

news & views

Volume 48, Issue 3

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MONTHLY PROGRAM

Thursday, March 14

LOCATION

Sheraton Four Points,
Waltham

PROGRAM

Maximizing Your In-
vestment in Trade
Shows

COST

\$40 members; \$55 non-
members.

RESERVATIONS

Advance registration is required. RSVP by March 11, 2002. Send a check, payable to PRSA/Boston Chapter, to Paul Wetzel, APR, Chapter Administrator, 45 Broad Street, Boston, MA 02109, no later than Monday, December 10, or, email: wetzelpaul@msn.com Master Card and VISA are accepted.

Boston Pro Bono Pros

Special thanks to Vicki Ritterband who is this month's *News & Views* guest editor. Vicki provides us with a fresh look at pro bono public relations in Boston from the client and practitioner points of view. She shares a taste of who's doing what and why, as well as an overview of how you can volunteer your public relations skills to help make a difference. Thanks Vicki. Nice work

Here's what you'll find in this month's issue:

- ◆ **March 14th Program: Maximizing Your Investment in Trade Shows**
- ◆ **Hang In There –Letter from the President**
- ◆ **Finding a Worthy Cause**

Finding a Worthy Cause

By Vicki Ritterband
News & Views Guest Editor

You've finally decided to put your money where your mouth is, and offer your PR talents gratis to a worthy cause. But there's no listing for "worthy causes" in the Yellow Pages. How do you find an organization that would welcome your free services?

People who do pro bono work say they usually don't have to look far.

- ◆ **Pro Bono from the Client Perspective**
- ◆ **Pro Bono Work: A Professional and Personal Morale Builder**
- ◆ **Solos Do Pro Bono**
- ◆ **February Program Review: Overcoming Spokesperson Roadblocks**

"Tids & Bits":

- ◆ *Stop The Presses - New Editor Onboard*
- ◆ *Summer Interns Available*
- ◆ *PRSA Publications Winning Awards*
- ◆ *PRSSA Students Take on Travel Client*
- ◆ *Calling for Bronze Anvil Submissions*
- ◆ *February Was PRSA Ethics Month*
- ◆ *Professional Connections*

" Start out with what interests you: religious, civic, political" said Howard Sholkin, PRSA immediate past president and a seasoned volunteer. Sholkin has done pro bono work for his Newton synagogue for years, and is now working free for a nonprofit called GetPsychedSports.org. The founder of GetPsychedSports.org got in touch with Sholkin, after finding his contact information on the PRSA website.

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Letter from the President **HANG IN THERE...**

By Jeff Seideman, President

If there were anyone still wondering whether our industry is in a slump, or how bad it is, the February 15th edition of the Boston Business Journal left little doubt. That issue containing the BBJ's annual list of Boston's top 25 PR firms arrived just a few days after the BBJ's Book of Lists from 2001, including last year's top 25 firms. Looking at the two lists side-by-side was, well, painful.

There's always some minor movement on these lists, with a few firms moving up a notch or two and a few moving down. Some names dropped off or merged and a few made it onto the list for the first time. It's fun to speculate and gossip. But the list represents a sizeable chunk of agency employment in the Boston area. Real people with real rent and mortgages to pay. The 25 largest PR firms in the Boston area in 2002 have 1100 professionals on staff, a *drop* of about 560 from 2001 – a loss of fully one-third of their staffs. There are some who suspect the results were actually worse than reported. Remember too, this is just agency employment, not corporate, government or non-profit.

How do these numbers stack up with other data? We know that the Boston Chapter has had to update its email list more than once in the last six months. Indeed, in October, when we emailed to a recently updated list of 450 members, to alert them to a job hunting skills workshop in November, we got 125 bouncebacks. Of course, it was the intended recipients of those emails that bounced back that were most in need of the course. Still, we got a record turnout by word-of-mouth.

What else do we know? In the article accompanying the February 15th list, reporter Sheri Qualters told the story of a six-person suburban firm that received 280 resumes for an account executive spot. I know of a high-end corporate position

that drew 500 applications and of a recent entry-level opening that generated 300 responses in three days.

Is there any good news? Definitely. Everyone, from Alan Greenspan on down says the recession has hit bottom and the economy is beginning to turn around. The only real questions are: When? How robust will it be? and Which sectors will rebound first?

So, what do out-of-work practitioners do in the meantime? Don't panic. Keep job hunting, networking and all the other things. Also, use the time wisely to maintain skills, develop new ones and explore new market segments and PR specialties. Try something new. Senior practitioners can keep their strategic planning skills sharp by volunteering to work with the boards of non-profit organizations. Less experienced practitioners can also volunteer at non-profits, but might want to use the time to sharpen their writing skills by freelancing. If they came into public relations without a journalism background, now's the time to build a portfolio and let a crusty news editor critique their work. They'll become better PR people as a result.

For the chapter's part, we'll be introducing some initiatives in the near future to help unemployed members get their resumes out and to develop job hunting skills.

Hang in there.

February Was PRSA Ethics Month

The month is over, but the importance of ethics remains. The PRSA Board of Ethics and Professional Standards created materials for workshop and program development. Members can access Code of Ethics booklets, Decision-Making Guide business cards, an Ethics Education Power Point presentation, and seven ethics case studies and case study guides by contacting Judy Voss at judy.voss@prsa.org.

March 14th Program: Maximizing Your Investment in Trade Shows

Do you ever wonder if you're getting full value for your trade show dollars, or whether you should even be going to a particular show? Do you wonder what more you could do to maximize that investment? How you can stand out from the crowd at a trade show? How about learning from the mistakes of other exhibitors?

Often, exhibitors don't take full advantage of opportunities offered by the show organizers, and the media. And, even more often, they don't measure the outcomes.

Using tutorials, case studies, anecdotes and Q&As, an expert panel with agency, events, corporate and trade show management experience will offer tips on "maximizing your investment in trade shows." This program is designed for corporate managers and mid-level agency practitioners who have responsibility for trade show programs and budgets.

The panel of experts includes:

Barbara Wellnitz, principal and founder, Ryan Wellnitz & Associates, who has worked for more than 15 years with manufacturing, technology, financial services and professional services clients on trade show strategies and programs.

Mark O'Toole, vice president, The Castle Group, a Boston-based public relations and events management firm, with deep experience helping clients define and execute trade show strategies, participation and presence.

Howard Sholkin, director of corporate communications, Getronics Corporation. He has 20 years of high tech experience in product and service companies.

Wanda Whitson, who has more than 10 years' experience in public relations and event planning, most recently at Key 3 Media, the leading producer

of information technology tradeshows and conferences, including COMDEX and Net-World+Interop.

WHEN: Thursday, March 14, 2002, 6-9 PM. Networking and Buffet: 6-7 PM, Program 7- 9, including Q&A

WHERE: Sheraton Four Points Inn, Waltham (Exit 27A off Rt. 128)

COST: PRSA members: \$40; Nonmembers and guests: \$55; Students \$20. Advance registration is required before end of day Monday, March 11. Send registration information to Paul Wetzel, 45 Broad Street, Boston, 02109 or fax to 617-423-7812 or e-mail wetzel paul@msn.com. Master Card and Visa accepted.

NOTE: no-shows will be billed; please cancel by March 12, to avoid being billed.

Summer Public Relations Interns

If your organization is interested in summer interns from Boston University's College of Communication, now is the time to apply. Summer interns are available to work full- or part-time beginning in mid-May.

Sponsoring organizations are required to provide meaningful, supervised, public relations work assignments and to complete a thorough student evaluation at the end of the semester. Students, in turn, are expected to produce high quality work and are required to adhere to the same standards that apply to the sponsor's professional staff. While participating organizations are not required to compensate interns, many do so.

If you are interested, please forward a brief overview of your organization, a description of the internship project(s) and candidate qualifications to Steve Quigley at squigley@bu.edu. Internship candidates will be pleased to forward a resume for your review. Call Steve at (617) 358-0066 for more information.

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If you've done some introspection, and still can't think of an organization to help, here are some other places to go.

Executive Service Corps of New England,
www.escne.org

Based in Boston, this nonprofit organization provides high quality, affordable consulting services, resources and mentors to other nonprofits. Consultants volunteer their services and ESCNE charges a nominal, sliding scale fee to the client to cover their expenses. For more information, call Terry Shemo at 617-357-5550 or email her at tshemo@escne.org.

The United Way of Massachusetts Bay
www.uwmb.org
617-624-8000

The United Way helps match people with volunteer opportunities. You can do a search for volunteer jobs on their site (I typed in public relations and got 163 matches) and you can also create a personal profile, specifying exactly what type of work you want to do. They'll email you available volunteer opportunities regularly if you wish. Go to www.uwmb.org and click on "Volunteer" in the left column.

Associated Grant Makers
www.agmconnect.org,
617-426-2849

AGM is a regional association of grantmakers located in Boston. The group lists consultants, who focus on non-profit work, on their website. The listed consultants aren't necessarily offering their services pro bono, but I can't imagine a non-profit would turn you down if you insisted on working pro bono. On their website click "Links" on left side, then "technical assistant for nonprofits."

Local community foundations. For a link to contact information for these foundations, go to: http://www.givingnewengland.org/phil_link_cf.html. Community foundations pool charitable funds, invest them, and then distribute the income to nonprofit organizations. You can contact one in your area for volunteer opportunities.

One veteran of the nonprofit world stresses that it's crucial that the nonprofit is very clear about how it wants to use its pro bono consultant. "It's really important for the nonprofit to be focused and know what its needs are and how it wants to use the consultant's expertise," said Henry Allen, senior program officer at the Hyams Foundation in Boston. "If there's not that kind of clarity, it can be waste of time for both the nonprofit and the PR person." ut rest assured that your services are very much needed, Allen says. "Public relations and marketing is a critical need for nonprofits, especially the smaller community-based groups that don't have the resources, capacity and infrastructure to do these things on their own," he said.

Solos Do Pro Bono

By Vicki Ritterband
News & Views Guest Editor

Running a one-person public relations operation can be all consuming. Yet many solo practitioners are finding time to do pro bono work for causes they feel strongly about. The rewards are many -- interesting work, a sense of doing good, new contacts-- yet there are downsides, as well.

Pro bono work often gives "soles" the chance to expand their practice into areas they don't usually venture.

Take Leslie Scott-Lysan as an example. Her Wakefield practice focuses on high tech primarily, with some business-to-business work. Her pro bono work gave her experience in the world of nonprofits and medicine.

At the age of two and a-half, her daughter was diagnosed with myelodysplastic syndrome -- a disease of the bone marrow, which can lead to acute myeloid leukemia. She was successfully treated with a bonemarrow transplant.

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While her daughter was ill, the entire family attended Camp Sunshine, a camp for families of children with life-threatening diseases in Maine. The experience was extraordinary, says Scott-Lysan.

"It's a bootstrap operation, staffed largely with volunteers," said Scott-Lysan. "I saw a need to help promote the camp outside of Maine." She started peddling the story in the Boston area and scored big -- The Boston Globe, New England Cable News and The David Brudnoy Show. She's continued to do work for them off and on, as PR opportunities present themselves.

For Newton-based Barry Wanger, his pro bono clients come from the same world as his paying ones. "It's hard when you have a practice like mine that specializes in non-profit. It's difficult to charge nonprofits a fee, then provide service free for someone else."

Nevertheless, Wanger is currently working on three pro bono projects: one is a fundraising event for Eleanor Roosevelt's Hyde Park, N.Y. home, Val-kill; the other is promotion for a author friend's new mystery; and the third is publicity for his synagogue. He has done free work for his temple on and off over the years.

Wanger says the benefits he derives from his pro bono work are numerous: feeling good about doing good, possible referrals for future work, and building credibility with reporters. "It's easier to talk to a reporter when they know you're doing something pro bono," said Wanger. "I also might deal with reporters I don't usually deal with. De-

veloping new relationships never hurts."

Martin Cohn has done pro bono work throughout his 26-year career. His reasons are simple: "I believe it's our obligation on our planet to give back," said Cohn.

Cohn, who calls himself a generalist with a focus on philanthropic organizations, said that his own pro bono work gives him the credibility that in turn has benefited his paying clients as well.

For the past two years, he has successfully pitched a show on New England philanthropy to WCVB's Chronicle. The half-hour show has featured several of his paying clients.

He said he has never had to look far for worthy causes. Like Wanger, he has done a lot of work for his own synagogue -- Temple Beth Shalom in Needham.

"Most of the organizations (I've done pro bono work for) make themselves known to me," said Cohn. "I would bet you in your own sphere you could find one in your area or interest that would jump at the chance for help."

Winchester-based Rick Goldberg, who focuses on high tech, said the benefits of pro bono outweigh the drawbacks, but there are things to watch out for. "You don't want a client with unrealistic expectations who demands more than he would ask a full-service agency," said Goldberg. "Paying clients can understand that results are to some degree related to budget. With a pro bono client, because there are no budget limitations, the client can think you should do more than an agency

Stop The Presses - New Editor Onboard

Beginning next month, *News & Views* will be edited by Rebecca Falletta. Rebecca has just joined us from California where she established an impressive career working in public relations, marketing communications and Internet development. Please feel free to contact her at rebecca_falletta@yahoo.com if you would like to contribute to *News & Views* or just to welcome her to sunny New England.

Pro Bono Work: A Professional and Personal Morale Builder

By Kimberly Allen
Senior, Boston University
College of Communication

The economy is down and most of us are worried about layoffs. Yet, non-profit organizations and charities still need volunteers and donors. They still have important stories to tell. And often, they cannot afford to hire PR firms to raise awareness about their causes. Happily, some Boston firms are providing their services pro bono, despite the economic downturn.

Thompson Becker International, a North Attleboro firm with nine full-time staff members, has done pro bono work since its inception in 1991 and continues today. "We [at Thompson Becker International] think that corporate America has a civic responsibility to give back, particularly now when the economy has been hurtling downward and giving is less," said Ann Becker, president and CEO.

Each staff member has a say in which pro bono clients the firm will take on each year, although the president has the final say. Every employee also works on the account in some way. The result, according to Becker, is a major morale builder. "It builds strength and rapport in the company in ways that have far greater impact than what we are paid to do," she says.

This year's client is the Southern Poverty Law Center. Thompson Becker is doing work for the Center's tolerance project (www.tolerance.org) including a public service announcement campaign and a tolerance curriculum for corporations. After the events of September 11th, Becker says that working to promote tolerance is an unpopular, yet significant issue. In fact, the firm tends to focus on less popular issues that they feel "need to be brought to the fore," such as their past work on male breast cancer, according to Becker.

Becker says the staff tends to spend a good deal of time on pro bono clients because the benefits are long-term. "You're imprinting your brand in people's minds by associating yourself with good

work," she says. In addition, "It gives people a sense of their role as communicators and increases their confidence. Our work with tolerance.org has brought tremendous pride to the staff."

The President of Sterling Hager Communications of Watertown, Jim Joyal, echoed those advantages. "[Pro bono work] is a healthy diversion for employees. They can ply their trade and offer a level of expertise that [pro bono clients] generally don't get access to," he said. "It gives the staff a warm sense of giving back while the sacrifice is minimal."

Despite recent economic setbacks, Joyal still encourages employees to do pro bono work within limits. "Every year we try to assess number one, what are the programs that need resources like ours? And two, how much time do we have to dedicate to them and still run the business?"

A high-tech firm, they are currently working pro bono for the Boston Biomedical Research Institute (BBRI) and Tech Corps, which puts technology in schools. Generally, potential pro bono clients are spotted by someone in the office through a personal acquaintance. Although a contract can be good for tax reasons, Joyal says it's usually a hand shake deal and there is no need for a high level of formality.

When asked about the pitfalls of pro bono work, Joyal noted that sometimes organizations can expect more work than the firm can offer. "We couldn't dedicate the same time and effort that we would to a paying client and sometimes they have to be reigned in relative to commitment." For the most part, however, he says that pro bono clients offer great work and opportunities for the staff.

According to firms that do pro bono work, the benefits can far outweigh the costs. There is a sense of importance and urgency to the work that you might not find with your bread-and-butter profit-oriented clients. As Joyal puts it when talking about his company's work for BBRI: "They're curing disease, how much more important can you get?"

Pro Bono from the Client Perspective

By Dan Tobin
External Relations Coordinator
Massachusetts Service Alliance

About two years ago, my organization --the Massachusetts Service Alliance - decided to increase our outreach efforts through some sort of ad campaign. The Alliance is a private nonprofit that serves as the state commission on community service. We began a search for an agency that would help us pro bono. Using the personal and professional contacts of our board members, we placed feelers out to various Boston agencies. Being a nonprofit, there is not a lot of money allocated for promotion. We are always looking for creative ways to get our message out. Our board gives us access to many corporations that might normally be out of our reach, and makes it possible for us to better obtain our goals.

We realized from the beginning that pro bono does not mean that everything will be done free of charge. Rather, in a pro bono campaign, the creative services are provided at no charge, but production costs are covered by the nonprofit. The amount of money an organization has available needs to be determined before a search for a pro bono agency can begin. Once an agency shows interest, an organization must discuss what costs will be incurred throughout the process.

Ultimately, through two board members, we were introduced to Peter Seronick at Greenberg, Seronick, O'Leary & Partners, a Boston-based ad agency. After an initial meeting where we got to know each other, Peter Seronick decided to work with us on the campaign. As with any other client, we were assigned an account manager and creative team that worked with us throughout the process.

The result was a campaign that encourages each of us to go out and improve our community

through service and volunteerism. The current (first) stage of the campaign includes three different posters that depict heroes that don't have the time to "save the day." Each story is presented as a book, and the tag line encourages people to visit their local library to access our web site to search for volunteer opportunities.

Eight months into the campaign, our posters can be found in libraries, schools, nonprofit and corporate businesses, government offices, and walls of people who enjoy service and volunteerism throughout the state and in many states across the country. We have also had an MBTA run and have appeared in *The BostonGlobe*. Ideally, the second stage of the campaign will begin this year. We hope to use the theme of the posters for radio spots.

This campaign would not have been possible without the extremely gifted and talented team at GSOP. Their vision has created a product that grabs the reader's attention and promotes service and volunteerism in a new and exciting way. To view the posters, visit www.msalliance.org and click on the Ad Campaign page.

PRSA Publications Winning Awards

PR Tactics and The Strategist recently received honorable mentions from the Association Trends 2001 Publications Contest. PR Tactics won for Monthly Tabloid Newspapers while The Strategist was honored for Professional Society Magazines. During 2001, Tactics won the Gold Award from the Society of National Association Publications (SNAP) and the prestigious APEX 2001 Grand Award. For the record, Tactics entered four competitions in 2001 - and came away with four awards, two being the highest awards in the category.

PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS

Communications Manager

Prestigious nonprofit, national healthcare association located in Sudbury, MA, seeks an energetic, meticulous professional to lead organization's communications activities.

Responsibilities include editing and production of monthly newsletter, Web site and listserv management, print advertising solicitation and processing. Will identify and capitalize on opportunities to publicize association and its activities in consumer and trade publications, including writing articles and editorials.

Ability to multi-task, excellent written and oral communication skills, experience in project management. Ability to work both independently and as a team members.

At least three years' experience. Bachelor's degree in journalism, communication, public relations, marketing or related field. Familiarity with or ability to quickly learn Quark (PC), Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop, iMIS. Weekend and evening hours occasionally required. Salary \$40-45,000.

Send resumes to:

**American Healthcare
Radiology Administrators
P.O. Box 334, Sudbury, MA 01776,
or electronically to:
mreitter@ahraonline.org.**

Executive Associate

LEWIS is an international PR consultancy, specializing in technology clients. With 13 offices globally, LEWIS is the most successful company in its field.

LEWIS Boston was established in 2000 and is currently recruiting for a PR Executive Associate. Candidates should have a degree in a relevant discipline with an above average GPA, a passion for the media and an interest and knowledge of IT markets.

A personal development programme will give a firm foundation on which to build a career in PR and hands-on experience will be gained in writing press material, media liaison and research projects. Salary: >From \$25,000 per annum

Opportunities also exist for voluntary internships, providing administrative support to the PR team. This is vital business experience if you are a student currently considering a career in PR or communications.

For further information, please visit www.lewispr.com.

Email cover letter with resume to:

**Helen Burness
International Recruitment Manager
helenb@lewispr.com**

Calling for Bronze Anvil Submissions

PR professionals can now make their submissions for PRSA's prestigious Bronze Anvil Award by downloading the applications from the PRSA Web

site <http://www.prsa.org/awards/bronzeanvil.html>. The deadline for the Bronze Anvil is April 15. For more information about the Award, go to <http://www.prsa.org/awards/index.html>.

February Program Review: Overcoming Spokesperson Roadblocks

By **Kimberly Allen**
Senior, Boston University
College of Communication

Former WBZ-TV anchor Suzanne Bates, Sandy Lish of the Castle Group, and Diane Saunders of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation spoke to a crowded room of practitioners and students about overcoming spokesperson roadblocks during last month's PRSA Boston program. The speakers covered tailoring media training to each participant, convincing spokespeople that media training is important, and preparing for tough questions from reporters.

Sandy pointed out four keys to successful media training. First, do your homework. Second, tailor the training to the spokesperson. Third, plan ahead for common problems -"if you give them a swivel chair, inevitably they swivel." And fourth, recognize that media training is an on-going process.

Diane Saunders is a successful spokesperson who has gone through media training. She said that one persuasive reason to go through training is that it greatly improves your comfort level with TV, radio, and phone interviews.

"It can move you from sheer terror to just little butterflies," she said. Putting a stop to heavy sweating or a shaky voice can be the difference between a strong interview that makes it on air and a weak one that hurts your message or gets cut.

Diane agreed that it is difficult to watch yourself on tape, but pointed out that it helped motivate her to work harder. She also highlighted important voice modulation, breathing, and body language techniques she has learned through media training.

Suzanne Bates, the final speaker, focused on understanding what reporters need and the kinds of questions they ask. Working together, group members at each table considered how to comfortably bridge from a difficult question to key message points.

"The fact is [reporters] don't care about you. They're just out to get a good interview," said Suzanne. She also emphasized understanding the difference between marketing and news messages. She noted how easy it is to throw away an interview if it sounds or looks too self-serving.

PRSSA Students Take on Travel Client

PRSSA's annual Bateman Case Study Competition is in full swing. More than 60 universities are participating in this year's case study sponsored by Contiki Holidays, the world's largest travel company for 18 to 35-year-olds. PRSSA members are creating and implementing a campaign targeting college students to strengthen general interest in international travel. In addition, the campaigns will address how to help change the negative perception of motorcoach tours and group travel, increase brand awareness for Contiki, and position the company's tours as the alternative to Eurail and backpacking.

After the entries are judged at PRSSA Headquarters, three teams will be chosen to present their campaigns to a group of PRSA and Contiki representatives in Honolulu. The finalists will also participate in a Contiki motorcoach tour throughout the islands. If you are interested in judging this year's entries or would like to find out more about sponsoring next year's Bateman Case Study Competition, please contact Jeneen Garcia at (212) 460-1466 or e-mail jeneen.garcia@prsa.org.