

News & Views

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PRSA Practitioner Spotlight

Vic Beck, S4 and the US Navy Reserve

[Vic Beck](#), a long-time Boston PRSA member, has had a distinguished career in both the public and private sectors. Currently, Vic is Director of Communication Planning and Strategy at [S4 Inc.](#) and a Captain and Public Affairs Officer in the U.S. Navy Reserve. We sat down with Vic to ask him about being a communicator in both the public and private sectors, and for some tips on networking.

What are the differences in communicating for the military versus private industry?

Being a communicator is not all that different in either setting. The Navy Reserve is a part-time commitment, so I attempt to treat it like a client sometimes -- though it's a large, complex client. No matter the setting, the basic principles of communications still apply.

How has your experience in the military shaped your communications style?

My agency and military experiences have really complemented each career. Not unlike life at an agency, in the military you learn to take on several roles and carry out several different types of tasks. In fact, my ability to multitask is required in both of my careers.

In the military I have run many major media events and activities like Fleet Week in NYC and most recently as the Chief of Media Operations in Iraq. The combination of skills I obtained over the years has really helped me. Some would say that I ran media operations in Iraq like a large public affairs agency.

Can you talk a little about networking? I've heard you are one of the

From the Editor

This month, Vic Beck, a longtime Boston PRSA member, shares his experiences as a military communicator, his views on the media landscape and thoughts on networking. We also speak with Frank Quaratiello about day-to-day newsroom operations and how to pitch his paper, *The Boston Herald*.

In "What to do When You're Looking" we provide tips for those seeking new jobs. Lastly, we have updates on the chapter's annual student scholarship award.

Happy reading!

Chris Ranjitkar
News & Views
Editor

best networkers in town.



Networking is a great way to build and foster relationships. Word-of-mouth referrals and face-to-face contact are almost certainly the best endorsements. There is a certain mindset you need to have when you are going to different events. Networking is about meeting people and helps you get new perspectives on things since you are meeting so many different individuals.

What networking tips can you provide PRSA Boston members?

Some things to keep in mind as you try to build and expand your network: Networking is all about people, so network because you find people interesting.

Be willing to go to several different types of events. I recently went to Washington, D.C., for client work and, because I had the time, I attended an IABC (International Association of Business Communicators) breakfast, out of which I was able to meet several new people.

Don't start networking just when you need a new job. This is the hardest time to network. Build your network when you don't need it the most, then it will be there when you do need it.

At any event, scope out the room and pick out five people you would like to speak with, no matter who they are. Make it a goal to speak with those individuals throughout the event.

Use the event as a venue to meet people who you want to meet. Invite a new contact or an old colleague you haven't seen in a while to come to the event.

In what ways do you believe the media landscape is changing?

Media channels are splintering in ways we don't fully comprehend yet. However, whatever the changes, we as public relations professionals need to be involved in the process, do our best to understand these changes and be an integral part of the change. *CRR*

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Don't Miss!

Integrating Social Media in Crisis Planning

Join this group teleseminar on how to factor social media tools and tactics into your business continuity and crisis management plans.

April 21, 2009
3:00-4:30 PM
Waltham

Quick Links

Join the chapter's groups

Visit PRSA National's blog

What to Do When You're Looking

Five Tips All PR Job Seekers Should Follow

Frustrating.

That's how [Leigh Larkin](#) describes her job hunt. A native of Orange, Mass., Larkin received her master's degree in corporate communication last summer. But not even the sizzling sun of late July could thaw a frigid job market. "There just weren't a whole lot of results," says Larkin. "The jobs disappeared."

She's still in the hunt, and she's certainly not alone. PR professionals throughout the Boston area face a shared dilemma -- too many candidates for too few jobs.

However, the following tips could facilitate your job search process.

Clean up your digital footprint. Pull any questionable photos off your social networking profile. They could prevent your next job interview. "These photos are like tattoos - they get older and less attractive faster than you expect," notes PRSA member and Salem State College faculty member [Robert Brown](#).

Increase your visibility. Take advantage of free online networking tools. Create a profile on professional networking sites such as [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#). Once you're satisfied with your professional profile, don't be afraid to create a hyperlink to your profile within your electronic resume. As Brown adds, "These tools will establish a platform for job seekers to promote themselves in a fiercely competitive job market."

Build your skills. Use your free time wisely. "Hone preexisting skills such as public speaking and time management," suggests Dorie Clark, principal of [Clark Strategic Communications](#). Start a blog about your industry. "This will keep you current, and establish you as a thought leader."

Get involved and volunteer. "If you haven't already, start volunteering with community organizations to build your skill set in communications and related fields," says Clark. Your volunteer record will be an important criterion for hiring employers.

Don't rely only on online job boards or Internet postings. Some sites aren't reviewed consistently, so you may find stale postings for positions that are already filled. You also may run into postings from recruiters that solely are trying to build up their 'bank' of potential candidates to send clients for future vacancies.

Follow these five tips to be well-prepared for that next career move.

[Joseph DeNisco](#), M.A. Candidate, Emerson College

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President's Letter: The Geek Speaks

Dear Colleagues:

One of my Guilty Pleasures (ease back from the edge of your seat -- this isn't going to qualify for PerezHilton.com) is the CBS crime drama, *Numb3rs*.

What I hesitate admitting publicly is how much I enjoy the series' geekier moments. Show after show, brainy math professor Charlie Eps solves that week's felony simply by crunching some numbers.

Which brings me to public relations, a communications discipline generally devoid of anything as complex as long division. (I recently heard a comm school described as the College of Minimal Math.) It should come as no surprise, then, how often the lowly spreadsheet is overlooked as a valuable PR tool.

Yes, more than a few media lists are maintained in MS-Excel, even when far better contact management software is available. But it's also true that many time-consuming, labor-intensive PR tasks lend themselves quite well to spreadsheet format. A trio of examples:

- Project Management -- assign responsibilities, countdown until milestones, monitor (and easily total) budget items.
- To-Do Lists -- sort, by multiple hierarchies in categories; measure age and tally the status of incomplete activities.
- Coverage Analysis -- compare and assess messaging differences among groups of clips.

There's a lot more. For me, each spreadsheet triggers a Guilty Pleasure akin to Professor Eps fighting crime by regression analysis: watching Excel automatically do in a screen flash what would have taken me hours to calculate or record.

In the coming months, I plan to shine up a few of my favorite PR workarounds and post them on the chapter Web site for all to test drive. In the meantime, I'd love to hear from others on this topic -- [send me email](#) with details of your own experience in applying technology to PR's backoffice.



Jack Jackson
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PRSA Media Spotlight: Five Questions for *The Boston Herald's* Frank Quaratiello



Boston is has long been a two-newspaper town. The Boston Herald and The Boston Globe both are important and institutions when it comes to reporting breaking, important news in politics, arts/lifestyle and business. This month, we were fortunate to have the opportunity to interview Frank Quaratiello, Deputy Business Editor at The Boston Herald. Mr. Quaratiello, originally from New England, graduated from Stanford University and worked as a reporter and editor in California before moving back East and working as an editor for The Concord Monitor. He has been with The Herald for the past 12 years.

Can you describe your typical day at the helm of *The Boston Herald's* business section?

I work with our reporters, photographers and graphic artists to bring our readers the best business section every day. My daily routine usually revolves around three meetings. At a morning meeting, top editors at the paper get together to plan the day's coverage. In the afternoon, we meet again to place stories in the paper and decide what will be featured on the front page. Then, I hold a separate meeting with my production editors to design the next day's business section. During the day, I am working with reporters and other editors on stories, either assigning them or listening to ideas.

What are your pet peeves about PR people?

I prefer to get story pitches from someone who has read our paper and our section and understands the types of stories we do. I prefer to get story pitches via e-mail with clearly worded, descriptive subject lines. I don't mind a phone call about a pitch that you've sent first via e-mail, especially when the story is time-sensitive. But just one phone call, please. I really dislike when someone tries to pitch me a story that is not new.

What is the best way to pitch you and your team?

By e-mail to frankq@bostonherald.com with an accurate, descriptive subject line. Good PR people do their homework. They take the time to learn who they should talk to about different story ideas. They pitch timely, newsworthy stories and, of course, they pitch them to *The Herald* first and never *The Globe*.

In light of several newspapers (including *The Globe*) facing financial difficulties, how has *The Herald* managed to stay relatively healthy?

The Herald's owner Pat Purcell is a smart businessman and an excellent newspaperman. He sold Community Newspaper Co. at the right time and eliminated *The Herald's* debt burden. *The Herald* has made some tough cuts over the years, but the folks who are left here are a scrappy, hard-working bunch.

How will Boston's media landscape change over the next few years? How do you see *The Boston Herald* changing?

I'm not sure how the TV and radio landscapes will change, but I think you'll see increasing economic pressure on *The Herald* and *The Globe* even as the economy turns around. I would not be surprised if *The Globe* gets a new owner or moves to a subscription-based online model, given The New York Times Co.'s financial challenges. I think *The Herald* and bostonherald.com will be around for a long time. We'll tighten our belts as needed, but we'll likely be around for your grandchildren to read, though they'll be reading us on their Kindles. **CRR**

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Applications due May 29

Calling all Area PR Students: Annual PRSA Boston Scholarship Up for Grabs

PRSA Boston is now accepting candidates for its 2009-2010 academic year scholarship. [Applications](#) are available on the chapter Web site and must be submitted no later than May 29, 2009.

The \$2,000 grant provides support on the basis of financial need and academic merit to current college students or researchers in the field of communications. Undergraduate and graduate students attending a college or university in eastern Massachusetts in the 2009-2010 academic year are eligible, as are individuals conducting public relations or communications. Students working in an unpaid internship at a nonprofit organization are also eligible to apply.

Judges are looking for individuals with a "spark" and enthusiasm about communications, who possess a strong desire to launch a career in PR and seek to contribute to the field. Scholarship applicants should consider originality, creativity and writing style as they complete their applications, including details on internships and life experience as they relate to public relations.

The chapter's scholarship winner will be announced at a chapter meeting this fall.

[2009-2010 PRSA Boston Scholarship Application](#)

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