



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Have you ever wondered about the power – and reach, for that matter – of your words as PR professionals? Personally, I had never really given it much thought until we published the November issue of this newsletter.



Lori Quiller

As you may recall, I used my pen (or keyboard as the case is these days) in response to an editor of *The Dothan Eagle*, who took issue with the Dothan Personnel Board for creating a new, second public relations position.

Not long after the November issue hit the web, I received a phone call at my office, and at first I'll admit I was very nervous with our conversation. This person introduced herself as the subject of both articles, and then she simply said, "Thank you."

I'm in Montgomery...she's in Dothan. So, of course, my first question was how did she know about the article? She said that wasn't important, but what was important was that she didn't feel alone anymore, because there were others out there who had the same problems and issues.

Needless to say, I have her contact information, and we are staying in touch. We've never met, but I know I will always have a friend in Dothan, and she will always have a friend in Montgomery. She's even made plans to attend the conference in October!

To know that MY words actually made a difference in someone's life was the best feeling I've known in a long time!

And, it certainly wasn't the phone call I was expecting given the tone of the article!

As PR professionals, we craft our messages very carefully every day. That's what we do. That's what we've trained to do our entire careers. But, have we ever stopped to think about the impact of our words on the individuals in our audiences, however large or small?

Even in a one-on-one conversation, our words carry much more meaning than we probably intend or even imagine. You know how it feels to be on the receiving end of a conversation with someone who says something that you may take as offensive and hurtful. But, have you ever been on the giving end of that conversation and not realize it?

Sometimes we don't realize the impact of our messages – either good or bad. Unfortunately, there are some in our profession who just don't care, and they are seem to be missing the filter between their brains and their mouths. We excuse them because of their position in our profession or in business. I prefer to think of them as just being rude and unprofessional, and they don't carry much weight as they may think that they do.

We are the "face" of our profession. We give it personality, breath, blood, life. We are the only ones who can make it better...or worse...in the eyes of those so willing and waiting to tear it down.

Words can hurt, or words can heal. Which words do you choose?

CHAPTER MEETING

PRCA Holiday After Hours

Monday, Dec. 3
La Jolla Restaurant
at EastChase
5-7 p.m.

Let's kick off the holiday season with some after-work fun! Join us at **La Jolla Restaurant** for the happy hour specials and do a little networking with some friends and colleagues!

Please RSVP to:
Niko Corley at
niko@alabamajustice.org

RSVP Deadline:
Noon Friday, Nov. 30

SPECIAL NOTE

Members who make reservations for chapter luncheons but fail to cancel by noon the Friday prior to the meeting ARE responsible for payment. We will invoice you!

Welcome New Members!

Please help us welcome our new members...

- ★ **Tiffany Trueblood**, communications specialist, Central Alabama Electric Cooperative
- ★ **Sandra Polizos**, public relations director, St. James School

Jobline...

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

The Alabama Society of CPAs seeks a detail-oriented professional with excellent written communication skills and public speaking abilities for entry-level position. Microsoft Word skills required. Responsibilities include: serving as a support liaison for 11 chapters, providing administrative support for the Communications Department, web site monitoring, assisting with student recruitment and special event planning/execution.

Mail resume and salary requirements to: Jeannine Birmingham, P.O. Box 5000, Montgomery, Ala. 36103-5000 or e-mail to jbirmingham@ascpa.org.

ThyssenKrupp Stainless USA, LLC

ThyssenKrupp Stainless USA, LLC, is looking for public relations positions for the Mobile plant. Responsibilities include: community relations (public and government), corporate publishing of newsletters and promotional materials, marketing, Internet and website experience and speech writing capabilities. Qualified candidates should have a Bachelor's degree in communications or political science, seven to 10 years of experience in media relations, corporate experience is helpful, manufacturing background is preferred and the ability to speak German is a plus.

Send resumes to ThyssenKrupp c/o AIDT, Public Relations, 1854 Ninth Street, Brookley Complex, Mobile, Ala. 36615. Or, e-mail it to tkresumes@aidt.edu.

REPORTER

WAKA-TV, CBS 8 is looking for a reporter who is creative and energetic. Candidate should have at least one-year reporting experience as a television news specialized or general assignment reporter. Must be able to turn in daily live shots. College degree in communications and/or journalism preferred.

Send resume / tape to Human Resources (RPTR), WAKA-TV, 3020 East Boulevard, Montgomery, Ala. 36116. EOE

Member Profile...



Jim Plott is an information specialist with the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs. His office issues nearly 400 press releases annually for a variety of different programs. In addition to law enforcement and safety, community development and workforce issues, ADECA also assists several outside organizations like the Governor's Black Belt and Rural Action Commission with PR and press releases, as well as an in-house online newsletter and issues an annual report.

Do you have any tips to being a top PR practitioner?

Jim: No, because I am not a top PR practitioner, but I think I am learning from some of the best.

What are the top three skills needed in PR?

Jim: 1) Act as a "strainer" to turn technical material and departmental jargon into something the public can understand; 2) Have a good ear to listen and properly respond to questions; 3) Be willing to learn and change.

From where did your interest in PR originate?

Jim: I guess I have had somewhat of a fascination with it when I was on the other side of the fence as a reporter.

Why did you join PRCA?

Jim: To learn more about this thing called public relations. Any job should require continuing education. The day you quit learning should be the day you die.

What experience most shaped your career?

Jim: Twenty-five years as a newspaper reporter. When reporters call on deadline, I know what they are going through. I have been and I try to be as obliging as possible.

What would you like to be doing in five years?

Jim: Basically the same thing, although with my recent interest in horticulture, I would truly love to do something involving farming, forestry conservation and gardening or relating to Alabama history, which is also a passion. I love this state!

What was the greatest lesson you learned through PR?

Jim: Take a pause before you do or say something, and consider how someone will interpret what you say or do.

What is your greatest achievement?

Jim: Two things stand out. In the 9th grade, we had a substitute teacher for Alabama history at Lyman Ward Military Academy. Every student except me cheated. I still made a 100, and one student spoke up for me when the regular teacher threatened to fail us. Another is my constant badgering as a reporter of district attorneys and attorneys general involving a death case that was initially ruled accidental. I didn't let up, and years later the dead man's son was indicted and convicted of murder. It was hard, too, because the son and I had been really good friends growing up, but I knew from all the evidence I had gathered that he was guilty.

How to Turn Your CEO Into a Great Speaker...

Your CEO wants to hit the speaking circuit to create buzz for your company, be seen as a leader in his industry, and generate some free publicity.

So, he asks you to edit the 20-page speech he will read at the local Rotary breakfast, and review his Power Point presentation that turns out to be powerfully pointless. You visualize his audience members dozing off at 8 a.m., foreheads crashing onto their plates.

What's a PR pro to do?

If it's any consolation, you aren't alone. Many executives think a well-written speech and some flashy visuals are all that's necessary to wow an audience. Too often, bad speakers with the best of intentions are almost never invited back. Some can even hurt their company's image instead of help it.

"For more than 20 years, I've been to conventions and seen CEOs give dynamite talks and motivate their sales forces, or give pathetic talks and demotivate everyone," says Patricia Fripp, a top national speaker who also works as a speech coach to executives.

The secret to great speaking is the ability to tell personal stories that illustrate key points—without notes.

Fripp had less than a day to teach a company president with an engineering background and no public speaking skills how to deliver a rousing speech at an annual convention during a year when sales were flat. First she started by learning all she could about his background—his parents, family and passions. She discovered that he played on the water polo team at age 7 and later attended the Olympic games in Munich and Mexico City.

"He regaled me with tales he had been telling his kids and friends across the dinner table for years," she said. "They were word-perfect, polished and exciting."

Those stories were the basis for his presentation. Fripp showed him how to use the stories as an introduction, then to explain that he had been training for the CEO's job since he was 7 years old, then segue to how the Olympic games taught him how to handle defeat, to how he was going to upgrade the product line and his sales force.



"In four and a half hours, we created an original talk that he went through twice. I handed him the tape and told him to get his secretary to transcribe it, but just so he could review it. Ten days later, he gave a speech with no notes. It was fabulous, and it set the tone for the entire meeting."

She has included many other suggestions in articles about public speaking at her website.

Ron Arden, known as "the guru of speech coaches" who has trained more than 1,000 executives on how to feel comfortable on the platform, thinks all business people—not just top executives—should have a 5- to 6-minute well-prepared presentation that convinces others that the company they represent is first-class. No notes. No visuals. No Power Point.

"Well used, Power Point is a valuable tool," Arden said. "But can you explain to me why anybody becomes obsessed with taking pictures of words? Why don't they take pictures of pictures? The visual aid, unless you're deaf, is meant to be pictorial."

The best way to create pictures, he says, is to do so in the audience's mind through anecdotes and stories, regardless of how complicated the topic. Then, use an occasional visual only if it reinforces the idea. If the slide projector jams or the laptop computer crashes or the bulb on the overhead projector burns out, the speaker can continue without visuals and still be entirely effective without notes.

Top political candidates and CEOs who sometimes must read from speeches that are written for them should be coached on how to present a written speech without making it sound written.

If you can't help the boss yourself, how do you delicately recommend a speech coach?

Arden offers this suggestion: "Start by being complimentary and by saying, 'I think you have a real talent for this. It's a little rough,

but you could be an outstanding speaker with a little coaching.' "

A variety of coaches can be found through the National Speakers Association or by calling the association at 480-968-2552.

For a few executives, however, like the CEO who "is so arrogant and uncoachable that he will turn people off," there's little hope, says Joan Lloyd, an executive speech coach from Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

"If the humor is off color, the grammar is flawed or the style is caustic, save yourself the time and money," she said. "If the personality flaw is ingrained and likely could come out in public, you're better off keeping the CEO off the platform because the coach can't scrub that out completely."

For speakers who are willing to learn, however, and PR pros who can invest the time, the camera can be an excellent teacher.

"Executives like one-on-one work and do better when the coaching is private and off-site," Lloyd said.

Good coaches work with the CEO over a period of time and attend actual presentations or view tapes, and continue to make suggestions.

"CEOs are just like the rest of us—worried about how they'll look and sound," she said. "The difference is, when you're at the top of a company, you don't get as much honest feedback and career development. This is a great way to get both."

Need more help promoting your CEO as a great speaker? See *Special Report #21: 67 Publicity Tips for Professional Speakers*.

(<http://www.publicityhound.com/publicity-products/reports.html>) See also *Kick Up a Media Storm*.

(<http://www.PublicityHound.com/publicity-products/marketing-tapes/mediastorm.htm>)

Tom Antion interviews Joan Stewart about how speakers can create lots of free publicity.

Reprinted with permission. Joan Stewart publishes "The Publicity Hound's Tips of the Week," a free ezine on how to generate thousands of dollars in free publicity. Subscribe at her website at <http://www.PublicityHound.com> and receive free the handy checklist "89 Reasons to Send a News Release." She blogs on publicity topics at <http://publicityhound.net>

Join Us for PRCA After Hours...

If you've been in PRCA for any length of time, you've no doubt heard the old story of how our chapter came to be.

The tale of a group of public relations practitioners meeting in a smoke-filled bar, networking, blowing off a little steam...is it true? Maybe. Does it sound like fun? Absolutely!

One of the many "opportunities" I was approached with by our membership since I took office has been for more fun activities, that we don't do as many after-hours activities as we used to ages ago, back in the days when gasoline cost a lot less than \$2 a gallon, and gathering at the local watering hole was just the thing to do after a long, hard day at work.

So, I asked our board of directors what they thought, and we have come up with **PRCA After Hours**, what we hope to be a quarterly event to allow ALL our members the opportunity to get together and socialize, network, drink and dine together in a much



more laid-back atmosphere than our regular monthly meetings.

While we are still asking that you make your reservations so that we can allow the managers of our chosen destinations the chance to prepare themselves, we won't charge you to attend. However, your drinks and meals are on you. But, we hope this will not

discourage you from attending. In

fact, one of our goals is to host an event each quarter at a different restaurant in the city.

We chose December as our first PRCA After Hours event as a fun way to kick off the holidays, and we hope you will agree. We can't think of a better way to ring in the holiday season than with our PRCA family, so we hope to see you on **Dec. 3** at **La Jolla Restaurant at The Shoppes at EastChase** between 5 and 7 p.m.

Who said PR practitioners don't know how to have fun? Hope to see you soon!

Lori Quiller, chapter president

Mark Your Calendars...

Mark your calendars now for the 2007-08 Montgomery Chapter monthly meetings! All meetings are at the RSA Plaza Terrace beginning at 11:45 a.m. There is free parking in the parking deck. Cost to attend meetings is \$12 for members and \$20 for non-members and guests. *RSVP your attendance to Diane Christy at dchristy@ascpa.org no later than noon on the Friday prior to the Monday meeting.* Members who make reservations for chapter luncheons, but fail to cancel by noon the Friday prior to the meeting, will be responsible for payment.

Jan. 7 Feb. 4 March 3 April 7 May 5 June 9 July 7 Aug. 4 September TBA

Oct. 2-3 PRCA State Conference



PRCA Montgomery is a monthly publication for PRCA's Montgomery Chapter members. For the most up-to-date information, visit www.prcamontgomery.org. Please send all job announcements, news items, updates and comments to Neil Probst at nprobst@capnhq.gov and indicate "PRCA" in the subject line.