



Letter from the President

I am having one of those moments when life offers a view from a different perspective. As publisher of the *Alabama CPA* magazine, I edit the volunteer chair's message each month. Now I'm the one **writing** the message and it's made me think about the various roles we inhabit as public relations professionals.



Diane Christy

First of all, we're generally working in an office where we are THE (WO)MAN in public relations. If we're lucky, we have one other staff to help. Sometimes we have to take on marketing functions, coordinate member relations or volunteers. Flexibility, focus and professionalism are our mantras.

Second, we are volunteers ourselves, using our PR skills and other talents for a wide range of organizations. Children's charities, check. Friends of the Alabama Governor's Mansion, check. Habitat for Humanity, check and double-check. These responsibilities add length to our days and breadth to our experience.

Third, we use that same sharing impulse to inspire charitable efforts within the PRCA Montgomery Chapter. Just look back at all the programs we supported in 2011:

KARMA, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation's annual *Great Strides* walk and the Pack-a-Purse project for Aid to Inmate Mothers, among others. The open hearts and hands of members are a reminder of the blessings we enjoy, both personally and professionally.

As we begin a new year with PRCA, I challenge you to be more global in your vision for our chapter and for the leadership it can provide in our community.

Please pass along to me, or any board member, your ideas for 2012. They may include suggestions on speakers and programs, workshop recommendations, community events we can support, or non-profits which can use our PR expertise.

While the networking and professional development PRCA provides are invaluable, their true pay-off is in moving outside our own circle in service to others.

All the best for 2012,

Diane

CHAPTER MEETING

**Rep. Mike Hubbard,
AL House Speaker**



**Tuesday,
January 10
11:45 am - 1:00 pm**

**The Montgomery
Country Club**

**RSVP by January 6
to Kristi Gates
kristi.gates@mh.alabama.gov**

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!**

Lori Quiller Earns Accreditation in Public Relations

Lori M. Quiller with the Medical Association of the State of Alabama has successfully completed the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations, entitling her to use the APR professional designation.

The Accreditation program aims to improve the practice of public relations by assessing competence in 60 areas of knowledge, skills and abilities associated with the profession. The Examination is designed for public relations professionals with five to seven years of

job experience and/or a bachelor's degree in a communication field.

Candidates who successfully complete the rigorous process, including presenting his/her portfolio to a Readiness Review panel of three peers and sitting for a computer-based Examination, are granted the APR.

Quiller, a resident of Prattville, has more than 15 years of experience in public relations. She is a member and past president of the Montgomery Chapter of the Public Relations Council of Alabama and member of the Southern Pub-



Lori M. Quiller

lic Relations Federation. She is an SPRF Senior Practitioner and a two-time, back-to-back recipient of the APEX Award for Publication Excellence.

PR Intern Needed for Montgomery Consulting Firm

Part-time Public Relations Intern for Matter Creative Studio (un-paid)

Matter Creative Studio is a bold design consulting firm specializing in brand development, marketing strategies and public relations. We build brand identities, communications campaigns, printed matter, events, and websites for influential (and soon to be) brands, people, places, and products including the city of Montgomery, Hampstead, local restaurants and no-profit organizations. In addition, we set ourselves apart from other design firms by having the experience and knowledge of creating the exciting, innovative places and spaces that make cities engaging. We have designed and built a number of Montgomery's most vibrant settings, and understand the target market of those people who appreciate these places.

Our firm's unique perspective comes from the creative individuals who make up Matter. Each of us are passionate about creating and maintaining a better, more innovative environment to live. We bring backgrounds and

perspectives from all over—ranging from London to New York—and know how to merge new ideas with the regional and local market to achieve exciting yet effective change within a city like Montgomery.

We are in need of a motivated student or recent graduate interested in learning real world, hands-on skills in a fast-paced work environment.

Desired hours: 10-15 hours per/week (flexible according to intern's schedule)

Internship work would include, but not limited to: Editorial Research, Media Database Development, Writing, Social Media, Event Planning, Event Execution, Tracking and Reporting.

Office location: The A&P Development in Old Cloverdale

Provided: Mac computer, dedicated desk space and company email

To apply, contact:
Tiffany Bell, Dir. of Communications
tiffany@mattercreativestudio.com

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, and donates their PR skills and time to the community.

If you have a nomination for the award, please send it to Lara Lewis - llewis@mmfa.org or Lori Moneyham - lori.moneyham@arec.alabama.gov.

Update on PRCA-Montgomery's "Pack-a-Purse" for AIM

PRCA Montgomery's partnership with AIM (Aid to Inmate Mothers) has kicked off with huge success!

Project "Pack-a-Purse" went off without a hitch and 75 purses were collected for AIM in November and December. This effort of our chapter reflects the willingness of the group to get involved in our community.

The partnership with AIM will continue throughout 2012 so stay tuned for details on our chapter's next project coming soon.

Thank you to Morgan Berney and all who helped make our first AIM project a success!



Five Ways to Navigate Today's Influencer-Relations Avalanche

By Dan Green

Traditional media outlets have been part of an incredible shrinking act the last several years as Generation X has led the way in opting to use only free Web-based sources. Despite that, the sheer number of influential writers whom marketers and PR pros are targeting has grown tremendously.

Today, getting your story in front of an influential writer can mean getting it to a traditional journalist at an established publication, an independent blogger, or a peer-to-peer reviewer.

And getting in touch with those key influencers is no easy task. Any writer who is important to you is also important to hundreds of other marketers, and she is inundated with an avalanche of emails, pitches, press releases, and tweets every day.

Sure, as that avalanche roars down the PR mountain, the writer could randomly open your email and pursue your story. But like anything else in the business-to-business realm, leaving things to chance is not the best strategy for a company looking to amplify its presence among prospects.

Though no method is guaranteed to get your story in front of an influential writer, you can successfully navigate those treacherous PR slopes and reach the influencers who matter most. Here are five proven ways to do so.

1. Familiarity Breeds Success

The simplest way to break through the clutter is to take an interest in the writers who are most important to your company. You can do that by following their blogs in your RSS feed, following them on Twitter, becoming a Facebook fan, and—most important—actually reading what they write.

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Be an active member of your PRCA - Montgomery Chapter

Our chapter thrives on the active participation of its members. If you would like to help with a community project or support one of the key functions of the chapter, please contact Diane Christy at dchristy@ascpa.org.

Medallion Deadline Jan. 27, 2012

The Public Relations Council of Alabama has made it easier to enter your public relations programs and projects in its annual Medallion Awards program with this online awards entry system.

Entry Eligibility:

Entries must have been produced between January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011.

Deadline for entering:

Postmarked by Friday, January 27, 2011.

FEES

\$50 per entry

\$45 per entry if submitting three or more entries

Enter online at www.prcamedallions.com. For more information about the Medallion competition, contact 2012 Medallion Chair Nia Johnson at niamjohnson@gmail.com. For more information on the 2012 state conference, visit www.prcaonline.com.

Five Ways to Navigate ...

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Taking a more personable approach is also a plus. That may mean contacting influencers via telephone instead of email or arranging a meeting in person if the writer is willing. In other words, engage with them; become a real person to them instead of just a name on a random email.

Find out what the writers' hobbies or interests are outside of their beat, and match them to yours. Stories have been placed with top-tier journalists simply because the writer and the person pitching the story shared similar interests. The story still had to be relevant to the writer's audience, of course, but a personal connection can break through the clutter.

Knowing what the writers cover and which audiences they target will prevent you from pitching stories that don't interest them. Mention something the writer has written recently and how it relates to the story you're pitching, and explain how her audience will benefit from the piece.

More important, know the writer's schedule and determine the best time and way to contact her. Nothing puts you further away from a writer's ear than calling her when she's on deadline.

2. Conversation Is King

Up until a few years ago, writers would make their pronouncements from Mt. Olympus, and then disseminate them to the masses. Today, feedback and comments on articles are precious.

Writers, especially bloggers, appreciate when interview subjects or company spokespeople comment on their stories. It shows you are listening to and

engaging in what they have to say. If you regularly follow writers and comment on their stories and posts, you'll establish a rapport that will serve you well.

If you read an article that interests you, hit the "Like" button, trackback via your company blog, or share it on a social networking platform. Tweet a link to the article, or Tweet something the writer posts. Don't just do that with stories you're involved in; do it with those you have a less direct connection to.

3. The Always-on Deadline

A lot of today's writers don't plan ahead. They're constantly working on tight deadlines, especially in the current 24/7 news cycle, so their primary interest is the story that's due next. That means you may get a request for an interview or more information that needs to be fulfilled *now*.

Acting quickly means you'll have a better chance of making it into that story since it's often "first come, first served" for last-minute sources. Don't be surprised if that last-minute request comes from something you pitched months ago. Instead, be glad that the writer thought enough of it to save it all this time.

On the other hand, if you can't get the person, statistic, photo, or any other material that the writer needs, be honest about it. Let the writer know as soon as possible so her search for sources can continue.

Watch for the second part of this article in February's newsletter!!



SAVE THE DATE!!

Mark your Calendar for PRCA State Conference in Huntsville, Alabama!

PR Recharge - April 15 through 17, 2012

Recharge your professional passion with this gathering of communication professionals throughout the region

interested in discussing their challenges and exploring new ideas for meeting them head-on.

We're holding the conference at the Embassy Suites in Huntsville, AL.

PR: Recharge is where you want to be—let it take you to new levels of innovation and help you to rediscover your passion for PR.

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 Cindy Scott at cindy.scott@jacksonthornton.com and indicate "PRCA" in the subject line.