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THE VOICE OF CPRS OTTAWA/GATINEAU



The Canadian
Public Relations
Society, Inc.

President's Message

By Annie Cuerrier
President, CPRS Ottawa/Gatineau

Dear fellow CPRS members,

We had great professional development sessions this past fall. It started out with Bernard Gauthier of Delta Media giving a presentation on how to connect with your audience. And in November, we had the opportunity to listen to a panel of bloggers discuss how social media and online networking are changing the communications landscape.

One thing I've noticed during the past few months is how involved our members wish to be. On several occasions, members who wish to give some of their time to help us out have approached CPRS board members. And we've taken them up on it.

When you visit our website at www.cprsottawa.com, you'll see a blog posting from Christina Stefanski, an Algonquin College public relations student. Christina contacted us because she wanted to get involved with our society. We were quite impressed by her enthusiasm and appreciated that she devoted her time and energy to us.

Upcoming volunteer opportunities

On February 29 of next year we will bring to our members a mini-conference that will be attended by our national board members. Danielle Côté, our President-Elect, has been leading a team of volunteers to put together an interesting program for you. In the coming months, she will undoubtedly appreciate any offers of help. Don't hesitate to contact her.

Another important initiative that our society will bring to you in the coming year is an awards dinner. Laurie Murphy, our board member responsible for the awards

program, has been working on this project for over a year. Earlier this fall, she held her first meeting with a group of volunteers to review survey results and talk broadly about the event. She appreciates all of the help she's received so far and she also encourages you to contact her.

These are just two examples of projects we're working on. We encourage you to contact Danielle Côté at 613-565-5600 should you wish to dedicate some of your time to us. We appreciate and value your time, advice and work.

Upcoming Winter PD Sessions

February

CPRS Ottawa/Gatineau, in collaboration with CPRS National, is hosting a one-day conference in Ottawa. Mark your calendars for what will be a full day of educational and thought-provoking speakers. Watch the CPRS Ottawa/Gatineau website for more details.

April

The MRP system is the first cost-effective, easy-to-use tool for the qualitative evaluation of media relations campaigns. The system measures editorial coverage in print, broadcast and online media stemming from proactive media relations campaigns, crisis communications activities and unplanned media attention. The MRP system includes a media report template, rating system and tool for obtaining up-to-date and accurate reach numbers. The rating system can be easily customized by company or by project and provides clear metrics to evaluate media coverage, track total reach and cost per contact.

Please check the CPRS Ottawa/Gatineau website for future events at www.cprsottawa.com.



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associations

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on PR topics

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in local and
national outlets

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In-house training
for our employees

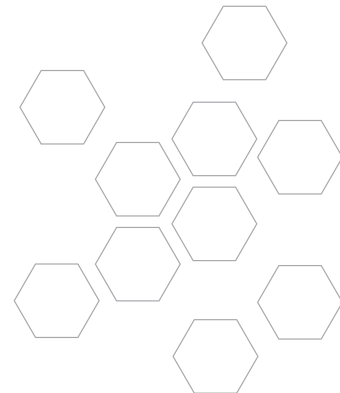
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Social Media and Public Relations

By Joseph Thornley, President and CEO, Thornley Fallis and 76design

The explosive growth in the past two years of blogs, podcasts, social networks and other new types of social media is great news for public relations practitioners.

Social media are online communications in which individuals switch roles fluidly between “audience” and “author,” posting, commenting on, sharing or mashing up content to form communities around shared interests. They use “social software” such as RSS feeds, blogs, podcasts, multimedia-sharing sites like Flickr and YouTube, social tagging/bookmarking sites like del.icio.us, micromedia like Twitter and social networks such as Facebook and “universal search,” which blends Web searches with listings from news, video, images and book-search engines.

Social media enable people to find others with whom they share something in common and to form online communities of interest that transcend geographic limitations. Thanks to social media, we can find friends and share information and opinions with them even if they are thousands of miles, or several time zones or continents away from us.

Social media present PR practitioners with new opportunities

Social media also present new ways to expand the scope of our practice.

The driving force of social media is the human desire to connect with others. The technology is just the enabler—social media are not the preserve of the techies. In fact, PR practitioners should take naturally to social media. Defining and understanding the interests and predispositions of “target audiences” has long been a mainstay of public relations. Our focus on conversation and relationships attunes PR practitioners to social media and their potential for community-building and growing long-term relationships between organizations and communities of interest.

We need to master a shift in perspective from “audience” to “community of interest” and from mediated communication to conversational communication.

The new realm of public relations is in defining and understanding communities of interest. What are they? What brings them together? How can you contribute? What do you have that they might value, want or appreciate? What is their culture?

Participating in this new realm requires the skills we’ve always had: listening, framing content in a way that is meaningful and responds to the interests of the person

at the other end of the line; communicating clearly and respecting others’ time and attention.

If you haven’t started, you’re definitely not too late to the party. An Ipsos Reid study released at the end of October at the Canadian Marketing Association’s Digital Marketing Conference suggested that

fewer than one in five Canadian marketers uses social marketing (defined as optimizing websites to share thoughts and ideas digitally) regularly. Only one in ten has used blogs or social network marketing often.

That says to me that we are still in the early days of exploring and using these techniques for marketing and corporate purposes. So, Canadian public relations practitioners who are beginning to explore this area can still catch the wave of adoption. There is still time to be part of this.

Don’t wait. Get started.

How can PR practitioners enter into social media in a way that will ensure we are welcomed?

Try the MAIL multi-step approach: Monitor, Analyze, Interact, Lead.

Start by monitoring. Learning about social media is not a spectator sport. You must experience the culture to understand the culture. Subscribe to feeds using an aggregator like Google Reader or FeedDemon. Listen to the conversation. Pay attention to the interests and perspectives of the authors. Find out who is writing and forming groups related to your interests.



As you listen, begin to analyze what is going on. Who is active in your area of interest? What perspectives do they bring to the discussion? What is the culture of the community that has grown up around this interest?

Once you've developed a feel for the perspective and style of the people who post in your area of interest, begin to interact by commenting on the posts. When you do this, remember that most bloggers value transparency and authenticity. State who you are and any interests you have in the subject area, such as clients or related business. Then be sure to offer something new and thoughtful. Don't leave "me too" comments. They don't add to the conversation and just increase the level of background noise.

Once you've monitored, analyzed and interacted, then you are ready to lead with your own voice. Start your own blog, podcast, Wiki, or social networking group. We have an array of new social-media tools at our fingertips: blogs, podcasts and video blogs, micromedia (Twitter, Pownce, Jaiku), multimedia-sharing sites (Flickr, YouTube), social networks (Facebook, MySpace, MyRagan), wikis (PBWiki), social bookmarking (del.icio.us), livestreams, livecasts (ustream.tv), news aggregators (Digg, Reddit), social-media news releases and newsrooms. Explore them. Experiment. Learn by doing.

Respect the culture

Social media offer tremendous opportunities. To get the most out of them, experienced bloggers would tell you there are some basic guidelines that you should observe.

Give more than you expect to receive. At their core, social media are a manifestation of the culture of generosity. They operate on the principle of the "gift economy."

It's a relationship, not a campaign.

Give up any idea of control.

Information increases in value by being shared, so share what you know.

Any advantage you have is ephemeral. You can't gain advantage through proprietary knowledge. What you know now, others will know in five minutes. So, if you want to gain respect, don't try to "brand" social media. Instead, think hard, participate in discussions, add to new ideas. Any advantage you may have comes only from staying on the crest of the wave.

Don't just keep it virtual. Take part in real-world gatherings that draw social-media types together. A good place to start would be with Third Tuesday, a community-driven series of social media "meet-ups" in Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal that feature some of the leading practitioners and thinkers talking about new developments and best practices in social media.

If PR pros embrace social media, the rewards can be great.

By joining and contributing to communities of interest, without intermediaries and in our own voices, we will expand the scope of our practice, escaping the shackles of media relations. Let me say that again: in our own voices. No ghost writing wanted.

And we will gain attention from key decision makers looking for strategic insight about what these new media mean for their organizations. The need for authenticity presents the opportunity to build a practice by providing solid strategic advice to forward-looking clients who see the potential but seek expert guidance. No arm- or legwork here.

Of course, we must do it right. Social media require skills that public relations practitioners already have: listening, analyzing, writing and speaking clearly and, above all, being sensitive to the interests and needs of the community.

The potential is ours to seize but it requires that we open ourselves to new possibilities and explore them with energy and patience.

And above all, if public relations professionals are to fully realize the potential that social media has for our practice, we must be open about sharing our experience and knowledge with one another. The advantage of proprietary information is ephemeral in a world of open sourcing and peer creation. A successful practitioner realizes that we all rise on a common tide of understanding and expertise. The true winners will be those who are seen to give more than they receive, who truly understand the "gift economy" and the culture of generosity.

Success in social media starts right here.

Ottawa Chapter Awards Update

By Laurie Murphy, Member-at-Large, Awards Program

Thirty percent of our membership completed the awards survey—thank you! This feedback is being used to determine our chapter's inaugural awards process, starting with the selection of an August 2008 application deadline and culminating in an awards dinner, with a guest speaker, in November 2008.

A whopping 90 percent of respondents see value in a professional awards program in terms of recognition (both peer and employer/client) and in the promotion of high standards. Our goal is to create an application process that is clear, straightforward and easy, with awards that are prestigious and worthy of competition.

The Awards Committee meetings will be on the first Thursday of each month, at 8 a.m., at GCTC (1233 Wellington Street West at Holland Avenue). Heading up the subcommittees are Calline Au (Adjudication), Lee Ellen Carrol (Event Management and Production) and Chamika Ailapperuma (Marketing and Communications). Please contact me at publicity@gctc.ca or 613-236-5192, ext. 229 if you're interested in heading up the Event Sales, Sponsorship or Finance committees or in helping get the program up and running!

Communicating Change: Key Lessons Learned

By David C. Kardish, APR, President,
The Centre for Excellence in Communications

In 1789, Benjamin Franklin wrote that “in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except **death and taxes.**” In 1936 Margaret Mitchell expanded on Franklin's view in *Gone With the Wind*, noting that: “**Death, taxes and childbirth!** There's never any convenient time for any of them.” I expect both would have added “**change**” to their now-famous observations if they lived and worked today!

Communications is the single most important component in any change-management process outside of the “change vision” itself. At the heart of every successful change process, then, is a well-defined and highly proactive change communications strategy and implementation plan that announces, advocates, explains and sustains support for the intended change. And experience has repeatedly demonstrated that organizations willing to provide the space, resources and opportunities necessary for the development and implementation of well-crafted change communications programs are successful.

Here are some basic elements necessary for communicating change.

1. Change communications is critical to the success of all change processes.

Change communications is the only vehicle that can outline the change process, win individual commitment to the planned change and sustain the organizational focus on the imperative to change.

2. Existing and/or traditional communications are not sufficient.

During periods of major change, existing and/or traditional communications approaches and channels are never enough to successfully communicate what is going on and what changes are involved. The demand for information is too great—too many people want too much information and they want it immediately.

3. Change communications secures engagement.

Detailed change communications programs provide people with the information to better situate themselves within the change process and understand how the intended change will benefit them and their future within the organization.

4. Change communicators must communicate relentlessly.

Change communications can ensure continuous opportunities for two-way communications and for communicators to repeat messages and information in many different ways using stories, graphics, humour, demonstrations, simulations, meetings and much more.

5. Communicators need to become change communications strategists.

Communicators must define strategic approaches to, and create new and innovative opportunities for, communicating about change, including multiple, face-to-face opportunities. And, in this context, they must determine how best to showcase and involve organizational leaders, managers and supervisors in comprehensive change discussions.

Successful organizations increase communications resources significantly during times of change and provide the space required for new communications approaches to be implemented.

Welcoming New Practitioners to the Profession

By Meaghan Quinn, with contributions from Evan Koronewski

When Erin Browning began studying public relations 15 months ago, she knew almost immediately that she had made the right decision.

“Entering the program, I was so excited about the opportunities and hands-on learning experiences I felt it would offer me,” she says.

Since its inception in 1984, the two-year, work-intensive public relations program at Algonquin College has prepared its students for the world of work with practical experience in research, writing, concept creation, speaking and organization. In addition to classroom and lab instruction, students go on a seven-week work placement during their second year of study to help them gain experience and confidence in the workplace.

Another way students apply their public relations skills is by planning and organizing the annual Welcome to the Program Party, which is sponsored by CPRS Ottawa/Gatineau. This year’s theme for the party was “Welcome to your future—Dress for success.”

Evan Koronewski, a second-year student and member of the party organizing team, says they chose the theme because “we feel it’s important in PR to project a professional image. We wanted to give our first-year colleagues insight into their future and help them realize that their careers start right now.”

The event allows students to network with one another, the faculty, past graduates and professionals in the PR field. It also helps them gain familiarity with CPRS. This year, more than 70 people, including Frances McRae, director of the CPRS Ottawa/Gatineau student program, gathered at the Honest Lawyer.

“The Welcome to the Program Party could not have been such a success without the support of our professional association,” says Koronewski. “The students were impressed by the society’s partici-

ipation. In fact, more than 30 have applied for CPRS student membership.”

Along with the Welcome to the Program Party, students apply their skills through an annual teddy-bear raffle for the Christmas Exchange of Ottawa and an annual spring fundraiser for a charity in the community. Since these fundraisers began in 1985 and 1989 respectively, the students have helped raised around \$142,000 for local organizations on behalf of the program.

As she anticipates graduation day this coming spring, Browning says she has no doubt that she chose the right career—and the right program to get her there.

Welcome New Members!

The CPRS Ottawa/Gatineau board of directors would like to extend a warm welcome to the newest members of our chapter. We invite all of you to join us at our professional development events throughout the year. See you there!

Tim Fisher, Environment Canada

Chris Forrest, Canadian 4-H Council

Linda L. Kristal, Public Policy Forum

Brooke Humphrey, Consultant

Bob LeDrew, Canadian Council on Learning

Marie Mould, CNW Group

Rosemary Pitfield, Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport

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National Update

Strategic partnership with Canadian Institute renewed

CPRS, with the approval of the National Board, renewed the strategic partnership with the Canadian Institute. CPRS members will continue to receive a 15 percent registration discount on Canadian Institute conferences, and the Society will receive a portion of the gross revenues as part of our partnership agreement. CPRS members must quote the priority code listed on the website or on the printed brochure for each event in order to receive the discount.

2008 Canadian Public Relations Conference website now live!

Plan now to attend the 2008 national conference, June 8 to 10, 2008 in Halifax, NS. Register online at www.cprs.ca/halifax2008.



New APR word mark

A new APR word mark designating the professional status of accredited public relations practitioners was unveiled at the CPRS National Conference in June. The word mark is available in red or black, with or without the tagline, for accredited members to use on business cards, letterhead and websites. To obtain a high-resolution image for your use, contact the CPRS national office at 416-239-7034.



The new word mark is also available on a silver-finish lapel pin. Whether you are a new APR proud of your recent success in the accreditation program, or an experienced accredited public relations practitioner who wants to promote the profession and the APR professional standard of excellence, you can order your new APR pin online by going to www.cprs.ca/accreditation/e_aprpin_order.asp.

Accreditation application deadline

The 2008 deadline for applications from new accreditation candidates is December 3, 2007. Please submit your application form, fees, résumé and your work sample overview to the CPRS national office before this date.

For more information on applying to the program, contact your local accreditation chair. (A list of chairs is available at www.cprs.ca/accreditation/PDFs/E-F_Chairs.pdf.) You should also review the accreditation handbook (www.cprs.ca/Accreditation/AccredHandbook.asp) as well as the information for accreditation candidates available at www.cprs.ca/accreditation/e_candidates.asp.

Accreditation volunteers need

If you are an APR who would like to participate in this valuable program as a volunteer, please consider the following options.

There is one position available on the Accreditation Council. The Council is asking for interested APRs to submit a letter of interest to Karen Dalton at the CPRS national office.

There are unlimited positions available for new accreditation graders. In order to become a grader you must work at least 50 percent of your time in public relations, you must have had your APR for at least five years and you must take part in a grader orientation session held by the Chief Examiner. For more information on becoming a grader, please contact the CPRS national office. The next grader orientation session will be held in February or March 2008.

Ottawa/Gatineau APR Update

Four candidates took the oral and written APR examinations on October 19. Two candidates are Ottawa/Gatineau members, one is from the Victoria chapter and living in the region temporarily and the other is from Montreal and wanted to write in English with our group. Thanks very much to Claudine Wilson and Peter Larock of the Algonquin Public Relations program who provided space and technical support for the examinations.

CPRS Ottawa/Gatineau 2007–2008 Board of Directors

Feel free to contact any of our board members with your ideas, thoughts or offers to help out!

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