

# PRCA MONTGOMERY

September 2011

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

## Letter from the President

I am so thankful for September for many reasons each year: a little reprieve from the hot summer weather; the start of football season; and for the fun, educational opportunities I receive from the Public Relations Council of Alabama.

Each September, I look forward to the One-Day Educational Workshop hosted by our Montgomery Chapter. Thanks to our hard-working committee, it will be especially great as it will be held at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Old Cloverdale--a beautiful, centrally-located facility. The September 13th event (our normal monthly meeting day) will feature Dr. Joe Trahan and a panel of crisis communication experts. In light of the recent disasters our state experienced, it will provide us with the opportunity to better communicate in the face of a crisis. I encourage you all to attend. It will be a great day! See the inside of the newsletter for more information and for registration information.

In addition, the Southern Public Relations Federation's annual conference will be held the first week-



Lara Lewis

end in October—just around the corner. The conference is a regional one and will include the participation of practitioners from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. If you have not attended one before, I highly encourage you to do so. It is a jam-packed conference full of

great material and includes fantastic networking opportunities. In addition, it will be held at the Grand Hotel in Point Clear, Alabama. I hope to see you there!

I hope this month leaves you with as much to be excited about as me and I look forward to seeing you at these upcoming educational events available to you through your PRCA membership.

All my best,

Lara Lewis  
2011 PRCA  
Montgomery President

## CHAPTER MEETING

### Crisis Communications Workshop



**Tuesday — September 13**  
**Trinity Presbyterian Church**  
**Old Cloverdale**  
**Montgomery, Alabama**  
**8:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.**

**Dr. Joe Trahan III, APR,**  
**Media Trainer, President & CEO**  
**of Trahan & Associates**  
**Members \$75**  
**Non-members: \$100**

**RSVP to Nia Johnson**  
**niamjohnson@gmail.com**

PRCA will accept checks on the day of the workshop or bill members



# PRCA scholarship available soon!

Beginning in November, PRCA will begin awarding \$1,000 each fall and spring to the most deserving part-time or full-time student.



The application will be available online later this month and the deadline for this fall's award is Monday, Oct. 3.

### Criteria for the scholarship:

- \* You must be an active member of the PRCA Montgomery Chapter and/or your local student chapter. Meaning you must have attended two or more professional or student chapter meetings in a calendar year.
- \* You are currently enrolled in an accredited Alabama university.

\* You are working towards a degree in communications, public relations, marketing or in a related field

\* GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale

Look for the application on the PRCA Montgomery Chapter Web site or if you have any questions, please contact Melody Kitchen at (334) 273-4389 or [mrkitchen@baptistfirst.org](mailto:mrkitchen@baptistfirst.org).



## Nominate a Star of the Quarter

The Public Relations Council of Alabama is filled with many talented and dedicated practitioners and we want to recognize you for all of your hard work! Each quarter, we will present one hard-working member with a "Star of the Quarter" plaque at our general membership meetings.

The award recipient will have gone above and beyond in their dedication to the practice and to PRCA through attendance at meetings, socials, participated in PRCA-driven events and initiatives, and donates their PR skills and time to the community.

If you have a nomination for the award, please send it to Carol Gunter—[cgunter@montgomeryal.gov](mailto:cgunter@montgomeryal.gov) or Lori Moneyham—[lori.moneyham@arec.alabama.gov](mailto:lori.moneyham@arec.alabama.gov).

## You be the judge

The Montgomery Chapter of PRCA is partnering with the North Florida Chapter of PRSA to help judge their 2011 PRism Awards.

The awards, patterned after PRSA's national Silver Anvil Awards, highlight outstanding practices with a focus on sharing and learning, and building collegiality among the best public relations strategists and creative thinkers throughout the chapter.

Our judging session will be held Friday afternoon, September 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Alabama Society of CPA's building located in Halcyon Summit on Taylor Road. PRCA will provide drinks and snacks for the afternoon.

Ten volunteers are needed but more are welcome.

Please email Morgan Berney, VP of Projects, if you are interested in participating in this service project –

[mberney@montgomerychamber.com](mailto:mberney@montgomerychamber.com).

Your help is appreciated!



# get to the point point clear, al

october 2-4, 2011      marriott grand hotel

## SPRF CONFERENCE 2011

### Featured presenters during general and breakout sessions

**G**et to the Point with public relations professionals from around the region at Point Clear, Ala., Oct. 2-4, 2011. Hear from nationally acclaimed speakers, learn tangible tools to get results, and network with industry colleagues from around SPRF's four-state region and beyond.

Examine best practices and case studies and get on camera with interactive media training.

Featured presenters:

**Eric Morgenstern**, APR, Fellow PRSA, Keynote CEO/President Morningstar Communication: **"Think Excellence Not Difference"**.

It's not enough to be different if you want to survive. Different does not mean better, it simply means different. A company's success rests solely in the audiences' perception of the business. Excellence must reside in a person's knowledge, perspective, interpersonal relationships and personal qualities in order to create a distinctive position in the minds of those who matter most.

Attendees will learn how to: understand the concept of excellence; learn why excellence, not difference as a positioning strategy, will help you build your company.; know how to identify and communicate excellence to your key audiences.

**Eric Morgenstern**—"Attraction Marketing".

Industries are over-flowing with clutter. As consumers we are submerged in

print, radio, TV and online advertisements from competing businesses. It can be daunting for audiences to weed through the clutter and difficult for business owners to separate from the crowd.

Attraction marketing is a philosophy designed to separate and highlight your brand through successful communication in order to reach your target audience.

This strategy requires three core components: Be excellent at what you do; Tell your story of excellence proactively and consistently in order to reach the people who matter most; Recognize the best prospects will come to you.

In order to implement this long-term strategy, attendees will learn to: understand the concept of attraction marketing; learn how to balance your educational and promotional strategies; grasp how to integrate attraction-marketing strategies into your current communication initiatives.

**Marianna Hayes**, Founder of HALO Business Advisors: "

**How to Get a Crowd to Show Up in 2011: Live & Virtual Event Promotion That Works"**.

**Dr. Joseph Trahan**, APR, Fellow PRSA, CEO/President Trahan & Associates: **"Media Relations That Cuts Through the Noise"** and **"Advanced Interactive Media Training"**.

Now more than ever the media is watching everything you do. If they can't get the answers from you, they're going to get them somewhere else, and someone else's answers may not be correct.

But, can you be in control of what the media is reporting? Yes, you can! This course teaches you how to get a handle on the media by organizing a communications plan and preparing to speak on camera.

You will learn how the media thinks and how to develop a message to reach them. Find out what reporters want, need and expect. In addition, this course shows you how to build good working relationships with the media, a factor often overlooked but very important to maintain.

Positive public relations doesn't just happen; it's a proactive job that takes focus and foresight. Trahan believes that you must be aggressive in getting your message out to the public. First, learn how to identify and fine-tune your company's message. Then you will develop creative and innovative ways to promote that message throughout your community.

**Rusty Smith**, Public Relations Director of United Way West Alabama: **"Crisis Communication: Tuscaloosa Tornado of 2011"**.

**Robin Street**, APR, University of Mississippi Professor: **"Internal Public Relations Case Study: Diversity Rocks"**.

For more information about the conference, please contact **Conference Chair Kim Collins**, APR at [kim@collinspr.com](mailto:kim@collinspr.com). Register at <http://sprf.org/annual-conference>

## Alternatives to sending a press release

By Claire Celsi—A version of this story first appeared on the blog *Public Relations Princess*.

**I**t's my firm belief that list-building services—while making reporter list-building extremely easy—have also created a generation of lazy PR professionals.

Sure, it's nice to pull a minty fresh list out of that database. That's the easy part. Now it's your skill and creativity that will get your news in front of those reporters. Yes, I said creativity.

Arguably, the worst part of being a PR Professional is facing that list, breaking it down, and digging in to pitch those reporters. But the most important thing is not writing the press release and blasting it out. First, you have to back up and say: "What is my message, and who would appreciate hearing it?"

If you have to, go ahead and write the press release. It might help you organize your thoughts and develop your key message. But don't send it!

Challenge yourself never to send another standard press release again. (Unless, of course, someone specifically asks for one. Or your client forces you to write one.)

Instead, here are alternatives that you should be using instead of a press release.

### 1. Pitch email.

More than 90 percent of reporters claim they want to receive pitches via email. Given that you're already emailing, just put your pitch in the form of a story, with bullet points emphasizing the most important details you want the reporter to know. Here is the key to a successful pitch email:

Google the reporter's name. After en-

suring that she still writes for the news outlet, click on one of her recent articles. Make sure it is within the same genre as your pitch. In other words, if you are pitching a health-care story, make sure she covers health care.

Write a one-paragraph personalized intro for every email you send. "I read your series on health-care abuses in the nursing home industry..." Show some interest in the reporter's work.

The remaining portion of the email can be the same for every reporter. This is your brief opportunity to capture the reporter's interest with your pitch. Make it short, and make it interesting.

Write a subject line that gets attention and describes your pitch. "For your information" is not a good subject line.

### 2. Make a website posting (preferably a blog post).

If your client has a newsroom or a blog, post your pitch material in the form of a Web article or blog post. Use storytelling language, not a standard press release format. Tag the post with keywords, and link to the company's website or to other information, if possible. You can start a new blog on Posterous in less than 15 minutes.

### 3. Send a Tweet.

Turn your key idea into a tweet. With a little practice, you'll be a pro at getting your message across in one or two tweets. Ideally, it would be great to send these messages to a reporter as a direct message, but if all else fails, go ahead and say: @JeffZeleny, did you know that the most outstanding pork tenderloin sandwich in Des Moines is at Smitty's?"

(Of course, you'll want to come up with your own tweet material.) If the reporter does not respond, follow up with an email pitch.

### 4. Send a Facebook message.

I'm friendly with a lot of local reporters on Facebook, but not so many national reporters. Even if you're not friends with a reporter on Facebook, you can still send them a message. Attach a link or photo if you have one.

### 5. Pick up the phone.

Sometimes a quick conversation to gauge a reporter's interest can save you a lot of time, especially when it seems as though a reporter is no longer covering that beat. If you keep your call brief and courteous, the reporter will be happy to point you in the right direction. If they don't answer or are on deadline, follow up with a pitch email.

### 6. Offer to meet a reporter for coffee if you're both in the same city.

Sometimes reporters are looking for any excuse they can to get out of the newsroom for a while.

PR pros have this incredible opportunity to be content creators instead of "content suggesters." Unless your client is absolutely hounding you to get in *The Wall Street Journal*, spend your time and energy telling your own story on your own website. Then use social media to build an audience (including media).