



Thriving in today's PR climate PR veterans offer opinions on the employment market and how to make the most of it

The uncertainty in today's economy might be causing a few sleepless nights, especially for those who are looking for a career change or graduating from college this year. But even with the unstable market there is an overwhelming consensus in the public relations industry that we are on the right track.

Steven R. Van Hook, public relations guide for About.com, has worked in the PR industry for more than 20 years. "The US Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts job growth in public relations should exceed the average for all other jobs combined through the early years of the new century," Van Hook said. "Considering the statistical take along with the practical realities, it's looking like 'PR' will weather the current storm well."

On the surface a slumbering economy might seem to yield less dollars for companies to put toward public relations, but Kathy Burnham, APR, Padilla Speer Beardsley, said companies will ultimately turn to PR to save money.

"Public Relations offers better



Kathy Burnham, APR

opportunities for companies than advertising. Reputations can be damaged overnight and companies find the PR dollar stretches further than the advertising dollar," Burnham said.

Fred Haberman, CEO of Haberman & Associates, agrees that when the economy slows down, the first thing cut is the advertising

budget. "This results in newspapers and other media cutting their editorial staff, so then publications turn to public rela-



Fred Haberman

tions people for good stories. The media rely on PR corporations to get their message out with the most reasonable budget," said Haberman.

Finding a job

Despite the optimistic forecasts by public relations professionals, there is little question that the current job market

Important dates to remember

June

21

Monthly meeting 8:30-9:30 a.m. at the Metropolitan in Mpls.

29

Deadline 2001 Skills Seminar call for presentations

August

6

Fall APR registration deadline

September

12

Skills Seminar

15

Fall APR exam

October

27-30

International PRSA Conference in Atlanta

November

1

Deadline nominations for Padilla Public Service Award

Note: No monthly meetings in July and August

What's new on

www.mnprsa.com

Chapter's six-month progress report



Minnesota PRSA reaches out to senior practitioners

About a year ago, our chapter conducted a study of its members about their involvement in Minnesota PRSA. And once again, we were reminded about the needs of more senior practitioners, who often feel left out by the lack of programming that truly touches on issues and topics that they confront in their jobs.

Because of the participation of many younger professionals in the chapter, especially on our volunteer committees, where many of those decisions about what to offer to our members are made, our chapter has generally done a fair job at best in delivering quality programming to our senior chapter members. That's not to say that we've ignored senior practitioners completely, it's just that our orientation has been steered toward offering more practical, how-to, skills-based opportunities that appeal to a broad section of our membership.

As I look at the long-term health of our chapter as well as our profession, it's become clear to me that our chapter cannot afford not to actively engage senior practitioners. We very much need their experience and insight in continuing to enhance the reputation of Minnesota PRSA as the voice of public relations in Minnesota. So I offer this sincere invitation to our senior-level members — come join in the fun. In fact, I challenge you — because many of the young professionals involved in PRSA could benefit from your wisdom. We need your involvement in our committees; to serve as mentors and instructors; and we need your ideas and suggestions in guiding our programming. Pick up the phone today and call me, or drop me an e-mail.

In the meantime, we have several exciting opportunities coming up throughout the year that are hand-made for senior-level practitioners.

The Skills Seminar is just around the corner; the Professional Development committee is looking for a few good presenters — click on the Minnesota PRSA Web site (www.mnprsa.com) to learn how you can offer a presentation. The Professional Development committee also is researching an ambitious program to be launched in January

2002 — an advanced public relations studies program geared to younger practitioners who have just entered the profession and yet, are not ready to go through the universal accreditation process. For this program, we need experienced professionals to offer insights, as well as those who may be willing to teach.

We also need senior practitioners who would be willing to serve as mentors to younger pros. I think it would be great to see younger professionals involved with our New Pros group matched with senior professionals — what a rewarding experience that could be.

For senior practitioners who have a strong interest in ethics, we have formed a committee, led by past-president Margaret Hennen, APR, our chapter's newly appointed ethics officer, to raise awareness of the recently revised PRSA Code of Ethics.

In addition, this fall, our Member Involvement committee is planning to host an evening event geared specifically for senior practitioners. As part of that event, we hope to recognize the lifetime achievements of several senior public relations professionals modeled after National PRSA's Gold Anvil Award program.

As you can see, we have lots to do and lots to offer. But we could use a few more hands to lighten the work. Please join us.

Six-month progress report

Your Minnesota PRSA chapter leaders and volunteer committee members have been very busy during the first half of the year. In addition, your leadership has made a number of changes that we believe will enhance our day-to-day operations and increase the value of your membership. I invite you to visit www.mnprsa.com to receive a progress report on the chapter's first six months during 2001.

—Stephen Dupont, APR
sdupont@clynch.com
(612) 375-8525

Newsletter designer needed

The Minnesota PRSA Member Communications committee is looking for a production coordinator to produce the monthly *PRSA Today* newsletter and help guide its evolution. Candidates for this volunteer opportunity need to be proficient with Quark XPress and Photoshop software for Macintosh and familiar with HTML design basics. Ideal for members with graphic design background; responsibilities include design and layout of each issue as well as coordination of approvals and printing. Time commitment is approximately 3-5 hours per month for a minimum of one year. If you are interested in this volunteer opportunity, please contact Eva Keiser at (612) 872-3774 or ekeiser@psbpr.com.

Vision + Awareness = Fulfillment

What does experience in over 50 jobs, more than a few employer-driven terminations of employment, and having two failed businesses under one's belt give a person? It gave Amy Lindgren the authority and passion to speak on "The Power of Personal Vision: Renewing a Sense of Mission on the Job" to April PRSA meeting attendees.

"It's as simple as determining that if you're in a job and don't like it, that is a bad thing," said Lindgren, a Knight-Ridder employment columnist with the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* and founder and president of Prototype Career Services. Her answer to discovering career fulfillment lies in following a five-step process.

1. Set goals — "Right off the bat, this is often where people get confused," Lindgren said. People have an idea what they should want, but many times this is not part of their actual desires and talents.

The answer to setting the right goals, Lindgren said, is doing so for the right problem. According to her research and experience, too many people focus on the financial aspects of goal setting. Targeting the right problem means identifying your ultimate life goals and then thinking of your job and earnings as tools to be leveraged in pursuit of these goals. The job and its benefits become the means to achieving life goals, not ends in themselves.

Lindgren's guidelines for setting goals for the right problem include asking two main questions: 1) What is the one thing you want to do before you die? 2) As a child, what was the main thing you wanted to do with your life ahead?

A fatter paycheck, a promotion and a corner office are rarely answers to these questions.

2. Build timelines — The concept of building timelines goes hand in hand with setting and achieving life goals, according to Lindgren. Once your life goals have been identified, plan out how you're going to achieve them. Carve out time not merely to work in the age 22 to



"Does your job match your heart? If not, then something needs to change, and you can make that change happen."

—Amy Lindgren



65 window, Lindgren said; rather, set and follow at least a general timeline for when you would like to see the ultimate life goals occur.

3. Evaluate your current job — Does the perfect job exist? Lindgren said that the more the talk about the perfect job, the more the focus becomes skewed.

Instead she suggests a focus on the person with the job, not the job itself.

"It always comes back to what your goals are," Lindgren said. Her coaching is that your job should either be a direct tool toward achieving your life goals or at least not a stumbling block toward seeing them fulfilled. "It's time to move on if the job is no longer a tool to make your goals happen."

4. Identify future jobs — Lindgren pointed out that identifying future job possibilities makes sense after evaluating the position in which you currently find yourself. After doing so and perhaps finding more negatives than positives, there can be difficulty in getting at the root of what it is you truly would like to have in a position.

To combat this Lindgren suggested taking the knowledge gained from the above three steps and then, in whatever learning style you work best, evaluate the pros and cons of potential opportunities. Whether it's in making lists, doodling, writing on index cards or making puzzle pieces, Lindgren's advice is to take into account all the factors already in your life, determine what's missing, and identify activities that can fill the void.

5. Set an action plan — "You can talk the talk, but can you walk the walk?" Lindgren pointed out that there can often be a problem with the inertia of immobility. In other words, setting the steps in place may be relatively easy, but actually acting on them can often times become the hard part.

The bottom line, according to Lindgren: "Does your job match your heart? If not, then something needs to change, and you can make that change happen."

—Elisabeth Zimmerman
Freelancer

Jobs from Page 1

is tight. This makes finding a job more difficult and standing out above the crowd more important.

To find the perfect job in public relations your preparation must be executed flawlessly to ensure success. The research process begins with understanding what public relations is and what it involves.

“People are coming out of college, even with PR-specific degrees, with limited knowledge of what media relations really is,” said Burnham. “On the writing test people often write collateral material as their news release. We want journalistic news copy, not blatant advertising.”

Learning about the company you are seeking to join is also crucial. Haberman strongly emphasizes researching the company before you apply.

“Check out the agency’s Web site. Learn about the soul of the firm and go from there. Develop a list of questions, and have them when you go into the interview. Try to get to the core and then you can begin to customize the interview to the needs of that firm.”

The Web has not only brought pressure to research a company before submitting a resume, it has also expedited the application process. Many sites like Monster.com and Flipdog.com allow prospective employees to post their resume on the Web, allowing employers the opportunity to gather resumes from around the world instantly.

Haberman & Associates has used RecruitUSA to find new employees and has received hundreds of resumes. “Of course there are times when I receive resumes that are way off, but now and then we get some real gems. I don’t think we would get those gems by just putting an ad in the local newspaper,” commented Haberman.

The application process

Steve Sterling, APR, director of the technology practice at LaBreche Murray, cites three things applicants can do to impress him. First it is critical that the candidates be able to clearly present themselves on their resume and cover letter.

“Secondly, in an interview they must be able to clearly articulate their approach to media relations, in a way that differentiates themselves from other people. I look for their approach to building professional relationships. How do they build trust, how do they build a relationship that allows more work to be done?” said Sterling.



Steve Sterling, APR

The third piece Sterling considers is the potential employee’s portfolio. Rather than having the candidate just present what they have written, Sterling said, it is critical that they are prepared to show the impact of each piece and show clips of coverage.

Practice going through your portfolio before an interview to sharpen your presentation and be prepared to answer any questions the interviewer might have. “You can talk yourself out of a job by not answering the questions given you,” said Sterling.

Education and career development

Even with the best looking resume in the world it all comes down to experience. But finding the right track for your professional career can be daunting with so many places to start.

All career paths begin with an education of some kind, be it real-world experience or academic. Getting involved in organizations like PRSA and IABC are good first steps, suggests Van Hook. “Such memberships show you’re serious about your profession. In any field and especially public relations, networked connections are indispensable. ‘Connected networking’ is the very foundation of PR.”

Accreditation, like APR, offered by PRSA also is important for senior-level professionals, says Burnham. Upper level candidates also are expected to have involvement in extracurricular activities.

While a master’s degree can be helpful in separating yourself from the crowd, personality and an eagerness to learn is ultimately the distinguishing factor. Haberman looks for life experience over an MBA, but said that it is important for a potential employee to be able to read a business plan and understand it.

The future of public relations looks bright according to the experts. “As our society becomes ever more complicated, the need for PR professionals to help build clarifying bridges between stakeholders and the public will grow even stronger,” says Van Hook.

In the slow economic times it is more important than ever to be a public relations professional.

—Ryan May
Strother Communications Group

Help support our community by volunteering

Are you doing volunteer work that you're keeping quiet about? Whether you're a new or a long-time volunteer, PRSA's public service committee invites you to participate in supporting the chapter's community contributions.

Each year, Minnesota PRSA's Public Service committee recognizes the individuals who give of themselves so that our community and our profession may profit from their efforts. The committee offers several ways that you can support the community's nonprofits:

Show by doing. The committee provides information about organizations seeking volunteers both in the newsletter and online. If you're not involved yet, consider volunteering. If you're volunteering, consider expanding your efforts. Through an association with Management Assistance Program for Nonprofits (MAP), an organization that provides management consulting, board recruitment and other support to thousands of area nonprofits, the chapter gathers information about local volunteer opportunities. Members also can contact MAP directly at (651) 647-1216 or visit www.mapnp.org to learn more.

Track your work. Help the chapter track volunteer work by submitting your volunteer hours for the annual Public Relations Oriented Service (PROS) program that recognizes

members for public service. While previously limited to public relations work, this year the program will expand to recognize all members' volunteer efforts, whether or not the member was doing public relations work. (Note that volunteering for PRSA does not qualify.)

Recognize others. Submit a nomination for the Padilla Public Service Award. Start thinking now about potential candidates to recommend by the Nov. 1 deadline. This annual award honors a person who is judged by the chapter's leadership to have made selfless contributions of time and public relations talent to make our community a better place. The award is named for the late public relations pioneer and chapter member's legacy of volunteer service.

Support the Skills Seminar. As part of the annual PRSA Skills Seminar, the Public Service committee coordinates a series of expert presenters who focus specifically on the communications needs of nonprofit organizations. If you have an area of expertise, consider offering to serve as a presenter.

For more information on the chapter's Public Service committee, contact co-chairs: Susan Larson, (651) 603-7800 or smlarson@life-source.org, or Melanie Boulay at (612) 626-1107 or boula008@umn.edu.



Local professionals and PRSSA students had a chance to network at the April monthly meeting. (Left) Sarah Schmitt, St. Cloud State University and Nancy Anderson-Smith, ARA Content. (Right) Cindy Matson, Carmichael Lynch Spong, and Lisa Taylor Lake, Minnesota Dept. of Health.



Announcements and Opportunities

Locals win national awards

Congratulations to Minnesota-based companies and agencies who have received national recognition for their work:

- Carlson School of Management and Kohnstamm Communications received a Bronze Sabre Award for the “Blue Chip Status” speech given by David Kidwell.
- General Mills and Maccabee Group, Inc. received a Bulldog Award for Excellence in Media Relations and Publicity for the “Millennium Penny” public relations campaign.
- Donaldson Company and Padilla Speer Beardsley Inc. received a Nicholson Award for the corporation’s 1999 annual report.

Member kudos:

Congratulations to **Heidi Bornhuse** for her promotion to PR director at Lilja Inc.

Congratulations to **Gabrielle Twiest** for her promotion to senior account executive at Fleishman-Hillard, Inc.

Members who have recently changed positions include:

Nikki Bartholomew has joined Lundquist, Killeen, Potvin and Bender (LKPB Engineers) as marketing manager. Her new address, phone and e-mail are: 1935 County Rd. B2, Roseville, MN 55113; (651) 633-1223 ext. 355; and nbart@lkpb.com.

Kathleen Crandall has formed Crandall Communications. Her new address, phone, fax and e-mail are: 14721 Wellington Rd., Wayzata, MN 55391-2446; (952) 472-5956; (952) 472-6459 (fax); and brudek@aol.com.

Melanie Boulay, APR, has joined the University of Minnesota Cancer Center as director of communications. Her new phone, fax and e-mail are: (612) 626-1107; (612) 626-3069 (fax); and boula008@umn.edu.

Ellen Jambois has joined Leonard, Street and Deinard as a marketing communications specialist. Her new address, phone, fax and e-mail are: 150 S. Fifth St., Ste. 2300, Mpls., MN 55402; (612) 335-1519; (612) 335-1657 (fax); and ellen.jambois@leonard.com.

Laura McCarthy has joined Lilja Inc. as a PR director. Her new address, phone and e-mail are: 7505 Metro Blvd., Edina, MN 55439; (952) 893-7140; (952) 893-7815 (fax); and lam@lilja.com.

Gayle Thorsen, APR, has joined The McKnight Foundation as vice president of communications. Her new address is: 121 S. 8th St., Ste. 600, Mpls., MN 55402.

Lynn Treadwell has joined the National Marrow Donor Program. Her new address, phone and email are: 3001 Broadway St. NE, Mpls., MN 55413; (612) 617-8364; and ltreadwe@nmdp.org.

Lisa Winkler has joined MetLife Auto and Home as director of marketing and communications. Her new address is: 180 E 5th St., Ste. 600, St. Paul, MN 55101.

Welcome new members

Welcome to new Minnesota PRSA members who have joined recently. They include: **Tracy Anderson**, Personnel Decisions International; **Greg Bates**, freelance; **Vince Bossany**, Padilla Speer Beardsley Inc.; **Larry Bussey**, Medica; **Molly Crawford**, Minnesota Department of Human Services; **Amanda Engquist**, St. Paul Convention & Visitor’s Bureau; **Jackie Freberg**, Colle & McVoy; **Karen Greenwood**, Fleishman Hillard Inc.; **Karolyn Josephson**, Search Institute; **Maureen Juairé**, MJ Marketing; **Susan Kohn**, American Association of Cereal

Chemists; **Michelle Koshiol**, Soft Link, Inc.; **John Merritt**, Carmichael Lynch Spong; **Kendra Meyers**, Maccabee Group, Inc.; **Joe Miller**, Dakota Electric Association; **Carrie Niezgocki**, Imation; **Jeff Olson**, Fleishman Hillard Inc.; **Shannan Paul**, Wells Fargo Bank; **Kristine Rauh**, Labreche Murray Public Relations; **Sharon Sabatake**, Phillips Plastics Corporation; **Noelle Schaffer**, American Collectors; **Michelle Stange**, Gopher State One Call; **Jeanne Rogge Steele**, University of St. Thomas; and **Connie Stelter**, Best Buy Company Inc.

PRSA today

President, Minnesota PRSA
Stephen Dupont, APR
sdupont@clynch.com

Board Liaison
Theresa McHugh Palmersheim, APR
McHughCom@aol.com

Newsletter Editor
Eva Keiser
ekeiser@psbpr.com

Newsletter Assistant Editor
Bronwyn Schaefer Pope
bpoppe@allina.com

Design/Production Coordinator
Julee Penton Sylvester
jpls@sightandhearing.org

Minnesota PRSA
1821 University Avenue #S256
St. Paul, MN 55104
(651) 917-6244
(651) 917-1835 (fax)
prsamn@nonprofitsolutions.com
http://www.mnprsa.com

Credits