed. After looking at his profile on Twitter, I decided to look him up on LinkedIn to see if he is an alumnus. Much to my surprise, not only is he an MSU CommArts alum, but we also went to the same high school and he works in an area of public relations that I'm interested in. These coincidences were too much to pass up! After messaging him over Twitter we decided to set up a time to talk over the phone.

Talking with Chris over the phone really helped to solidify our connection. I learned about his career path, his experiences in MSU PRSSA while he was in college and even got some career advice. I'm looking forward to keeping in touch with him both over the phone and online.

My advice to students looking to build their network is to take advantage of what you have at your fingertips – the Internet. It's a fantastic tool to help you make connections in an area of public relations you're interested in or an area of the world you'd like to relocate to.



