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PR Job-Outlook in Boston

An Interview with Ted Chaloner of Chaloner Associates

With the economy and technology evolving rapidly, what will be the hottest fields in Boston public relations in the coming years? What skill sets will be most important? In today's job market, what will be most important for both senior and junior practitioners? We sat down with Ted Chaloner to discuss these and other questions for this issue of *News & Views*.



Ted Chaloner, President of PR search firm Chaloner Associates.

What will be the hottest fields in Boston public relations in the coming years?

The fields in Boston that have typically offered the most opportunities for public relations practitioners are the ones that are important to our region's overall economy. These fields include healthcare, technology, education and finance. While the public relations landscape is changing, the areas mentioned will continue to offer opportunities to practitioners.

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Social Media and the Future of Journalism

Christopher Ranjitkar

In late May, PRSA Boston and the Social Media Club of Boston held a joint event to discuss social media and its impact on the future of journalism and public relations. The event consisted of a panel discussion featuring four experts on new media: Robin Lubbock, Director of New Media, WBUR; Ted McEnroe, Director of Digital Media, NECN; David Wallace, Managing Partner, Gamechange LLC, and Adjunct Professor, Emerson College; and Howard Sholkin, Director of Communications and Marketing Programs, IDG.

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Shuffle Up and Deal for Charity

Mark W. McClennan, APR

The 2nd Annual PRSA Boston/PR Newswire Charity Poker Tournament was a resounding success.

The night was fun and was a mix of agency and corporate players. The trash talking that went on before the event via email and Twitter was half the fun. We had people of all skill levels, from both the corporate and agency sides.

Dan Evans, a great PR Newswire executive, proved he can do more than answer frantic phone calls from PR

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Pharmaceuticals, biotech and medical devices will continue to grow in prominence in the Boston area and will be major employers for practitioners. Newer fields that will provide a growing number of jobs for public relations practitioners include green technology and biofuels.

What are the skill sets employers are looking for these days?

Besides traditional media and public relations skill sets, there is growing demand for practitioners to have experience with new media and social media.

What advice can you give to a junior practitioner at the beginning of his or her career?

Internships are major differentiators when it comes to finding your first job. It is not uncommon these days to find some outstanding candidates with multiple internships under their wings. Learn to network and get to know people across the field. Find a mentor who can answer your questions and provide guidance through your first few years.

What advice can you give to a mid-level or senior-level practitioner?

Public relations is an evolving field, so continue to educate yourself and update your skill sets as often as possible. Continue to network and get to know people outside your company. Most importantly, learn how to deal with C-suite executives; after all, they will be the people to whom you will be providing counsel.

How will the field change in the coming years?

Change is constant. Public relations in two or three years will be different from public relations today. Media is increasingly being driven by consumers more than “media” in the traditional sense.

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All four agreed that social media was changing the face of journalism and how it is practiced. Journalists operate 24/7 and the concept of a story first appearing in next morning’s broadcast or print news is quickly being replaced by stories breaking online not long after an interview. Likewise, many journalists are no longer focused on a particular form of media and can be expected to record an interview for a story that may be produced for audio, video, print and online dissemination.

Along with the concept of journalism, the way that media organizations operate is also changing. McEnroe and Lubbock discussed how NECN and WBUR were dealing with the changes, while Sholkin provided a perspective on how IDG has already adapted to these changes. They gave the audience a glimpse into the various new business models that these traditional print, television and radio organizations were developing and how they affected both news delivery and the reporter.

The concept of the journalist and the quality of journalism were also discussed. Some panelists also opined that some news items on the Internet are not checked for accuracy to the same degree that they are in more mainstream media, such as print or broadcast outlets, presenting a challenge for PR professionals managing the reputations of their clients. All four panelists discussed how the Internet and new journalism were interactive.

“As a news media organization, you set the quality of journalism,” said McEvoy. “With new media, the Web creates a forum for feedback.”

An audio recording of the event is available [here](#).

Shuffle up and deal for charity – Cont. from page 1

people asking about the suite of PR Newswire products and took down the tourney. He is the 2008 Champion. Darlene Hollywood (the current VP of Programs for PRSA Boston and a talented PR counselor) proved that she knows her way around the felt and finished second, taking Top Agency Player honors. Tim Whitman from Schwartz Communications finished 3rd.

It was great to see so many new faces, and so many different agencies represented.



Some of the players: David Weiner, PR Newswire; Darlene Hollywood, Top Agency Player; Daniel Evans, PR Newswire - Champion and Top Corporate Player; Mark W. McClellan, APR - Tourney organizer and immediate past-president, PRSA Boston

Chapter Notes

Diane Davis Award – The Board of PRSA Boston has voted unanimously to rename the PRSA Boston Beacon Award in honor of the late Diane Davis, APR, Fellow PRSA, a longtime leader in the profession and a former president of the Boston Chapter. The Diane Davis Beacon Award will honor a Boston-area public relations practitioner for his or her lifetime achievement in the profession. The award will be presented in November at our annual meeting.

Ms. Davis, who passed away earlier this year, was one of the first women in New England to open her own public relations agency -- Diane Davis Associates. She ran the agency for more than 30 years and was named a Fellow of PRSA for her pioneering work on behalf of New England professional associations and educational institutions. She served PRSA as Boston Chapter president, chair of the Northeast District, National Board member, National Assembly delegation member, and National Nominating Committee member. Ms. Davis lectured on public relations at a number of area colleges, was a mentor to many young pr professionals, and was active in the community, serving on the Board of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce and the United Way of Massachusetts Bay.

PRSA Committee declines to issue student award - After careful consideration, the PRSA Boston Scholarship Grant Committee has decided not to issue a PRSA Boston Scholarship Grant in 2008. The committee determined that the applicants, although worthy students of public relations no doubt, did not achieve the level of excellence in their grant applications that the committee has come to expect for a winner. This marks the first time in the eight-year history of the scholarship program that the committee has reached this decision.

In the words of the chairman of the Grant Committee, Art Dimond, the decision “was an extremely difficult one for us. Ultimately, we reached it because, while we thought that each application had merit, we concluded that no one application had a special quality – a spark, an originality – that we have perennially sought.”

Have an idea for an article? Know about news of interest to your fellow PR colleagues? Have a recent personnel change, new hire or a position available? Contact Christopher Ranjitkar, News & Views Editor at Christopher.ranjitkar@gmail.com for inclusion in the newsletter.