

PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

All-Stars Issue

★ Featuring the PR People & 15 to Watch Award Winners

More so than other industries, PR is intensely social, fueled by human interaction. No matter how brilliantly conceived, a program can never come to fruition without talented and focused PR pros guiding and galvanizing it. People—not concepts—continue to be the engine driving this business. At *PR News*, we know this instinctively, and we are delighted to pay homage to the winners of the PR People Awards and the Hall of Fame inductees in this issue, which is being unveiled at our Nov. 6 awards luncheon at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Also included in this issue is our nod to young Turks—the “15 to Watch” PR up-and-comers.

Agency Executive of the Year

JOHN HELLERMAN, CO-FOUNDER,
HELLERMAN BARETZ COMMUNICATIONS

As co-founder of Hellerman Baretz Communications, John Hellerman has carved a niche for himself as a mastermind behind strategic communications campaigns for some of the world's top law firms. Providing advice to attorneys on how to manage their high-stakes litigation PR needs, Hellerman's contributions in the area of legal marketing have sealed his reputation as a superstar in this arena.

The Lateral Angle

Taking into account the high frequency of attorneys jumping ship to new firms each year, and that the average cost to integrate a new lateral partner into a firm is at least \$600,000, Hellerman figured out that more than \$240 million was being squandered because law firms weren't able to satisfy their lateral partners. Hellerman, who helped found Levick Strategic Communications, devised a strategic and cost-effective system that would help firms institutionalize talent by promoting the new, high-profile laterals hires with tactics such as speaking engagements at industry conferences, bylined article opportunities in trade publications and submissions to “best of” lists.

Hellerman's innovative PR practice led to him being asked to present at the Legal Marketing Association's Annual Conference and to author for leading legal journals several articles on the topic of promoting high-profile hires.

A Splash in the Blogosphere

While watching the NBC sitcom *The Office*, Hellerman was hit with a thunderbolt of inspiration: Why not create a blog for client law firm Ford & Harrison LLP that directly addresses workplace issues that pop up on the TV show? Thus was launched the *That's What She Said* blog in February 2007. Since its inception, the blog has become a virtual sensation, scoring more than 20,000 hits a week. It also has generated notable media coverage in leading



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PR Professional of the Year: Corporate

DEIRDRE LATOUR, DIRECTOR OF
PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING SERVICES,
GENERAL ELECTRIC



and athletes, as well those of her fellow employees.

GE's Dream Team

The Beijing Olympic Games presented an unprecedented level of complexity. As director/public relations and marketing services for GE, Latour coached her team in keeping efforts on a clear and logical path while remaining sensitive and accommodating to cultural differences. “Through all this complexity, Deirdre keeps the effort on target and provides us with results that are beneficial for all the constituencies,” says Peter Foss, president/Olympic sponsorship and corporate sales for GE. “She is a good person who really cares.”

Gold Medal Effort

Latour was instrumental in managing GE's event at the company's on-site product display building—the Imagination Center—on the Olympic Green, coordinating tours and visits for media, employees and VIPs. Trained in public relations, hospitality and security initiatives, Latour's vast internal and external responsibilities included overseeing

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Margery Kraus, President and CEO
APCO Worldwide
tel: +202 778 1010
fax: +202 466 6002
mkraus@apcoworldwide.com

Neal Cohen, CEO, Americas
APCO Worldwide
tel: +202 778 1000
fax: +202 466 6002
ncohen@apcoworldwide.com

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Editor, Courtney M. Barnes
212.621.4986, cbarnes@accessintel.com
Media Group Editor, Iris Dorian,
212.621.4670, idorian@accessintel.com
Managing Editor, Greer Jonas 212.621.4876,
gjonas@accessintel.com
Editorial Director, Steve Goldstein 212.621.4890,
sgoldstein@accessintel.com
Editorial Contributor, Katie Phillips
Director of Marketing Communications,
Amy Jefferies 301.354.1699, ajjefferies@accessintel.com
Director of Circulation Marketing, Carol Bray
301.354.1763, cbray@accessintel.com
Graphic Designer, Christina Barnard
VP/Group Publisher, Diane Schwartz
212.621.4964, dschwartz@accessintel.com
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e-mail: clientservices@accessintel.com

New York Editorial Office:
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PR People Winners & Honorable Mentions

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WINNER: Michael Sacks, MWW Group

Honorable Mentions:
Allison Greco, Coyne Public Relations
Jennifer Seelin, Makovsky + Company
Brian Wachur, Widmeyer

Agency Executive of the Year: p. 1
WINNER: John Helleman, Helleman Baretz Communications

Honorable Mentions:
Ed James, Cornerstone
Maggie O'Neill, Peppercom
Christine Perkett, PerkettPR
Liya Sharif, JHG

Brand Marketer of the Year: p. 4
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Honorable Mentions:
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Gail Heimann, Weber Shandwick

Corporate Social Responsibility Leader: p. 6
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Honorable Mention:
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Elizabeth Dougall, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Liam Leduc Clarke, APCO Worldwide

David Ritchey, School of Communication, University of Akron

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WINNER: Nancy Christal, CVS Caremark

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Richard Ramlall, RCN Corp.

Media Relations Professional of the Year: p. 10
WINNER: Billee Howard, Weber Shandwick

Honorable Mentions:
Joann Donnellan, JD MEDIA
Sean Dougherty, MWW Group Inc.

PR Professional of the Year (Academic Institution): p. 16
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Denise Keyes, Georgetown University

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Barbara Crystal, CDW Corp.
Jon Harris, Sara Lee Corp.
Laura Kane, Aflac
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Jonathan Collegio, National Association of Broadcasters

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Kelly Hershkowitz, Biosector 2 New York
Emily Kooistra, Clear!Blue Communications
Kristie Kuhl, Makovsky + Company
Tina Martineau, E*TRADE FINANCIAL

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Julie Ice, Humana Military Healthcare Services
Richard Ramlall, RCN Corp.

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Ken Capps, DFW International Airport

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Jim Billmoria, Director of Communications House Committee on Ways & Means

Kristin Binns, Staff Vice President of Corporate Communications, WellPoint, Inc.

Bonin Bough, Global Director of Social Media, PepsiCo

Tracy Calabrese, Sr. Account Executive, MWW Group, Inc

Sandra Fine, Senior Account Executive, rbb Public Relations

Rachel Foltz, Director, External Relations, Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide

Christopher Fuller, PR Manager, Pizza Hut

Jessica Lange, Account Executive - Microsoft Game Studios, Edelman, Worldwide Public Relations, LA

Nicole Messier, Account Director, SHIFT Communications

Erin Naman, PR Project Manager, TNT & TBS

Margie Newman, Principal, Hall Strategies

Sunok Pak, Supervisor, Hill & Knowlton New York

Tim Paynter, Communications and Marketing Project Manager, Northrop Grumman Corporation

Melissa Perlman, Manager, Media Relations, Office Depot

James Robinson, Vice President, APCO Worldwide

PR Students of the Year

Matthew Kelly, Eastern Illinois University (graduated May 2008)

Natalie Virgilio, La Salle University (graduated May 2008)

Jessica Renee Borchert, New Mexico State University (Senior)

Donald Davis II, University of Akron (Senior)

PR People Award Winners



Brand Marketer of the Year

SAURABH WAHI, GROUP VICE PRESIDENT, MWW GROUP

As a driving force behind MWW's relationship with flagship consumer client Nikon, WahI has successfully altered public perception of the brand once seen as "too expensive" through multifaceted campaigns, while increasing market share and camera sales. He also directed Nikon's Four to the Floor Tour, which encompassed five urban markets and showcased the brand and its new products (such as Nikon's Coolpix S51C0) in events featuring live music and top DJs/producers. Partly as a result of WahI's efforts, *Time* magazine named the Nikon Coolpix as the second "Best Invention of the Year," following the iPhone.

Pied Piper of the Younger Set

One of WahI's specialties is his canny ability to tap into the youthful pulse for Nikon products. For Nikon's Coolpix Style digital cameras, WahI oversaw a campaign that leveraged pop culture through associations with supermodel Kate Moss, couture designer Zac Posen, the smash reality show *Project Runway* and VH1's Save the Music Foundation. The catchy media bits nabbed 1,000 million impressions in prestigious lifestyle publications, and a 32% increase in Nikon Coolpix Style series camera sales.

Social Media Phenom

Like many other visionary PR professionals, WahI has incorporated social media tools to drive revenue and generate coverage for Nikon. When research showed that a majority of Nikon's target audience was spending as much time blogging and sharing photos online as they did with traditional media, WahI played a key role in orchestrating a program that built relationships with the top 100 most influential bloggers for Nikon. What resulted was a 700% increase in blog mentions of Nikon, in addition to a 225% increase in search engine referrals and an average of 500 blog mentions a day. ■



Honorable Mentions

Huma Gruaz, Founder, Alpaytac

Gruaz's dedication to her agency's founding client, Shark Euro-Pro, is clear in her efforts to market one of their latest innovations, the Shark Steam Mop. Acting as PR counsel and spokesperson, Gruaz has contributed to Shark Euro-Pro's success, carving out a niche for the Shark Steam Mop in a cluttered marketplace.

Gail Heimann, Co-President, Global Consumer Marketing, & President, New York office, Weber Shandwick

A celebrated communications veteran, Heimann's client roster reads like a who's who in consumer packaged goods, technology and nonprofit organizations. Working with companies such as Microsoft, Unilever, KFC and MAC Cosmetics, Heimann consistently delivers campaigns that capture attention and alter behavior.

Hellerman, cont'd from page 1

publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

Coping With Challenges

"[New ideas] offer tremendous opportunities, but are difficult to sell and implement. We're a creative agency, but we work for a very conservative clientele," says Hellerman. "There's a delicate balance, and selling news ideas can be challenging. However, as an owner of my company, I have tremendous empathy for our clients and understand why some great ideas simply never come to pass."

Reading Advocate

When not working long hours at his firm, Hellerman, who manages a team of 10 in three offices while overseeing more than 30 clients, lends his talents to The Reading Connection, a nonprofit literacy organization in Washington, D.C., for which he serves as president of the board of directors. ■

Agency Executive of the Year (cont'd from page 1)

Honorable Mentions

Ed James, President, Cornerstone Public Relations

Since launching Cornerstone Public Relations in 2006 as an extension of lifestyle marketing firm Cornerstone Promotion, James has worked on prestigious campaigns for HBO, Guitar Center, Johnnie Walker, Relix Magazine and Turner Broadcasting. His innovative targeting of and outreach to the coveted young music-driven urban audience sets him apart from his peers.

Maggie O'Neill, Senior Director, Peppercom

Overseeing more than \$1.4 million in billings for clients such as Major League Baseball, Panasonic and Whirlpool, O'Neill has become a catalyst of growth and creativity at Peppercom. Beefing up Peppercommotions, a division of Peppercom specializing in marketing events and sponsorships, she has increased its revenue by more than \$300,000.

Christine Perkett, President/Founder, PerkettPR

An innovative business and industry leader, Perkett founded PerkettPR as an all-virtual firm long before telecommuting was widely accepted. Recently celebrating the agency's 10th anniversary, Perkett has doubled the firm's client base, which include Sycamore Networks and Constant Contact, while employing more than 30 senior executives across 10 states.

Liya Sharif, Senior VP of PR and Branding, JHG

Sharif's highly proactive and effective media relations campaign for Covario, which lacked brand recognition, resulted in numerous placements in such media outlets as the Associated Press, CNNMoney, Marketwatch, *Los Angeles Times*, *InformationWeek* and *Adweek*. As a result of Sharif's efforts, Covario executives spoke at more than 20 key industry events.



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Account Executive of the Year

MICHAEL SACKS, ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE, MWW GROUP

Champion Multitasker

With his work ethic, willingness to pitch in whenever needed and natural leadership skills, Michael Sacks is the epitome of a gifted public relations professional. Since joining MWW Group a year and a half ago, Sacks, who has an M.A. in public communication from American University, has made multitasking an art form, tackling challenges and projects with aplomb and finesse.

Business Wiz

Among the notable campaigns Sacks has worked on at MWW has been for Deloitte LLP. Entrusted to identify a platform that would promote Deloitte's business, Sacks was instrumental in putting together a program that leveraged Chairman Sharon Allen's philosophy about ethical decision-making in the workplace. With Sacks at the helm, the team conducted a survey whose findings proved that a healthy work-life balance in one's life (or lack thereof) could have a reciprocal effect on ethics. The findings positioned Allen as a thought leader in her field; it also generated a great deal of media coverage—much of which would not have happened had it not been for Sacks' creativity and drive.

Helping the Client Stand Out

"In a client service business, there are two objectives," he

notes. "One is to help the client organization reach their business goals; the other is to help make your client contact look good in front of their bosses. For me, sometimes it's more rewarding to help make our client contact stand out to his or her boss on the strength of the counsel we provide."

Groomed for Hire

Sacks has also been integral in securing and growing new accounts, including Adecco, the world's largest staffing firms. Sacks has applied his expertise to develop thought leadership opportunities and bylined articles so that Adecco executives can build their reputations as leaders while also attracting top candidates for placement.

Lessons Learned

"Watching my senior colleagues day-to-day has been a great learning experience, particularly when it comes to building client relationships," says Sacks. "Sometimes, doing our job means saying the tough things to our clients. I'm learning how to have those conversations." ■



Honorable Mentions

Alison Greco, Account Executive, Coyne Public Relations

Working on campaigns for such high-profile brands as Cheerios and Ritz Crackers, Greco's skills have translated to great successes. A founding member of Coyne's Social Media practice, Greco helped pave the way for monitoring and tracking ROI in this space for clients.

Jennifer Seelin, Assistant Account Executive, Makovsky + Company

A former hotel desk clerk, Seeling's flair for account management and marketing communications have put her in good stead at her current PR post. Whether it's managing a national awareness campaign for yearly colorectal cancer screening or organizing a key opinion leader panel, Seeling acquires herself with a wisdom well beyond her years.

Brian Wachur, Account Manager, Widmeyer Communications

At Widmeyer, Wachur has overseen several major nonprofit and government accounts that include the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' "Stop Bullying Now!" campaign. For the latter, Wachur helped HHS prepare for the International Bullying Prevention Association's conference that was attended by 500 educators.

Corporate Social Responsibility Leader of the Year

JAMES WRIGHT, DIRECTOR OF CSR DIVISION, TRIMEDIA INTERNATIONAL

Beyond His Years

He may only be 29 years old, but James Wright has quickly established himself as an influential member of the CSR community in Europe, having set up the CSR division at Trimedia two years ago. Since then, Wright has risen through the ranks, making a name for himself working with blue-chip clients such as BT, Coca-Cola, Costa Coffee, Land Rover and World Vision.

Switching Motors

Starting out in consumer PR, Wright developed a passion for working in the corporate charity sector and soon shifted course in his professional trajectory. This change in course has been especially fortuitous due to the enthusiasm Wright infuses his projects with and the loyalty he engenders in his colleagues and clients. One client, BT, has been so pleased with the ROI of Wright's campaigns, the firm is currently in its eighth year with Trimedia.

Dalliance with World Politics

While serving as an account manager for UK PR firm, Sinclair Mason, Wright personally briefed then Prime Minister Tony Blair on the launch of the Telemedicine service. Due to events that had transpired

in Northern Ireland that morning, Blair lacked a chance to read the written summation. Instead, he requested a direct briefing before his speech at the Telemedicine launch: Enter Wright.

Bloody Marvelous

A benchmark feat of Wright's work at Trimedia is when he launched World Blood Donor Day in July 2005. Subsequently, he was invited to become a communications advisor to the WHO on blood issues. Wright developed the creative collateral for the campaign thanking donors. The initiative won numerous awards in the UK, with a donor increase by 20%. ■



Honorable Mention

Brendan May, Managing Director of Planet 2050, Weber Shandwick

As the head of Planet 2050, Weber Shandwick's corporate responsibility and sustainability practice, May has advised more than 25 companies, NGOs and governments, growing the revenue by 100%. His efforts have earned the firm the distinction of being the go-to agency in this area.

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Educator/Research Experts of the Year (tie)

CRAIG CARROLL, PH.D., SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS,
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

With his commitment to excellence and thought leadership, Dr. Craig Carroll is a shining example of a superior public relations educator. In his introductory class at UNC Chapel Hill, Dr. Carroll leverages cutting-edge practices in the industry and educational technologies—all in support of students learning about the public relations profession from concept to program execution. His success is manifested in the high ratio of students' placement in summer jobs and internships in PR.

Achievement Highlights

A native of Nashville, Tenn., Carroll, who previously taught at USC's Annenberg School of Journalism, has spearheaded a number of efforts that have catapulted him to the forefront of his profession. One such example: He developed a Friday Speakers Series to which PR professionals were invited as "visiting professors" for the day to speak to entry-level



students. Speakers included such industry luminaries as Kirk Stewart, VP of APCO, and Katie Paine, president and founder of KDPaine & Partners.

Class Time

"I integrate teaching and research in ways that gives students the confidence and commitment to prepare them for whichever direction they decide to go," says Dr. Carroll. "My approach fuses the values of social science with entrepreneurship, advocacy and social justice." The results of his teaching speak for themselves: Two former students are pursuing PhD programs in public relations; and his teaching and research programs at UNC have raised over \$500K in research funding.

Tackling Hurdles

"The biggest challenges thus far have been of two types: The first has been to get students who enter PR because 'they like people' to embrace data and metrics. This includes helping them overcome their fear of numbers, adopting a sense of social science objectivity and establishing a sense of self-efficacy and confidence in conducting and interpreting research. And the second has been to build understanding and respect across campus and industry for the field of PR." ■

LESLIE GAINES-ROSS, CHIEF REPUTATION STRATEGIST,
WEBER SHANDWICK



Gaines-Ross' research expertise in the area of reputation management has made her an industry leader. Last year she put her skills to good use for a Weber Shandwick

program developed at the Harvard Business School, which focused on the dynamics of the client-agency relationship. The premise was to give students a clear understanding of the leadership issues affecting public relations firms. Among the bigwigs interviewed for the project was Harris Diamond, CEO of Weber Shandwick, along with other senior agency executives. Thanks to Gaines-Ross' involvement, Weber Shandwick gained excellent visibility; the program also elevated awareness of public relations functions for up-and-coming business executives.

Reputation Stumble

Gaines-Ross' innovation and prescient eye have led her to pinpoint business trends. For instance, when she published her second book, *Corporate Reputation: 12 Steps to Safeguarding and Recovering Reputation*, Gaines-Ross created a new trend dubbed by Weber Shandwick as "the stumble rate." This moniker refers to the fact that 52% of America's No. 1 most-admired companies in their respective industries lost their status over a five-year period (2002-2007). Gaines-Ross stresses the importance of reputation recovery preparedness, since companies that lead their industry today have a less-than 50-50 chance of being the most admired five years from now.

In Demand

With her formidable body of knowledge and lofty industry standing, Gaines-Ross is frequently called upon to speak at conferences, such as the *Forbes* Executive Women's Forum and the IABC & Cision 2007 Research & Measurement Conference. Last year, she was honored by *Ethisphere Magazine* as one of 100 most influential people in business ethics. "I enjoy speaking about trends and shifts

Honorable Mentions

David Bartlett, Senior Vice President, Levick Strategic Communications

Whether executives are preparing for *60 Minutes*, CNN or the BBC, Bartlett has helped them face the media in a cool and collected manner. As a former reporter and spokesperson, he draws from decades of experience on both sides of the camera to ensure that a client's key messages are what comes across in an interview.

Liam D. Leduc Clarke, Vice President, APCO Worldwide

Clarke has designed and managed numerous philanthropic programs for APCO's Fortune 500 clients. He has also been heavily involved in APCO's "Trio" training program, which focuses on expanding the client, project and financial management skills of the firm's mid- to senior-level managers.

Elizabeth K. Dougall, Assistant Professor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

An award-winning educator, Dougall also provides training in crisis communication, media relations and issues management to organizations that range from Wachovia and Nortel to the Orange County (NC) Health Department and the UNC School of Public Health. She also co-leads a five-year, \$7 million social marketing campaign focused on Shaken Baby Syndrome.

Dr. David Ritchey, Professor, Ph.D., School of Communication, University of Akron

Training future practitioners in international public relations, Dr. Ritchey has made globalization a prime element for students to experience firsthand. On six separate occasions, he has taken groups of students to England to study public relations, thereby enhancing their knowledge of the field.

in the PR world and business world at large," says Gaines-Ross.

Lesson Learned

"If you have a great idea, don't let anyone stand in your way," says former Gaines-Ross. "Go for it. Be relentless." ■

How To Win The Golden Thinker Award

The prestigious Golden Thinker Awards and Certificates of Excellence have been received recently by NAPS clients in record numbers. These awards have been given to clients that have stories judged to be the most newsworthy by newspaper editors and radio or TV broadcasters. The bar has been met or exceeded by more NAPS clients than ever for 3 key reasons:

1. Downsizing at major dailies and weeklies due to a decline in advertising revenue has created increasing demand for high quality feature articles which are readily available in the widest variety of formats that NAPS has been providing to grateful editors for 50 years. NAPS has been a lifesaver for some editors who are now doing the jobs of 2 or 3 people.

2. The media relations team at NAPS has been inundated with requests from thousands of news web sites and blogs, many of which have been started by a loyal fan base of former newspaper editors who have a long established relationship with them.

3. The 5,000 free newspapers, with a cumulative circulation of 72 million, have been growing at a steady rate of about 7% to 9% per year, according to Tim Bingaman of CVC (The Circulation Verification Council). These community newspapers have accounted for most of the biggest users of NAPS material. Thousands of these publications are monitored exclusively by the NAPS internal clipping bureau for maximum tangible evidence of results.

Some of the stories that have earned awards recently, by achieving more than 800 placements, are viewable on the www.napsinfo.com web site. Experienced NAPS writers, with an average tenure of more than 10 years, offer story ideas and proposals at no cost or obligation. The NAPS team of experts is relied on by most Fortune 500 companies, the top 20 PR firms, over 100 associations and many government agencies. NAPS guarantees complete satisfaction with each release or another one free.

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Media Relations Professional of the Year

**BILLEE HOWARD, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGIC
MEDIA GROUP, WEBER SHANDWICK**



Last year, when the media landscape was convulsed by massive shake-ups and a reeling economy, Billee Howard devised ways to make executives at companies such as MasterCard, Bext Buy and Honeywell put their best public face forward. For her, treading the line between traditional and nontraditional media has been imperative to forging relationships with journalists and engaging global audiences.

Yet the evolution of today's media relations has presented challenges for Howard. "Many [clients and those in the industry] view media as a commoditized component of PR, when in fact, the need for 'decommodification' in this aspect of our business has never been greater," she says.

Hit Parade of Campaigns

Of the many campaigns Howard has worked on, she says her efforts for Royal Caribbean and Honeywell Aerospace are her most noteworthy. For the former program, launched post 9/11, the objective was to encourage the U.S. government and the public to view maritime safety as an area requiring as much attention as airport security. The latter initiative focused on globalizing the Honeywell brand "during a time where business globalization itself has never been more important to a company's future growth trajectory."

Pros & Cons

"The most rewarding thing related to what I do is



identifying a trend that I believe is going to drive corporate reputation in the future, helping a client sculpt their corporate brand around it and then watching that trend and that corollary platform work together to enhance a client's reputational capital," explains Howard. "It's really rewarding to develop a campaign idea for a client, communicate it and see your idea 'concretized' in real results."

The contracting of the media landscape can be problematic for Howard, particularly in the wake of the Web 2.0 world. "Fewer journalists means fewer subject matter ex-

Honorable Mentions

Joann Donnellan, President, JD Media, LLC

Donnellan's reputation for strategic thinking and problem solving have resulted in an extensive client network. Prior to founding her own firm, she directed crisis media relations for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and did a stint as traveling press secretary for the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors.

Sean Dougherty, Group Vice President, MWW Group Inc.

When the Scottish Enterprises engaged the MWW Group to set up a media tour for the First Minister of Scotland, Dougherty created a program that would get the First Minister maximum exposure in major U.S. and international publications. It worked: Dougherty secured features representing Scotland as a business capital in well-respected publications, including the formerly inhospitable *Wall Street Journal*.

perts as opposed to generalists," she says. "Producing deep industry coverage, which is both accurate and effective, is a mounting concern." ■

PR Professional of the Year: Corporate (cont'd from page 1)

Latour, Cont'd from page 1

the hospitality programs for more than 3,000 guests comprised of GE employees, key customers and GE's board of directors.

Latour's sound corporate messaging and judgment deserved a gold medal according to her colleagues' standards. "Perhaps even bigger than her success for GE was her defense of business as the engine of one of the world's noblest causes—the Olympic spirit," says Ben Boyd, executive VP/U.S. corporate practice at Edelman. "Through her availability to the media, Deirdre served as the thoughtful voice of business as it found itself at the intersection of brand, purpose and profit." ■

Honorable Mentions

Stacie Bright, Senior Communications Marketing Manager, Unilever Home & Personal Care

Stacie Bright and her team helped generate 229-plus impressions for the Dove Entertainment for Esteem campaign with tactics that included the Dove Reality Diaries, an online platform that followed four girls as they shared their personal struggles with self-esteem issues.

Barbara Crystal, General Manager of Public Relations, CDW Corporation and CDW Government Inc.

Recognizing that market-changing results cannot be achieved by run-rate public relations, Barbara Crystal launched the School Safety Index (SSI), which assesses K-12 schools' physical and cyber safety efforts, creating a national benchmark against which schools can evaluate their own safety programs.

Jon Harris, Senior VP, Global Communications, Sara Lee Corp.

To successfully drive the company's reputation among an

international audience, Jon Harris developed Sara Lee's first global communications strategy, which helped strengthen the company's brand in foreign markets.

Laura Kane, Second VP of External Communications, Aflac

To focus on Aflac's long-held policy to base compensation for all employees on company and individual performance, Laura Kane strategically repositioned the story and distributed releases throughout the year to pique media interest and maintain incessant favorable coverage for Aflac.

Pam Slay, Senior VP, Network Program Publicity, Hallmark Channel

Pam Slay ended dependence on traditional wire services and print placement with the implementation of PR targeting software Vocus, which pinpoints key opportunities and contacts, monitors trends in national press coverage and uses widespread distribution of materials that would ultimately be too cost-prohibitive for smaller teams.

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Public Affairs Executive of the Year

MICHAEL ROBINSON, SENIOR VP, CHAIR CORPORATE & PUBLIC AFFAIRS PRACTICE, LEVICK STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS



Any public affairs exec can share a story or two about tough campaigns, but taking on the U.S. government in an antitrust matter on behalf of a little-known foreign company is a hard one to top. Michael Robinson, who was the leader of a rigorous

campaign on behalf of Stolt-Nielsen—a global leading provider of transportation services for specialty liquids and chemicals—lived out such a David and Goliath tale. At issue was an alleged violation by the Department of Justice of an antitrust amnesty agreement, under which Stolt-Nielsen had agreed to inform the U.S. government of a price-fixing cartel in the parcel tanker industry in exchange for an agreement not to prosecute the company. “The key to success was successfully positioning the narrative of this story in a larger template—that of overzealous prosecutors,” Robinson says.

Training Day

With a seasoned career that spans the White House, the Justice Department and the Securities and Exchange

Commission, Robinson says what makes him a skilled professional is his “ability to draw on a varied background in the private sector, government and corporate America augmented with an understanding of how communications can substantially impact, and move, important issues.” Consider the following strategies of the Stolt-Nielsen campaign:

- Pegged publications and reporters covering the Justice Department daily and barraged the shipping trade media regularly read by Stolt-Nielsen employees and shareholders.
- Utilized new media via constant monitoring and updates to high-authority blogs.
- Captured arguably the most influential columnist at *The Wall Street Journal* on business and antitrust issues, who framed the Stolt-Nielsen story as an example of bad actions by the Justice Department.

Out of the Office

Robinson’s creativity evolved the focus from a single case to a debate about policy, which resulted in the recruitment of key third-party supporters. Always one with a hands-on approach, he provided daily counseling for attorneys litigating the case and to Stolt-Nielsen’s CEO, general counsel and board-level media spokesperson. ■

Honorable Mentions

Amiee Goforth, Director of Public Affairs, Ochsner Health System

When five of the largest hospitals in New Orleans came together to ask Congress for financial support, Amiee Goforth and her team of one public relations manager led all communications, implementing a full-court-press media relations campaign that represented all five competing hospitals.

Julie Ice, Director/Legislative and Public Affairs, Humana Military Healthcare Services

Applying her combined experience in both the broadcasting and public relations industries, Julie Ice orchestrated communication efforts when Humana Military and subcontractor ValueOptions unveiled a new behavioral health Web site for TRICARE beneficiaries. Ice’s efforts generated more than 21,000 Web page hits, and have helped Humana Military enjoy a 136% increase in news releases since she came on board in 2005.

Richard Ramlall, Senior VP, Strategic External Affairs and Programming, RCN Corp.

To help RCN reemerge from bankruptcy as a credible competitor in the marketplace, Richard Ramlall implemented a proactive communications outreach program that garnered coalition support from other industry rivals and resulted in favorable pro-RCN conditions being imposed by the FCC. The FCC waiver on set-top boxes saved RCN \$50 million, and his program resulted in increased positive print, industry and electronic media coverage.

Honorable Mentions

Jules Andres, Director of Corporate Communications, Mattel Inc.

When Mattel issued four major toy recalls in the summer and fall of 2007, Jules Andres devised the Safety section of the Mattel.com Web site, as well as a strategic communications plan and tactical approach. Andres was instrumental in Mattel’s success in maintaining public trust and gaining praise from key stakeholders via the drafting of extensive communications materials such as the placement of an editorial in *The Wall Street Journal* the day prior to Mattel CEO Robert Ecker’s first Congressional hearing.

Ken Capps, VP of Public Affairs, Dallas/Forth Worth International Airport

In an industry that competes against weather delays and a fickle-flying public, Ken Capps maximizes potential public relations value through innovative approaches. For instance, special departure or arrivals flights at DFW Airport receive a special recognition known as a “shower of affection” by the DFW Airport Fire Department in a symbolic gesture of honor; in turn, the events produce stunning photography, ensuring increased media placements and overall exposure for the airport.



Publicist/Spokesperson of the Year

SAM SINGER, PRESIDENT, SINGER ASSOCIATES INC.

When things look bleak, Sam Singer’s the guy to call. He’s been dubbed “The Fixer” by the *San Jose Mercury News* and “Top Gun for Hire” by the *San Francisco Chronicle* for his talent to turn the news around when times look tough for clients. He acquired these nicknames after a string of campaign strategies hatched to deal with the fallout of the largest sex scandal in history at San Francisco City Hall as well as a tiger escape at the San Francisco Zoo. Under his guidance, Singer Associates Inc. enjoyed a 20% growth rate in 2007 and generated nearly \$6 million in revenue.

Definition of Success

“The best professionals in any business possess three attributes: an excellent education, the ability to listen carefully to the smallest of details and strong writing and communications skills,” Singer says. “Common sense and a dash of panache [also] round out a skilled professional.”

Strategic thinking also helps. As president of Singer Associates, he makes sure his 15-person agency implements innovative methods, including the creation of the agency’s own news service, to help clients tell their stories. He also plays a critical role in measuring the success of his efforts through daily analysis of news coverage and political events. His success, Singers says, should also

be attributed to “two great parents, [who both were] professors at UC Berkeley, a very smart wife and good mentors in the public affairs business that taught me the ropes.”

Dispenser of Wisdom

A tireless teacher of public affairs, Singer frequently lectures at colleges, professional seminars and international public relations groups to spread the word about successful spokesperson strategies and tactics.

Lessons Learned

Singer says the best practices he has formulated in his career are two-pronged:

- “Learn from others who are wiser and more experienced,” yet “learn from making your own mistakes.”
- “Be a good listener,” and “never underestimate the power of relationships and respect and courtesy for others.” ■



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Investor Relations Professional of the Year

NANCY CHRISTAL, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, CVS CAREMARK

With 23 years of experience in investor relations (12 of which has been spent at CVS Caremark), Nancy Christal is an ace in her field. Her understanding of the business, coupled with her strong communications and interpersonal skills, have been key in securing investor confidence under adverse circumstances. For instance, when CVS and Caremark merged in 2007, Christal orchestrated efforts to educate the investor community about the benefits of the merger. Due in part to her efforts, CVS Caremark has been named "America's Most Shareholder Friendly Company" for the past three years by *Institutional Investor* magazine.

Accomplishments Galore

Christal, who holds an MBA in finance from NYU and who previously served as vice president of investor relations for Ogden Corp., has directed a number of notable efforts this past year that further

fortified her status as a leading investor relations professional. Among her recent feats: obtaining the necessary shareholder votes to complete the merger despite a hostile takeover attempt of Caremark by a competitor; and helping to reposition CVS Caremark as a healthcare industry leader after being perceived primarily as a pharmacy retailer.

Coping With Challenges

"Our company's constant growth and recent new business model have resulted in split analyst coverage between two sectors and changes to our shareholder base," says Christal. "Our transformational model and new service offerings have to be communicated as they are created. So the messages are evolving all the time, and Wall Street tends to be very impatient."

Unfortunately, this can lead to problems that involve "dealing with short sellers or other interested parties that spread false information about the company for personal gain."

Lessons Learned

"Expect the unexpected," advises Christal. "Be highly flexible, since each day may take several unexpected turns." ■



Honorable Mentions

Claire Koeneman, Co-President of Financial Relations Board and Head of the Real Estate Division, MWW Group

Even in the most dire economic times, Koeneman has worked on several high-profile IPOs, including DuPont Fabros Technology, whose \$800 million capital raise made it the single largest IPA in the fourth quarter of 2007. She has also helped develop a new area of expertise at MWW's Financial Relations Board that offers international companies best practices on how to make themselves "capital markets ready" for U.S. investors and key stakeholders.

Richard Ramlall, Senior Vice President, Strategic External Affairs, RCN Corp.

Thanks in part to Ramlall's leadership and actions, RCN emerged from bankruptcy as a strong competitor in the marketplace, restoring public and investor confidence. Last year, Ramlall successfully implemented a proactive media, financial and public affairs outreach program that led to increased positive media coverage of RCN.



Honorable Mentions

Pete Campisi, Senior VP and Managing Supervisor, Weber Shandwick

Aligning with top designers and celebs, Pete Campisi and his nine-member team established Hanes' first "pop-up" boutique to showcase the brands' ComfortSoft intimate apparel collection.

Kelly Hershkowitz, Media Relations, Biosector 2 New York

Using innovative tactics, Hershkowitz and her team launched the "Novo Nordisk Presents: Divabetic—Makeover Your Diabetes" lifestyle initiative, which reaches out to women with diabetes.

Emily Kooistra, Executive Account Director, Clear!Blue Communications

To drive media traffic to the Dodge Durango Tango contest at the State Fair of Texas, Emily Kooistra and her team wrangled football legend and reality TV dancing champion Emmitt Smith to kick off the event, generating industry buzz.

Kristie Kuhl, Senior VP, Makovsky + Co.

Within the first few weeks of 2007, Kristie Kuhl secured new clients amounting to about \$700,000 in new annual revenues, and won the Alexion Pharmaceuticals account.

Tina Martineau, Senior Director, E*TRADE Financial

Tina Martineau was at the forefront of E*TRADE's Global Trading Platform, which featured an extensive PR plan featuring a full product road show, demos and several announcement visuals. Martineau also unveiled a media kit that encompassed the key elements of each global market.



PR Team Leader of the Year

FRANK SHAW, PRESIDENT, MICROSOFT ACCOUNTS, WAGGENER EDSTROM WORLDWIDE

Frank Shaw may be a seasoned public relations practitioner, but he never stops learning. Currently serving as president of Waggener Edstrom Worldwide's Microsoft account team, the agency's longest-running account, Shaw balances individual skill and broad team leadership while orchestrating communications efforts for high-profile developments such as the proposed Yahoo acquisition and Bill Gates' recent retirement. His can-do spirit encourages all in the office that they have the tools and support to be successful, and has won him legions of fans, both colleagues and clients alike. All of these qualities make him an invaluable asset to the industry.

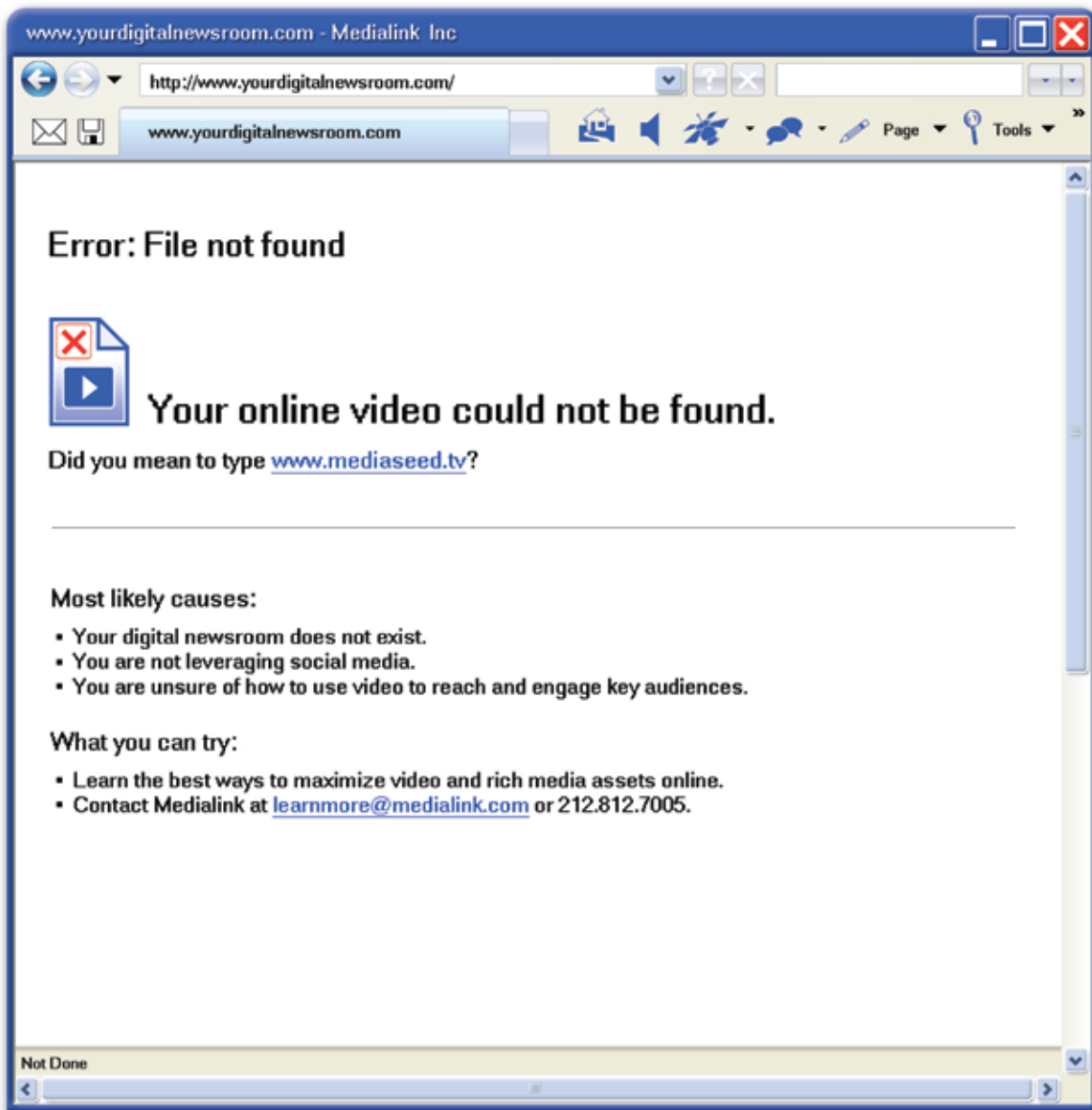
Follow the Leader

All of Waggener Edstrom's regions—Americas, Asia and Europe—tie into the Microsoft efforts, prompting Shaw and his team to frequently integrate with colleagues worldwide at a moment's notice. Shaw taps into his Marine Corps background and turn-on-a-dime flexibility to respond to real-time changes in a timely manner. His accessibility and multitasking ability have led clients to believe they're his sole client.

Finding the Balance

Although Shaw is something of a public relations "utility infielder," as his colleagues call him, he effortlessly dons the hats of storyteller and corporate counsel when bringing in experts in various fields, and his reputation among the media corps who follow Microsoft is one of being the company's best outlet to providing insight into and access to Microsoft. Striking a balance is the biggest challenge when it comes to being a public relations team leader, Shaw says. "Balancing the dynamic between actually doing PR—engaging with media, thinking about the impact of influence and the way clients should consider audience engagement, driving stories, etc.—and working with the teams on the account to do the same thing [is key]," he says. ■





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PR Professional of the Year: Academic Institution

BRIAN WOODLAND, DIRECTOR, COMMUNICATIONS & STRATEGIC PLANNING, PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



The 1.3 million-person community the Peel District School Board serves in Ontario is one of the fastest-growing in North America, with 150,000 students in 232 schools. Half of the schools' students speak a language other than English at home, and during the last three years more than 11,000 of its registered students came from families new to Canada. To create a more unified identity within the district, the school board's Brian Woodland devised a "what have you done for the students today?" approach, and stepped back in the classroom.

Head of the Class

Recognizing that learning isn't just for students, Woodland administered public relations training to senior administration, managers and supervisors in the district. He taught staffs at more than 30 schools about crisis communications, customer service and the power personnel has over public image.

"Research says that the No. 1 factor in school reputation is what our staff says about schools, so the key audience is internal. [Our mission is] to make sure that staff understands the power they have over school reputation," Woodland says.

Some of his tactics:

- To ensure schools welcomed newcomer families, Woodland integrated a "We Welcome the World" initiative last year into all major board activities. Schools received a "Welcome to School" toolkit, with more than 50 parent resources, each translated into 25 languages.
- Woodland shaped the board's organizational response to new provincial legislation about school safety and discipline, and orchestrated crisis communication response on issues such as student deaths.

School Days

Despite Woodland's hectic schedule (he's a sought-after keynote speaker across North America), he says he meets weekly with



Honorable Mention

Denise Keyes, Associate Dean for Public Relations and Corporate Communications, Georgetown University

Denise Keyes had two goals in mind when she was assigned the task of developing a new master's in public relations program: maintain the academic rigor expected of the university, and bring PR industry leaders into the classroom to help train a new generation of communication leaders. The curriculum emphasizes communications responsibility with a comprehensive understanding of ethics and corporate social responsibility, providing graduating students with a competitive advantage in the digital age.

the schools to provide counsel on organizational concerns. "It is an absolute privilege and a pleasure to be in an organization where everyone is so committed to caring for children, a place where each person in each role wants to help children succeed," Woodland says. "There is no more rewarding career choice as a PR person." ■

Honorable Mentions

Emily Callahan, Managing Director, MarComm, for Susan G. Komen for the Cure

In addition to managing all proactive and reactive communications for Komen's National Breast Cancer Awareness Month platform last year, Emily Callahan crafted an integrated campaign that would launch both the new Komen brand rollout and mark the organization's 25th anniversary. She orchestrated key media placements featuring Komen's senior leadership in outlets that included *The Today Show* and *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*.

Jonathan Collegio, VP, Digital Television Transition, National Association of Broadcasters

To get audiences nationwide to tune in to the federally mandated switch to digital television broadcasting, Jonathan Collegio spearheaded a face-to-face campaign, overseeing the creation of the DTV Speakers Bureau and DTV Road Show. After identifying groups disproportionately affected by the DTV transition, the team launched the DTV Transition Coalition, which unites industry groups that typically compete against each other, including broadcasters, cable and satellite.



PR Professional of the Year: Nonprofit/Association

MICHELLE ALVAREZ, SENIOR MANAGER, MEDIA RELATIONS, AARP

Throughout her career, Michelle Alvarez has become well-versed in the tactics of building brands and leveraging them through notable events, with a resume that boasts press coverage ranging from *Consumer Reports* to *Cosmopolitan*. When she arrived at AARP *The Magazine*, the media relations mission was straightforward: lead the 34 million-reader publication into territory once deemed nontraditional by the organization.

Total Exposure

One of Alvarez's major campaigns at AARP involved securing features in top-tier media outlets when actress Jamie Lee Curtis posed topless on the magazine's May/June issue cover. The campaign generated more than 410 million media impressions and was instrumental in defining the magazine's brand.

Alvarez opted for a less-traditional campaign approach with the launch of AARP's new media property, AARP TV, supplementing traditional media outreach with initiatives such as an on-site event, press tours of the state-of-the-art facility and meet-and-greets with network talent and executives. She was also instrumental in creating *Feria de la Segunda Juventud*, a national event catering to AARP's significant Hispanic language audience. She infiltrated Puerto Rico's media market with national

coverage on the National Telemundo morning show *Cada Día con Maria Antonieta* and organized a press conference on the island to announce the *Feria de la Segunda Juventud* event.

Enhancing History

In addition to building brands from the bottom up, Alvarez's expertise in strengthening already successful brands and franchises has helped AARP reach new heights in brand recognition and notoriety. Media efforts for annual AARP events such as AARP's Annual Movies for Grownups and AARP *The Magazine's* Annual Inspire Awards got more than 184 million impressions across all major platforms last year. It's no surprise that Alvarez herself has become a sought-after commodity in the media industry. ■





**Ochsner Health System
Congratulates Amiee Goforth**

2008 Public Affairs Executive of the Year Nominee



Hall Of Fame

This year's inductees into the *PR News* Hall of Fame are some of the communications industry's foremost thought leaders and innovative problem solvers. Their entire careers have been marked by needle-pushing accomplishments that beg one question: What's next?

**Ron Culp, Partner
Managing Director,
Ketchum
Midwest**

He may have a history of achievement in PR, but Ron Culp only has an eye for the *future* of the profession. As a partner and managing director of Ketchum Midwest, Culp serves as a global corporate strategist and oversees agency operations in Chicago and Pittsburgh, but his true passion is serving as a mentor for aspiring young PR professionals—something he believes is critical to the continued growth of the communications profession.

"Demand for quality PR professionals will continue to grow at a pace faster than most traditional professions," he says. "However, with nearly 35,000 students currently pursuing PR degrees in the U.S., the industry will have difficulty absorbing all of these graduates. For those truly dedicated to the profession, it is critical for them to get as much experience as possible through internships and PR-related volunteer projects."

Creating a Platform

This is exactly what Culp dedicates himself to in his spare time. In September 2008, he established a blog (www.culpwrit.com) to "provide direction for individuals pursuing careers in PR." He uses the platform as a forum for answering questions posed by students, offering advice on everything from the job application process and building media-pitching skills to spotlighting individual students' experience in PR internships and entry-level positions.

**Hall
of Fame**

**Harris Diamond,
Worldwide CEO,
Weber
Shandwick**

Lately the business world has been in a tailspin, with recent world events exacerbating the situation. The crisis has heightened the reputational risks that companies face and that communications professionals are left to manage. This reality makes Harris Diamond, CEO of Weber Shandwick and the Constituency Management Group of the Interpublic Group of Companies, a valuable asset to both the organizations that he oversees and the communications industry as a whole.

"It is an exciting time to be in PR. We have both an enormous opportunity and enormous responsibility," Diamond says. "The future of our profession, and the success of the businesses we manage, is dependent on our ability to broaden our own perspectives and be more bold in our thinking."

Visionary Thinker

Diamond is well-equipped to be broad in his perspectives and bold in his thinking thanks to his past experiences consulting for political campaigns (not to mention getting MBA and JD degrees).

Sage Counsel

"Giving advice to students and young PR professionals is personally rewarding, and makes me wish the Internet existed when I began my career 40 years ago," says Culp—not that a lack of Web-based career advice hindered his professional success. Prior to joining Ketchum in 2006, he made his mark in the world of corporate communications at organizations including Sears, Roebuck and Co., Eli Lilly and Sara Lee Corp. But it was a mentor from his first job out of college that truly shaped Culp's career as a communicator, which is perhaps the root of his current commitment to mentoring students.

"The best career advice I ever got came from a lobbyist friend in Albany who introduced me to my first corporate job at Eli Lilly," says Culp. "I was working for the New York Assembly at the time. [My friend] told me to get out of politics and get a real job." ■



But it's the modern business environment, complicated by emerging digital communications platforms, stakeholder empowerment, globalization and turbulent economies, that has provided Diamond with what he calls his greatest career accomplishment to date: "The successful integration of BSMG Worldwide and Weber Shandwick in 2000—creating a collaborative culture and ultimately becoming what is now one of the leading public relations agencies in the world."

Successfully merging disparate corporate cultures while turning the organization around to be a PR powerhouse is certainly a career highlight, and it undoubtedly took a very clear understanding of how the means to getting there would justify the end result. In other words, Diamond cites the ability to focus on your approach and objectives in any initiative as the pre-qualifier for success, something he learned at his very first job.

Take Me Out to the Ball Game

"I sold peanuts at Yankee Stadium in the late 1960s," he says. "On my first day, there I was, a New York City kid obsessed with the Yankees, standing there watching the game. An older vendor said to me, 'If you came here to watch the game, it's a lot easier to get a bleacher ticket for a quarter than to lug around this stuff; if you came here to work, understand why you're here.' That woke me up. What that vendor said had an impact on me—if you're here to work, focus on work." ■



With more than 20 years on the corporate side of the fence behind him, Matt Gonring has his fair share of experience navigating turbulent business landscapes. Having held communications positions at industries as challenging as airlines, accounting and healthcare, his expertise in carrying brands, reputations and even bottom lines through thick and thin is indisputable. Among a few of his many accomplishments: developing a master brand model and centralized Web team for Baxter; managing communications around the Arthur Andersen/Accenture arbitration; and managing communications around a prepackaged bankruptcy at USG Corp.—an achievement he cites as being among his proudest. All of this accrued expertise led Gonring to his current professional incarnation: a consultant with strategic execution and employee engagement consultancy Gagen MacDonald.

Getting Engaged to Build Value

Charged with helping clients in the very industries he used to work in himself to enhance their leadership performance, manage crises and streamline employee engagement to create value, Gonring places special emphasis on the latter activity, noting that employee and internal communications is no longer an afterthought, but a critical dimension of business management. His commitment to building awareness of employee

engagement’s strategic value can be seen in the body of knowledge he has created through research and authoring thought-leadership pieces, which connect employee engagement and customer loyalty as corollary drivers that increase business value.

Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

Gonring says he finds his most rewarding professional experience to be developing the careers of others, which he does as a member of Northwestern University’s Integrated Marketing Communications faculty, a board member of the Arthur W. Page Society and as co-chair of the Institute for Public Relations. ■



Past experience has a way of determining career paths, which explains why Laura Kane, 2nd VP of external relations for Aflac, plays such a dynamic role at the insurance giant. Her professional background includes a variety of unique roles and accomplishments: she was a TV producer; an ad agency exec for dot-com firms; a member of the team that started ESPN; she played a role in improving relations between Japan and the United States; was involved in changing the Georgia state flag; and made business history by driving communications at the first public company to give shareholders a “say on pay.”

Stakeholders First

The latter achievement is a highlight of her tenure at Aflac, in which her communications plan prompted a coup de grace for the company and entire investor community (the campaign won a *PR News* 2008 Platinum PR Award in the Financial Communications category). But all of these accomplishments come thanks to Kane’s ability to adapt her skill sets to the changing times.

“The pace at which information travels has dramatically increased,” she says. “When I started, most people received their news from evening newscasts at predictable times and intervals. Today, news is 24/7 and comes at us through alerts seconds after someone declares it news. This environment requires that I have a much better understanding of the company I work for, the world I live in and the possible agenda of the reporter/blogger/video streamer.”

Running the Marathon, Not the Sprint

Indeed, the media landscape has changed drastically with the proliferation of digital communications channels, making Kane’s role as a media relations specialist all the more relevant—and complex.

“PR is a marathon, not a sprint. [In the future,] our challenge as PR professionals will be to find ways to help companies develop guidelines and parameters that enable them to have genuine and meaningful conversations between [all stakeholders],” Kane says, further underscoring the relevance of Aflac’s move to give an influential but often challenging stakeholder group—investors—control over an element of the company’s reputation. “Regardless of the method used, public relations will always be about people communicating with other people.” ■



Linda Rutherford, VP,
Communications/
Strategic Outreach,
Southwest Airlines

Hall
of Fame

Her job description includes “guiding the efforts of media relations, employee communications, emergency response, emerging and multimedia, and legislative communications” —not an unsubstantial to-do list for any executive. But Linda Rutherford, VP of communications and strategic outreach for Southwest Airlines, has absorbed enough responsibilities for 10 people while (seemingly) effortlessly helping her company’s brand and reputation take flight as Southwest’s competitors repeatedly falter.

Tireless Dynamo

Rutherford’s 16-year tenure at the airline has been marked by achievement after achievement, among the most notable being the company’s oft-lauded Web presence that has served as a textbook example of how companies should leverage digital communications platforms to connect with stakeholders, consumers and media (an audience she is familiar with, given her past life as a journalist for the *Dallas Times Herald*). In this vein, Rutherford considers her greatest professional accomplishment to be one that broke down the invisible barrier between corporate executives and “everyone else.”

Going to the Small Screen

“My proudest moment came when our communications team got the green light to involve Southwest in the A&E TV series *Airline*,” she says. “It was then that I realized our ca-

capacity to help build brand awareness and to expose Southwest Airlines to new audiences wasn’t limited to what I had considered traditional PR activities. From that point on, I removed all boundaries on my thinking about how communications should engage. Our value proposition has been changing ever since.”

Maximizing PR’s Worth

Value is certainly something Rutherford has brought to Southwest, and to the communications profession as a whole. Her contribution to proving PR’s worth to brand, reputation and, ultimately, the bottom-line in the face of C-suite skepticism has helped elevate the discipline from a reactive press-release machine to a strategic, boardroom-worthy function that can guide an organization through turbulent business climates.

“The public relations profession has seen so much change in terms of audiences fragmenting and new communications channels,” Rutherford says. “I see a future where PR professionals perfect their roles as facilitators of communication; we are no longer gatekeepers. PR professionals will continue to redefine their roles as communicators in ways still not imagined.” ■



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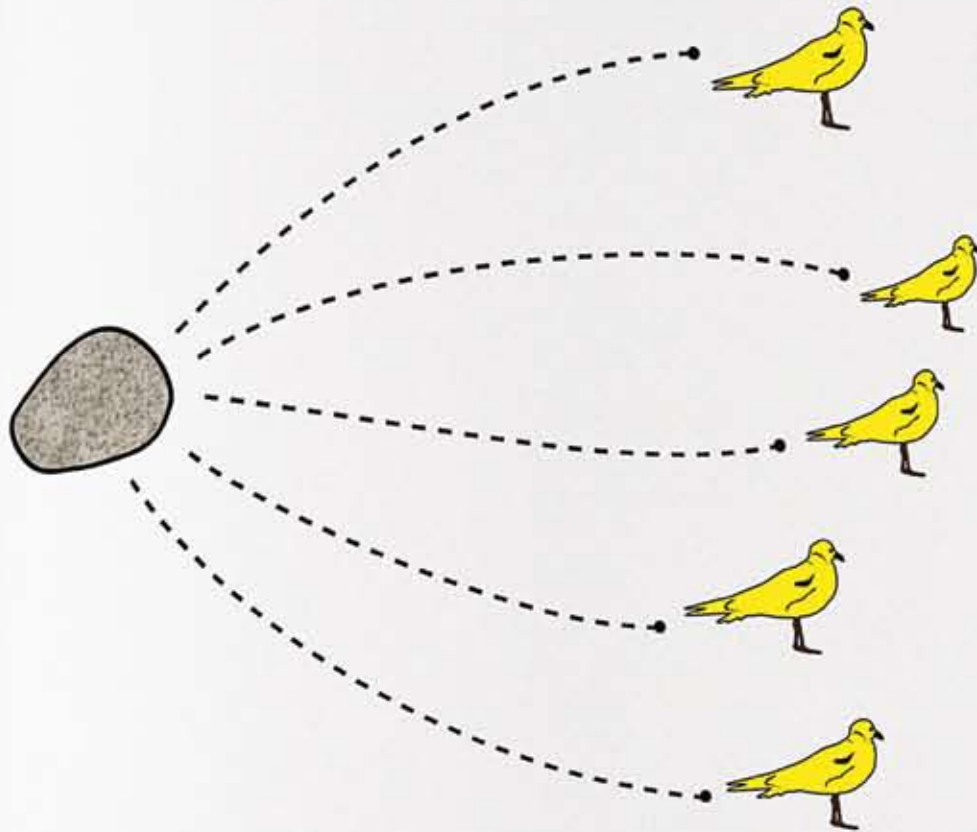


Fig. 1 - Method for leaving the competition completely speechless.

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George Bernard Shaw might have said “youth is wasted on the young,” but he certainly never met any of these 15 indefatigable and irrepressible up-and-coming PR professionals. Exuding a wisdom beyond their years, they all share a dedicated work ethic and a keen understanding of the nuances of the profession. Proving that outstanding performance trumps age, we are pleased to celebrate our “15 to Watch” PR pros.

Jim Billimoria

★ **Director of Communications, House Committee on Ways & Means • Age: 28**

Being a communications director for first-term congressman Tom Price (R-GA) and for the 17-member House Committee on Ways and Means poses a unique set of challenges, but Jim Billimoria has found a formula that not only works efficiently but also raises the profile for everyone he works for. Using a blend of traditional media skills and social media tools, Billimoria has set himself apart from the pack on Capitol Hill while successfully navigating the often treacherous waters of D.C. politics.

Groundbreaking Initiative

“Establishing a freshman member of Congress from a top 10 media market is very much like brand management for a product,” Billimoria says. “This was not only the greatest challenge,

but also provided for great opportunities. To distinguish your boss among 434 other members of Congress took traditional media components but also new tools and technologies that pushed the envelope at the time.”

Talkin’ Bout My Generation

“With press strategies and tactics now having to account for new technologies, and the changing way information is acquired and disseminated, managers are giving those who embrace these opportunities increasing autonomy and responsibility in their positions. It’s encouraging to see that managers are recognizing the fact that people acquire their information in many different ways and are giving latitude to those with the best ideas.”

Rewards and Drawbacks

“The fast-paced nature of press on Capitol Hill requires you not only to understand numerous local and national topics but be able to sell that information in a way that can be understood by all constituencies. Also, the results of your work can be seen instantaneously thanks to the 24-hour news cycle.

The most challenging thing: It can take time to learn your principal’s voice, and in this environment time is often in short supply.” ■



Kristin Binns ★ Staff Vice President of Corporate Communications, WellPoint Inc. • Age: 27

As staff VP of corporate communications for WellPoint Inc., a U.S.-based health insurance company, Kristin Binns brings a fresh approach to a field in which damage control is often the central strategy. Her efforts promoting WellPoint’s programs, such as the Safety Sentinel partnership with the FDA, which monitors pharmaceuticals after approval, reflects her understanding of the intricacies of both corporate communications and a \$60 billion enterprise.

Playing a Part

“The most rewarding thing about public relations is knowing you’ve contributed to the bottom line,” Binns says. “The healthcare industry is a great example. Consumers hear about

the latest technology available in cardiac imaging from their local news and start asking the doctors where they can access it. There’s a misconception that public relations can’t be measured or doesn’t directly contribute to revenue and sales. But educating consumers and spreading information that drives demand is public relations.”

Most Compelling Campaign

“During my time at GE Healthcare, the company released a new cardiovascular computed tomography tool, the LightSpeed VCT. Although publicity expectations for the product originally did not go beyond niche business-to-business and trade publications, the PR team set more

expansive priorities, securing placements in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *The Today Show* and the cover of *Time*.”

Google Rules

“Google is a staple. I live by Google Alerts. It’s important as a public relations professional to be on top of just about everything.” ■



Bonin Bough ★ Global Director of Social Media, PepsiCo • Age: 30

His tender years notwithstanding, with more than 10 years of experience in social media, Bonin Bough has become a bona fide expert in an field that is growing exponentially. Asked two years ago to launch Weber Shandwick’s global digital practice, Bough transformed the agency’s former Web relations team into a digital practice under the branded name of Screengrab. Under his leadership both clients and agency experienced increased revenue. Bough’s work has been so impressive that recently he was tapped by PepsiCo to become its new global director of social media following a highly competitive search.

Stellar Innovator

At Weber Shandwick, Bough launched a global social media listening product entitled Radian6 across both the

agency and the agency’s parent company, Interpublic Group. The tool allows clients and the agency’s teams to understand and leverage online conversations. Radian6 has since been recognized as one of the leading products of its kind for the industry.

Digital Prodigy

Prior to joining Weber Shandwick, Bough was the youngest senior vice president at Ruder Finn; he also founded one of the hottest boutique interactive PR shops, Ruder Finn Interactive. At 23, Bough began teaching digital courses at NYU’s graduate program in publishing studies. He also developed the technology curriculum for New York City’s alternative education schools to help high school students gain a competitive edge for future jobs in this space.

Budding Entrepreneur

Two years after getting his first computer at 10 years old, Bough founded and edited a youth entertainment magazine called *WHAT!* (Washington Heights Action Teens), which was distributed throughout New York City and led to his becoming the youngest person to ever appear before the New York State Board of Regents. ■



Tracy Calabrese ★ Senior Account Executive, MWW Group Inc. • Age: 26

In a mere four years, Tracy Calabrese has catapulted from MWW Group intern to senior account executive, a quick rise reflective of her passion for PR. After relocating in 2006 from the agency's headquarters in East Rutherford, N.J., to Dallas, Calabrese helped establish MWW's presence in the Southwest. She also manages top accounts, which include Samsung Telecommunications America, proving again that when drive and talent are involved, age is not a barrier for succeeding in PR.

Professional Turning Point

"It was only a few months after I started working on the Samsung Mobile account at MWW Group that they launched

the Samsung BlackJack, one of Samsung's best-selling smartphones to date," Calabrese says. "Working collaboratively with Cingular Wireless, now AT&T, and Microsoft, their respective PR agencies, as well as event planning firm BNC, we executed a multi-tiered launch campaign. In addition, the Samsung strategic marketing division began a week-long promotion with *The Jimmy Kimmel Show*, which gave away BlackJacks to the audience the first night and featured skits with the device each night thereafter."

Pros & Cons

"The most rewarding part of my job is seeing a program start with a basic idea and evolve into a full campaign.

"The one thing I find most difficult is how things can change so quickly. You work toward a goal and then something happens that throws a wrench in your plans. It can be frustrating, but in such a fast-paced environment, there is always something else to work on." ■



Sandra Fine ★ Senior Account Executive, rbb Public Relations • Age: 28

Sandra Fine's strategic approach and client-friendly insight at rbb Public Relations have resulted in low employee attrition, high productivity and prestigious industry laurels for campaigns she's steered. Fine has also implemented a mentoring program, in which interns and recent college grads receive a thorough orientation in an area of public relations (i.e. business development, media relations, etc.) from a staffer expertly versed in that specialty. A public relations major at the University of Florida, Fine says she has always known what she wanted to do professionally and, once embarking on that career, has never looked back.

Braving the Storm—Literally

"A defining moment in my life was the destruction of my home and displacement of my family as a result of Hurricane Andrew," Fine says. "It's no coincidence that 15 years later, my most successful, award-winning work has been on storm-related programs—rbb won a Silver Anvil and an Award of Excellence for a campaign to provide free TracFone Wireless phones and minutes to Hurricane Katrina evacuees. We exceeded FCC expectations on number of phones delivered through temporary storefronts, a traveling road tour and events with elected officials. It felt great to come full circle and give back to a cause so close to my heart."

The Metrics Conundrum

"Public relations can be so tough to measure. As professionals, we should continue to come up with ways to merchandise the work we do, and make sure it's going up the ladder to C-level executives. We should think beyond advertising equivalencies and media impressions." ■



Rachel Foltz ★ Director, External Relations, Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide • Age: 27

Whether it's smoothing the ruffled feathers of deadline-crazed journalists or serving as the youngest member ever of Ogilvy PR's global management committee, Foltz has parlayed her innate diplomacy and troubleshooting skills into a high-octane career—and in an astonishingly brief time span (five years). Her tireless efforts on behalf of Ogilvy PR executives and campaigns have led to numerous placements in top-tier media outlets, such as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Fast Company* and *U.S. News and World Report*.

Stepping Up to the Plate

"Most defining campaign was when I was asked to step

in to manage an event for Ogilvy's parent company, WPP, after it acquired several new firms," she says. "While I served as a representative of the larger holding company, it was then I realized the amount of pride I had in Ogilvy PR, the brand and our people. This got me interested in actually working on behalf of the agency's communications."

BlackBerry Addict

"Aside from my BlackBerry, which I can't live without, I really find wikis and other sharing sites incredibly valuable, especially when working with international colleagues. And while we are using social media tools like Flickr, Twitter and Facebook more and more, I still value the face-to-face meet-

ing or phone call with my supervisors or team."

Spanning the Globe

"I can honestly say the most rewarding part about my job is working with Ogilvy's senior leaders from around the world. Each of them has taught me incredible business and life lessons and involve me in various aspects of their roles, which I truly appreciate." ■



PRNews STUDENT OF THE YEAR



Jessica R. Borchert, New Mexico State University

A public relations major at New Mexico State University, Borchert enjoys the distinction of accruing more paid media job experiences in her specialty than any other student at the school. Whether it's working for local TV stations, a U.S. senator or a tourism bureau, this college senior is poised on the cusp of a brilliant career.

Christopher Fuller ★ PR Manager, Pizza Hut • Age: 31

After hearing how Detroit's Lions wide receiver Roy Williams received flak in the press for not tipping his pizza delivery drivers, Pizza Hut's Christopher Fuller got a clever idea: Why not arrange for Williams to mend his transgressive ways by walking in the shoes of one of Pizza Hut's delivery drivers for a day? Williams agreed to the offer, generating priceless photo ops and press coverage by outlets such as ESPN. This creativity is a stock-in-trade for Fuller, who has been a tireless leader behind the scenes, guiding the Pizza Hut franchisees nationwide as they navigate the complex media nuances in their local markets.

Beltway Baptism

"Less than one year out of college, I was working on

Capitol Hill as a press secretary for a Texas congressman, Mac Thornberry, who introduced a Homeland Security Bill more than six months before 9/11," Fuller says. "His wisdom and foresight in recognizing the need for change in the way we secure our homeland quickly catapulted him into the national limelight. While my experience was limited, I was suddenly handling calls from high-profile reporters including David S. Broder at *The Washington Post*. Also, when the congressman's bill was reintroduced I coordinated a joint press conference with Sen. Joseph Lieberman, which was heavily attended by national media. It was a make-or-break experience for me and, while trying, it gave me confidence to know that I could achieve in this industry."

Family Values

"I'm a firm believer in full dedication to work while I'm there and full dedication to my family when it's their time. That means that I value a flexible work schedule and an understanding from my managers that occasionally I may opt for a work-from-home day or need to leave early to attend a family event. I'm very fortunate to work for a company that values and encourages this work ethic." ■



Jessica Lange ★ Account Executive, Microsoft Game Studios, Edelman Worldwide PR • Age: 24

Since joining Edelman in spring 2007, Jessica Lange has become a supernova in an intensely competitive industry. Having jumped from intern to account executive on the Microsoft Game Studios team in a year, Lange's highest profile projects to date have been the much-heralded Halo 3 launch and the urban outreach program for Xbox 360, which culminated in extensive media coverage of the "Limited Edition Grand Theft Auto" console. When not clocking in hours at her pressure-cooker job, Lange, a graduate of University of North Carolina/Chapel Hill's PR program, volunteers for The Trevor Project, a suicide/crisis hotline for gay youth.

A Good Team Is the Best Resource

"I am constantly using my Xbox teammates as resources to help brainstorm new and exciting tactics, create messaging, integrate campaign efforts and provide insight for media outreach," Lange says. "Digital tools that track coverage and create media lists are helpful, but if I don't know how to do something, someone on my team does, and there is no digital resource that could replace that kind of group expertise."

Merit Trumps Youth

"I hear a lot about Gen Y being self-important brats in the workforce with an unfounded sense of entitlement,

but anyone who steps into this industry with that attitude will get a reality check pretty quickly. You sink or swim based on your own merit. This job is too competitive to stand around waiting for applause; you have to be constantly proving that you deserve to be where you are. Some people might find that unhealthy, but I know my managers wouldn't expect anything less, and neither would I." ■



Nicole Messier ★ Account Director, SHIFT Communications • Age: 28

"Who should we get to prep Al Gore for his speaking engagement at the RSA Conference?"

"Give that one to Nicole."

"What about handling press and the Secret Service for Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff?"

"Hmmm... how about Nicole?"

Jackie of All Trades

That's one of costs (benefits?) of being able to take on big jobs and making people forget about your youth: The big jobs always seem to fall on you. Not that Messier complains—it's just the way things have turned out for the six-year PR pro. After joining SHIFT in November 2007, she's advanced to the

point where she's leading a team of 10 PR pros and has, according to Cathy Summers, VP of account services at SHIFT, tripled her account base. Messier's team took on new client Goodmail Systems in February 2008, and after learning in May that the company was getting a new CEO and client contact, they got to work, securing 33 briefings resulting in 60 pieces of coverage in outlets such as CBS News, *Washington Post*, *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *New York Times*. Speaking of branding, Goodmail Systems branded Messier one of the best three PR people they've ever worked with.

Networking With Bigwigs

For the 2008 RSA information security conference, Messier and her team helped secure and track 283 pieces of coverage, a 51% increase compared with the coverage of the 2007 conference. She also helped the conference reach out to the blogging community by granting press credentials to bloggers and issuing RSA Conference "Blogger Badges" for use on the accredited blogs. Beyond that, she had to meet with Gore at SFO Airport and brief him, and deal with Chertoff and the Secret Service. And there was one more item to manage at the conference—the bomb-sniffing dogs. Guess who they gave that job to. ■

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PRNews STUDENT OF THE YEAR



Donald M. Davis, II, The University of Akron

Combining his communications skills with his passion for the environment, Davis has been the driving force behind Environmental Akron, a student organization. Using news releases and the campus e-mail server, the college senior has conveyed the mission of Environmental Akron like a seasoned pro.

Erin Naman ★ PR Project Manager, TNT & TBS • Age: 28

As PR leader at two well-established cable networks, TNT and TBS, Erin Naman's work gets laid out in public for all to see. She led publicity campaigns for the launch of the second seasons of *Saving Grace* and *The Bill Engvall Show*, and managed 216 Emmy Award submissions. For the *Saving Grace* launch, Naman came up with creative ways to put the time-strapped star Holly Hunter to work promoting the show, such as tying in publicity for *Saving Grace* with the star's appearance in May on Hollywood Blvd., where she received a star on the Walk of Fame. Naman and her team weren't limited to the ways of old Hollywood, though: They also reached out to women bloggers to generate word of mouth for *Saving Grace*, and arranged to have the show be a co-sponsor of the BlogHer Conference.

Career-Defining Three-Hour Tour

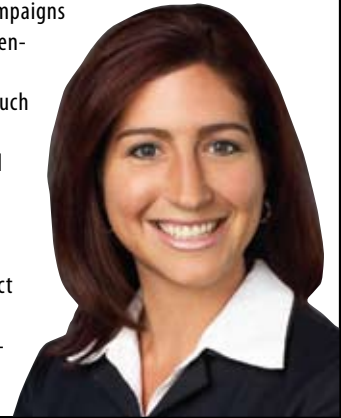
"Believe it or not, one career-defining campaign was *The Real Gilligan's Island*, a reality competition show that pitted one cast of nostalgic sitcom act-a-likes against another," Naman says. "I worked under a great mentor and made a lot of 'growth mistakes' that I still reflect on today."

Most Important Resources

"I have no idea what people did before computers, e-mail or the Internet. The only thing more valuable would be the knowledge I learn from my boss by watching, listening, consulting and collaborating with her on a daily basis."

Gratification From Grace

"I like working on campaigns that have further commentary than just the pure entertainment factor, [such as the one for *Saving Grace*]. It is inspirational to see a free-spirited, strong-willed woman on television. The press has embraced that aspect of the show, and it is reflected in viewer feedback as well." ■



Margie Maddux Newman ★ Principal, Hall Strategies • Age: 29

Margie Newman's PR shop, Hall Strategies, is a modest one, but her PR skills are anything but. Like a battle-scarred veteran, she works with traditional media, honing relationships with reporters and spreading the gospel about the power of social media. Her advocacy work on behalf of the "Smoke Free Tennessee" campaign, which included hosting rallies, crafting campaign messages and promoting a letter-writing campaign, helped ease passage of anti-smoking legislation in a state that ranks third nationally in tobacco production. And for the Southern Festival of Books she created a Twitter account and a Facebook fan page.

The Book on Newman

"I'm not sure I'll ever top my role as communications director on Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen's Books from Birth

Foundation team that took Dolly Parton's Imagination Library statewide," Newman says. "A staff of four grew the nonprofit from the ground up; 24 months later, the program was flourishing in all 95 counties. Since then, more than 4.9 million Imagination Library books have been delivered to Tennessee's children."

Don't Take Away My...

"...Gootodo electronic to-do list and Google Reader. I'm a big believer in David Allen's 'Getting Things Done' approach to productivity, so having one list and one place to gather news, Google Alerts and blog posts is a priority, if not an addiction. My enthusiasm for new media is often problematic because although the firm appreciates strategic technology applications, getting

current and potential clients up to that same comfort level can be quite a challenge."

Sound of Nashville

"I live in the heart of downtown Nashville, so my front yard is the Country Music Hall of Fame; my ambient sound is songwriters playing the honky-tonks. And my desire for hockey is fulfilled about 300 feet from my front door." ■



Sunok Pak ★ Supervisor, Hill & Knowlton New York • Age: 26



Never mind that Sunok Pak was born a year into Ronald Reagan's first term as president—at Hill & Knowlton's San Francisco office she's already leading campaigns for clients Qualcomm MEMS Technologies, THX, Project Better Place and eBay. She's developed one-on-one relationships with clients' senior

management to make things happen fast—a necessity for her office's technology roster. Among her triumphs, she helped eBay launch its online classifieds business—long the domain of Craigslist—and scored stand-alone coverage of the service, Kijiji, in last year's New Year's Eve edition of the *New York Times*.

Cracking Craigslist

"Microsoft tried. Google tried," the *Times* piece leads off. "Now it's eBay's turn to see if it can dethrone the Web's most spectacularly successful underdog, Craigslist. The Kijiji unit

of eBay, a free classified ads service covering 13 countries online, was introduced in the United States in late June, and has already achieved modest success," it continues. Now that's placement.

Spanning the Globe

After helping Hill & Knowlton win the Qualcomm account, Pak took the account worldwide by expanding the partnership to include H&K's U.K. and Beijing offices, for which she led the launch of Qualcomm MEMS color displays. ■



Matthew W. Kelly, Eastern Illinois University

At Illinois University, Matthew Kelly has his hands in many pies. An associate director of the campus student-run PR firm, the 2008 college grad co-edited the monthly newsletter for PR students and served as the chapter president for PRSSA.

PRNews
STUDENT OF THE YEAR

Tim Paynter ★ **Communications and Marketing Project Manager, Northrop Grumman Corp. • Age: 30**

Earlier this year, Northrop Grumman caught defense industry analysts by surprise when it won a \$35 billion defense contract to produce air-refueling tankers for the U.S. Air Force, beating out rival Boeing. When the controversial news broke, Northrop Grumman's go-to spokesperson was Tim Paynter, who offered such choice quotes to *Florida Today* as, "We didn't consider it an upset, in terms of our aircraft. . . it was an upset in terms of unseating the incumbent."

Flying High

But Paynter is more than a quote machine. He was the sole communications and marketing tactician working full

time helping to capture this contract, leading all facets of an integrated communications and marketing campaign. He developed an advertising campaign highlighting the attributes of Northrop Grumman's aircraft, which used as its slogan: "The Future Demands More." Messaging in the ad campaign was even referred to by Air Force Gen. Arthur Lichte during the Pentagon press briefing announcing the selection of Northrop Grumman for the air-refueling tanker contract.

Mobilizer of the Masses

After the Air Force made its selection, Paynter organized three large-scale employee rallies to help curry

political support for Northrop Grumman when Boeing protested the Air Force's decision. Held in Ohio, California and Florida, the rallies got some major media coverage and was well attended by elected officials—the result of an indefatigable PR soldier working in the trenches, a veteran at age 30. ■



Melissa Perlman ★ **Manager, Media Relations, Office Depot • Age: 26**

Four years in PR at a single company is a lot of time, particularly if you started at the company at age 22. There's a lot you can soak up, and a lot of responsibility to assume, if you're willing to put your heart and soul into your work. That's exactly what Melissa Perlman has done at Office Depot, where she has nearly single-handedly taken on the challenge of communicating Office Depot's environmental initiatives to its key stakeholders.

Defining Initiative So Far

"In partnership with Office Depot's director of environmental strategy, I have helped to craft Office Depot's reputation as a corporate leader in the area of environmental sustainability," Perlman says. "One of my personal favorite PR tactics is the use of an Environmental Internet Press Kit, which I built from scratch and continue to populate and update."

Secret Weapon

"Without the support, understanding and buy-in from the company's executive team, we would not be able to accomplish all that we are able to. [Also,] the key is to keep information straightforward and simple to comprehend; digital media has made this focus possible."

A Gen-Yer's Perspective

"As a professional under the age of 30 at a \$15.5 billion company with 49,000 associates around the world, it would be easy to be brushed to the side when first meeting with company executives. However, I have made it my priority to alter this perception by proving myself in terms of intelligence, strategic thinking, accountability and resilience."

The Truth About Top PR Pros

"Public relations professionals often get a bad rep

because there is an assumption that they are stretching the truth or spinning the story to benefit their client or company. Office Depot is a corporate leader in terms of sustainability, and I feel both lucky and honored to be able to share our positive story with a broad range of stakeholders." ■



James Robinson ★ **Vice President, APCO Worldwide • Age: 29**

For a person of any age, James Robinson has been around. He was born in the U.K., lived and worked in Asia, speaks Mandarin and Chinese (as well as English) and has risen to VP at global communications consultancy APCO Worldwide, after joining the company as an intern in 1999. He's held positions for APCO in Indonesia, China and, now, New York, where over the last year he has led client work for Microsoft and the Clinton Global Initiative. For the latter, he set up editorial board meetings with *Time*, *BusinessWeek* and *The Economist*, and helped craft the initiative's messaging.

PR Beyond Borders

"So far I've worked in Jakarta, Beijing and New York, and I know

that my experiences have helped shape my worldview and be valuable to my clients."

Talent, Talent, Talent

"The most critical resource needed to succeed is a dedicated team that has diverse ideas and real-world experience. Talented people remain central to developing strategy and delivering truly outstanding results for clients."

The Gen Y Factor

"We tend to value a high degree of flexibility and the ability to make personal connections rather than simply earning financial rewards. Thankfully, APCO's management is focused on creating these kinds of opportunities in the workplace."

Off-Hours Project

"I've recently completed a project with the Taproot Foundation, where I worked with a team of volunteers to rebuild the Web site of the Albert G. Oliver Program, an organization that helps disadvantaged youth to achieve educational excellence." ■



PRNews **STUDENT OF THE YEAR**



Natalie R. Virgilio, La Salle University

A recent graduate of La Salle University, Virgilio helped create the school's PRSSA chapter, serving as its secretary. Enjoying a string of internships at renowned companies such as Campbell Soup, she parlayed her last stint at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia into a job, thus launching a career in healthcare PR.

“**TALENT** HITS A TARGET NO ONE ELSE
CAN HIT. **GENIUS** HITS A TARGET
NO ONE ELSE CAN SEE.”

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

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