

PRCA MONTGOMERY

July 2008

A report from the Montgomery Chapter of the Public Relations Council of Alabama

Scott who?

These days, you just can't seem to get away from us PR folks in the news! Of course, it would be nice if the news were on the more gentle side of the column than where it has been lately, but it does make one wonder what's going on in the profession, doesn't it? I mean, we ARE supposed to be the good guys, right?



Lori Quiller

It made me cringe when I first heard the story of former White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan's scathing tell-all, *What Happened: Inside the Bush White House and Washington's Culture of Deception*. Go ahead...say it with me now...L-E-C-T-U-R-E C-I-R-C-U-I-T. Well, that and a HUGE advance, I'm sure. And, no, Mr. McClellan will not be speaking at the 2008 PRCA Annual Conference in October, even if we could afford his five-star lecture fee. Why would we want him?

Here's someone who was the model of the perfect public relations practitioner. He followed President Bush from Texas into the White House, and perhaps most importantly, remained a trusted advisor during the beginning of the most challenging times of any presidency – war. He defended the policies and leadership of the presidency from 2003-2006 from the podium that bears the seal of the White House. And, he condemned those who “blew the whistle” years after leaving their posts to write best sellers and tour the lecture circuit. Sound familiar, Scottie?

In our practice, we are often called upon to stand up for corporate ideas that we, as individuals, may not wholeheartedly believe in. But, as **Su Ofe** so eloquently

put it last month, we are the most active cheerleaders for our employers. If we see that something may be a bit askew, may not be well received by the public, or a policy that needs to be amended, the time to air our opinions isn't by way of an open mic, but with the decision-makers.

While there are those whistle-blowers who have certainly earned our respect for bringing injustices to the light of day, Scott McClellan is definitely not one of them in my book. Others have agreed, too.

If you've read the blogs, there have been condemnations of McClellan's tell-all, and simply the motivation of his action of putting pen to paper, all over the Web in the PR trade news. He's been the bad guy online from PRSA to PRNews Online and everywhere in between. The really sad part is that those struggling in this business of PR have indeed suffered a setback. Because now, if you don't have a seat at the boardroom table, you may not get one for a while longer until the memory of what some have called a traitorous act fades away.

And, the question that McClellan himself asked of those he condemned for leaving their posts and then criticizing the administration still lingers: Why didn't you speak up sooner? Better yet, if you were so offended by what was going on, why didn't you just leave? I suspect those daily briefings and being a media star had something to do with those answers.

If you're looking for a great book, give *Big Russ and Me* by Tim Russert a try. It's well worth the money...and a more entertaining read as well. It's a guaranteed good read by someone genuinely respected on both sides of the fence. Tim...you are missed...

CHAPTER MEETING

ASF Montgomery's Secret Weapon

*Economic
Development Tools
You May Not Have
Thought About*

Monday, July 7
RSA Plaza Terrace
11:45 a.m.

Meg Lewis
Public Relations Manager
Alabama Shakespeare
Festival

Members: \$12
Non-members: \$20

RSVP to Diane Christy
dchristy@ascpa.org

RSVP Deadline:
Noon THURSDAY, July 3

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!*

Member Profile...

Lori Quiller is the director of public relations for the Association of County Commissions of Alabama and the president of the Montgomery Chapter of PRCA. At ACCA, part of her job is to conceive, write, design and publish ACCA's official magazine, *County Commissioner*, which received its first award last year in the 2007 PRCA Medallions Competition. A few months ago she also took over the Association's Web sites. She coordinates campaigns for special projects to help local county commissions receive recognition for their programs and writes, designs and publishes special projects for ACCA and its affiliate groups as needed.



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

Lori: Listen. I have a great support group of very dear friends (they ALL know who they are!) that I consider at the very top of their game. Whenever I get stuck on a task, I know all I have to do is talk to them for their opinions...and I do...a lot! The next step is up to me, and listening is always key. If public relations professionals are not willing to listen, especially to others who may have different ideas, then the practitioner will never grow into the profession.

What are the top three skills needed in PR?

Lori: 1) Great writing abilities; 2) Willingness to listen so you can be heard; and 3) A willingness and ability to change and adapt to any situation.

Why did you join PRCA?

Lori: I was working as a graphics designer for a commercial printer here in Montgomery when a friend took me to a chapter meeting to hear one of our professors from UA guest lecture. I've been hooked ever since, and that was 1996!

From where did your interest in PR originate?

Lori: Who knew that one chapter meeting back in 1996 to hear Dr. Marian Huttenstine speak would lead to a totally different career? One never knows where or when that opportunity will pop up!

What experience most shaped your career?

Lori: Several years ago, while working for The Montgomery Academy, I invited the private school reporter, Regan Connolly, to the school's homecoming festivities. (MA had a rather unusual homecoming tradition at the time involving the senior class.) Regan was very thorough, talking to the students, their parents and the administration, and I was confident that she HAD the story – not an impression of it. Regan called my cell at 10:30 p.m. Her editor (who wasn't even at the event!) saw the story much differently. We each spoke to the editor, then I called the headmaster on the land line for an update. For the next several hours, I had two phones in my hands, speaking to our headmaster, a reporter and an editor until the wee hours of the morning. The situation was not "spun." We gave an accurate report of what happened, and I had the facts to back it up. What worried me was whether the battle in the bullpen was going to end with a different casualty. By the time the paper went to press, the article wasn't necessarily the one Regan originally wrote, but it was more fair than the one argued by the editor. It was the first time the

school had been featured on the front page above the fold, and even though it wasn't the most positive, glowing, feel-good article I was hoping for during a homecoming event, it was written by a journalist who had enough guts to fight for the truth in the situation. I realized right then that she didn't take sides to keep her job, and she didn't write the story that her editor wanted. I admired her for that. Sitting on the floor of my kitchen that night, as tired as I was, realizing just how badly the situation could easily be blown out of proportion, made me want to fight even harder to make sure that every story I write is written with character, honesty and from the heart.

What would you like to be doing in five years?

Lori: Maybe in five years I will have learned the secret to having it all! The family...the career...the house with the picket fence...

What was the greatest lesson you learned through PR?

Lori: If you don't listen to others, they have no reason to listen to you.

What is your greatest achievement?

Lori: I used to be the one to sit quietly in a meeting, so being chapter president is a huge step for me. Although, during my year as president-elect, it hit me at a rather odd time that I would also be chairing the state conference at the same time. I think I may have blurted something out during one of our chapter board meetings when that brick smacked me in the head. I hope it's not in the minutes! So, if I manage to survive this year in one piece, after having survived last year with two back surgeries and also keeping my job with a great bunch of folks...I think that will be a fantastic start!

Job Opportunities...

American Society for Reproductive Medicine Member Services Manager

Requisite skills, characteristics and experience include:

- Bachelor's degree in Marketing, Communications or related field;
- Five or more years professional experience;
- Excellent organizational skills: detail oriented, able to manage and prioritize effectively;
- Excellent communication skills: written, oral and interpersonal;
- Computer literacy, especially in Word and Excel;
- Familiarity with Association activities is desired.

Responsibilities include:

- Manage the group responsible for data entry and administration of service programs for members;
- Oversee all activities relative to special interest groups, professional groups and ASRM affiliates;
- Identify strategies for recruitment and retention of members;
- Produce membership reports on monthly and ad-hoc basis;
- Serve as association staff support to the membership committee;
- Provide performance feedback to direct reports about strengths and developmental needs;
- Other duties and responsibilities as assigned by manager.

This position is accountable for managing and developing team members, providing leadership for interdepartmental activities and developing tools for tracking current membership. This position reports to the Chief Operating Officer.

Please send resumés and/or questions to resume@asrm.org.

VOICES for Alabama's Children Director of Communications & Program Support

The Director of Communications and Program Support develops and implements VOICES' communications plan to support the various programs of the organization and to promote awareness of the organization, its programs, and the various issues for which it advocates to multiple audiences. The Director of Communications and Program Support reports to the Executive Director of VOICES.

Specific Responsibilities:

- Coordinate and implement all aspects of VOICES' organizational communications plan;

- Oversee and maintain content of VOICES' website;
- Coordinate communications calendar/activities with program staff;
- Coordinate e-advocacy campaigns using Get Active/Convio (training will be provided);
- Publicize VOICES' programs and events including Advocacy Training, Champion for Children, Alabama Kids Count Conference, and others;
- Develop and produce written materials including bi-monthly newsletter, bi-annual donor update and other donor communications, annual report, brochures, "From the Expert" issue briefs;
- Develop and implement annual membership drive;
- Implement media relations plan;
- Implement PR plan to raise organizational visibility;
- Conduct presentations for various constituencies;
- Assist with planning of VOICES' special events.

Competencies:

- Highly organized;
- Able to prioritize and handle multiple tasks;
- Strong oral and written communications skills;
- Ability to function with minimum supervision;
- Ability to produce high quality work needing minimal revision or correction;
- Ability to work independently and as a team member;
- Creative and self-motivated;
- Ability to work with multiple deadlines.

Minimum Qualifications:

- B.A. in Communications, Marketing, Public Relations or related field;
- 3-5 years prior work experience;
- Non-profit experience a plus;
- Proficiency with Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint;
- Knowledge of desktop publishing and/or graphic design software a plus.

Send resumés to:

Rhonda Mann, Deputy Director
VOICES for Alabama's Children
P. O. Box 4576
Montgomery, AL 36103-4576

rmann@alavoices.org

Fax: (334) 213-2413

Tips for Better Communication...

SPEAK WITH AUTHORITY AND CREDIBILITY

Don't let weak statements destroy your credibility. Here's how to present yourself with authority and gain respect:

- Change "I don't know" to "One thing I do know ...". Example: Replace "I don't know if this program will survive" with "One thing I do know is that this program has the potential to cut costs and improve morale."
- Use "I can" statements that describe what you are capable of. Example: Replace "I can't get that done by Friday" with "I can't get that done by Friday. But, I can give you a rough draft by 4:30 today, and I will turn in the final report first thing Monday morning."
- Answer "what if" questions. Some people use rhetorical questions as a shield or an excuse not to act. Offer solutions to avoid that trap. Example: Replace "What if the computers are still down tomorrow?" with "If the computers are still down, we'll process the data manually."
- Cut the qualifiers. Avoid words or phrases such as "maybe," "perhaps" and "sort of." You'll sound more confident when you say what you'll do. Example: Instead of saying, "I'll try to take care of that," say "I will take care of that."

Adapted from *It's About Time*, Linda Sapadin and Jack Maguire, Penguin Books, www.penguinputnam.com.

"It takes less time to do a thing right than to explain why you did it wrong."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882)

A change in terms...

The State PRCA Board of Directors recently voted to extend the terms of office of the local board of directors, as well as the state officers, in order to better coordinate the operating calendar with that of the Southern Public Relations Federation. The terms will now end Dec. 31.

In doing so, this will mean that the 2008 State Conference that will be held here in Montgomery in October will be the last state conference until the East Alabama picks up the event again in spring 2010. There will be an event in spring 2009 in which the state will award the Chapter of the Year honor that is usually part of the State Conference Medallion Awards. Beginning in 2010, there will be two conferences, SPRF in the spring, and PRCA in the fall. It is the hope of the PRCA state board that this change will make it easier for members to attend both conferences.

Mark Your Calendars...

Mark your calendars 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.* Those who make reservations for chapter luncheons, but fail to cancel by noon the Friday prior to the meeting, **will** be responsible for payment.

July 7 Aug. 4 September TBA Oct. 2-3 PRCA State Conference*

****Make your plans to attend the 2008 State Conference in Montgomery!***



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.