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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mark W. McClennan, APR

It's springtime and PRSA Boston is heating up

Spring is definitely here and like the weather and Red Sox bats, PRSA Boston is really starting to heat up. Over the past few months, we have asked our members what they would like to see, and you have definitely let us know. Thank you!

The three most notable comments have been:

- 1) More value for the membership
- 2) More communications
- 3) A wider variety of programs.

Well, I have talked about our new blog ad nauseam, and you are reading the revised newsletter, so I think we are doing well with #2.

For point #1- more value for the membership - Thirsty Thursday networking nights are going strong. In June we are moving the networking to the suburbs.

-Contd. on page 2

INVISIBLE PR

Ed Cafasso

A newspaper story about public relations is like a traffic accident on a busy highway. PR professionals know they should keep their eyes on the road but find themselves compelled to stare at the scene. We would be among the few readers who make it to the last paragraph, wincing all the way.

And so it was recently when an April 20 front page story in *The Boston Globe* trumpeted the arrival of Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick's kitchen cabinet. "Patrick forms team to market agenda," the headline proclaimed across several columns, complete with some mug shots of "the small group of seasoned political and media strategists" enlisted to "informally advise him on how to market his agenda and deal with the heated political world of Beacon Hill."

It was one of those stories that had just enough juicy details (a secret meeting at "private downtown office") and tough rhetoric (a vow to "crack the whip" on Republican holdovers) to excite an old State House scribe like Frank Phillips. Coming just a week after 39-year-old "veteran" Doug Rubin parachuted in as Patrick's chief of staff, the message was clear: The new governor needed to rebuild political capital like a lazy squirrel at the onset of winter.

The inboxes of PR pros throughout Boston pinged immediately, since almost everyone in town knows (or claims to know) one of the 15 new "marketing" squad members.

"It really should not have been publicized," I messaged a colleague across town. "Once people know that it's PR or Marketing, then it loses its effectiveness.

-Contd. on page 2

EVERYTHING'S COMING UP ROSIE

David Thomson

Rosie O'Donnell. Love her or hate her, these days you can't escape her.

When the *Rosie O'Donnell Show* exploded on the daytime TV scene in 1996, getting your client on with Rosie was a PR dream. The "Queen of Nice," as she was quickly dubbed, was a fun-loving, celebrity-gushing, koosh-ball throwing gal with a show tune at the ready and give-aways for everyone that came to watch her show.

The petals began to fall off the rose in 2002 when O'Donnell became embroiled in a legal dispute with the publishers of her recently launched magazine. This is where Rosie's squeaky clean image began to tarnish. Around this time, Rosie made headlines by coming out as a lesbian and deciding to end her popular talk show.

It seemed as soon as the show and the magazine folded, Rosie was no longer Rosie, or at least not the persona millions of Americans had grown to love. In fact, it was a total transformation. O'Donnell returned to stand-up comedy and immediately contradicted the "Queen of Nice" image she had previously cultivated by making fun of (and sometimes downright insulting) the celebrities she had previously fawned over. Her drastic image make-over included a short haircut and apparent lack of concern about her appearance.

The new Rosie focused on bringing attention to issues that are important to her, including gay adoption and gun control. She eagerly embraced the power of new media – specifically her Web site and blog – to make her views known.

-Contd. on page 3

From the President – Contd. from Pg 1

(I still call it the city, but I think I am the only one). The 4th Thirsty Thursday will be held on June 7, 2007, at the Newton Marriott Bar. This way we make it easier for people who do not live in the city to get there and network.

The free programs for PRSA Boston Members are finally in full swing. The May program, for PR professionals making the move to management, attracted 15 registrants. In June we will be having a free program on “Finding a PR Mentor”. In July we will focus on dealing with “mile wide/inch deep” issues.” We also have plans for free programs on getting your APR, guidance for those interested in making the move to higher education and another on bridging corporate, agency and non-profit skills. .

For point #3 – We hope you enjoy our Product PR event at Sam Adams. Next month gets even better. On June 14, we have a great speaker coming, who should be of interest to senior practitioners as well as those just starting out in PR. [Dick Martin](#), former Executive Vice-President for Public Relations for AT&T and author of *Tough Calls – AT&T and Hard Lessons Learned in the Telecom Wars* and *Rebuilding Brand America – What We Must Do to Restore Our Reputation and Safeguard the Future of American Business Abroad*. Stay tuned for more information.

Hopefully this shows you that PRSA Boston is working to help advance the profession and the professional. The three questions I will leave you with this month.

- 1) What have you done today to advance your professional knowledge and skills?
- 2) Are you committed to advancing your skills daily?
- 3) If not – then why not?

If we are not learning, we are stagnating. Don't stagnate.

Would you like to contribute content to the PRSA Boston newsletter? Do you have comments or suggestions pertaining to the newsletter?

Contact the editor at:
prsabostoneditor@yahoo.com

Invisible PR – Contd. from Pg 1

It's unfortunate that the administration's two major announcements in the past month have been to hire Rubin and to create a Marketing Committee. Remember: Action before words. Good substance sells itself.”

He disagreed, arguing that the “new day/new way” story line would help focus future media coverage on the kind of focused success Patrick had not produced during his first 100 days. “If the programs are seen as competently executed, with a coherent message, they will be called winners,” he dashed in reply. “If they are full of substantive ideas, but those ideas are muddled in both language and form, then they will be labeled as more mush from the wimps. Call it marketing, PR, or BS; as long as it gives this administration a clean slate, I'm for it.”

Who is right? Both of us, probably. It just depends on the stakeholder perspective and the time horizon.

The *Globe* story was a short-term salve for “frustrated” insiders in the political, business and media establishment, who may be less likely to undermine the new governor now that they know they can access his administration through skilled intermediaries who speak their language.

For the public, most of whom never made it to the jump anyway, the story was simple reassurance that their governor understood he had squandered their faith. The restoration of trust and credibility over the long term will still require action undertaken in the context of a well-defined plan and clear goals.

As a rule, the best PR is invisible. The exception is in a crisis. There are many people in Boston who hope that, in this instance, the PR seen on the *Globe's* front page represents the end of one story and the unwritten start of another.

Ed Cafasso is managing director for the Boston office of MS&L, a premier public relations and communications firms. He holds extensive experience in the communications field, having established himself as a specialist in reputation and issues management, internal and external communications, crisis planning and public affairs. Ed is an executive member of PRSA's Corporate Section.



Everything's....Rosie – Contd. from Pg 1

Gone was the fun-loving gal. In was the *tell you what's on her mind* (even if you don't want to hear it) *in-your-face*, advocate and activist.

Fast forward to 2006, when Rosie replaced Meredith Vieira as co-host and moderator of ABC's *The View*. Her contributions to the *Hot Topics* segment on the show certainly were hot, generating widespread media coverage. It made many people speculate whether ABC and show creator Barbara Walters had made the right decision in wooing Rosie. With a 17% year-over-year ratings increase, it was clear - despite her polarizing effect – O'Donnell's view was a winner with audiences and advertisers, albeit, not so much with Donald Trump with whom Rosie seems to have a never-ending feud.

On April 25, 2007, O'Donnell announced she would be leaving *The View* as a regular host when her one-year contract expires in June 2007. What's next? I'm sure we will all know about it soon enough. Rosie is an expert at letting everyone know what she is thinking and doing. Perhaps, and I know this is highly unlikely, she will look back at the image she cultivated in her self-titled talk show and bring a little more nice back to her persona. More likely, O'Donnell, who was recently named one of *TIME* magazine's 100 most influential people in the world, will continue to be a lightning rod for controversy.

In public relations, we often try to avoid controversy, but it is not something we should always shy away from.

Managed controversy is a powerful tool in the public relations arsenal and if, as a PR professional, you are able to steer your client through a turbulent situation you can often come out better for it. *The View* has seen the benefit that Rosie and her vocal opinions have brought to the program. In one year, it went from just another daytime talk show to water cooler buzz. Walters and company are too shrewd and experienced to let the attention die down. I'm sure they are aggressively seeking a new co-host that will court controversy. Managing the controversy will be the name of the game to keep the program top of mind without going over the top.

For both O'Donnell and *The View*, I think it's clear that everything's coming up Rosie!

David Thomson draws upon more than 15 years of marketing, sales, public relations, journalism and entrepreneurship experience to steer the growth of Thomson Communications. His strategic expertise has been tapped by numerous executives and non-profit organizations. Thomson also serves as a professor at Salem State College, teaching a course in Media Relations to students in the Communications Department majoring in Public Relations.



PRSA Boston Independent Practitioners Network (IPN)

“To Hire or Not To Hire: That is The Question”

A Roundtable Discussion on whether to partner with or hire someone (and *who* to hire) when you want to continue growing your PR practice but it is becoming too much for one person to handle.

PLEASE RSVP IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND!

Wednesday, May 23rd, 2007

12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

**Weston Public Library, Community Room, 87 School Street, Weston, MA
(Bag Lunch Allowed)**

COST: \$10 for PRSA/IPN members

\$15 for non-members, payable by cash or check

To RSVP and register, contact Beth Bryant at 508-786-3013 or bbwrites@verizon.net

**NEXT THIRSTY THURSDAY
JUNE 7TH AT THE NEWTON
MARRIOTT BAR**



We invite all PR, marketing and communications professionals --- both PRSA members and non-members alike --- to come and meet new people, reconnect with old friends, hang out, network, share war stories, recruit and expand horizons. There is no fee (you just have to pay for your own food and drink)!

When: Thursday, June 7, 2007
6:00-??PM

Where: Newton Marriot Bar
2345 Comm. Avenue
Newton, MA 02466

Directions:
<http://marriott.com/hotels/fact-sheet/travel/bosnt-boston-marriott-newton/#directions>

**SAMUEL ADAMS BREWERY SHARES
ITS RECIPES FOR PRODUCT PR
SUCCESS**

Find great conversations, cool libations and a tremendous learning opportunity all in one program!

Michelle Sullivan, Director of Public Relations for Boston Beer Company (the makers of Samuel Adams Beer), will pour forth tips, tricks and best practices for product and beverage public relations success.

Date: May 15, 2007 – 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Time: Brewery Tour: 6:00 - 6:45 p.m.
Networking/Dinner: 6:00-7:30 p.m.
Discussion and Q&A: 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Place: Boston Beer Company/Samuel Adams Brewery

Address: 30 Germania Street
Boston (Jamaica Plain neighborhood),
MA 02130

Directions: For directions, go to:
http://www.samueladams.com/contact_tour.aspx

SEATING IS LIMITED, SO GET HOPPING AND REGISTER TODAY!