

news & views

Volume 47, Issue 8

November 2001

MONTHLY PROGRAM

Thursday, November 8, 2001

LOCATION

Holiday Inn, Cambridge Street, Boston (corner of Blossom St.)

PROGRAM

Top PR Head Hunters Offer Advice & Election of 2002 Chapter Board Members

PRESENTERS

Ted Chaloner, President of Chaloner Associates, Jim Ward, President of The Ward Group, and Kerry Buckley, PR Practice Leader with Winter Wyman & Co.

COST

\$45 for members, \$55 for nonmembers

RESERVATIONS

Send a check, payable to PRSA/Boston Chapter, to Paul Wetzel, APR, Chapter Administrator, 45 Broad Street, Boston, MA 02109, no later than Tuesday, November 6, or use the fax back form, or e-mail: wetzel@msn.com.

Deadlines

Everyone's participation in News & Views is encouraged. Deadline for text is the 21st of the month prior to press.

Special Edition on Accreditation

By Ann Getman, APR
Guest Editor and Co-chair, 2001 Accreditation Committee

This issue of News & Views has all the regular features you expect, plus an issue-wide focus on Accreditation in Public Relations - APR. Inside you'll find everything you need to know about what it is, how it works, how to prepare, and testimonials and interviews with APRs on why they support it and what they got from the process ~ as well as dissenting opinion and a national perspective.

Although the debate continues about

whether APR should be required to hold national office in PRSA or vote as a chapter Assembly Delegate, the accreditation process has intrinsic value, as you'll discover inside, including credibility and a demonstration of professional capability in and commitment to public relations. Yes, you can achieve all that without being an APR, but having it represents much more than letters after your name. Please print and save this issue: you may be inspired, you may be motivated, you may find a mentor to work with you in joining the ranks of Boston professionals Accredited in Public Relations.

High-tech Editors Provide Wealth of Examples of How to Get Their Attention

Relationships, responsiveness, and relevant information were key themes at the October 11 High-tech Editors panel discussion in Waltham. Bob Brown, executive news editor, Network World, Dyke Hendrickson, editor, Mass. High Tech, and Derek Slater, executive editor, CIO magazine discussed the fast track to success. Given the economy, Brown suggested vendors provide tips on "how to save money or make money." Slater said stories on cost savings, efficiencies, security and business continuity are

hot though hot is relative at CIO magazine because journalists work on stories at least four months in advance. Hendrickson urged the audience to map story pitches to the online editorial calendar. "We don't write about layoffs or out of business stories," said Hendrickson, but "I do look for interesting people stories." He mentioned MIT graduates who started a business with winnings at casinos, another interviewee who biked across Russia, and a businessman who was a scuba diver at the Titanic.

Slater emphasized building a relationship by providing "something useful

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Incoming and Outgoing

The election in November of the 2002 board and officers for PRSA Boston prompts me to reflect on my 10 years of active involvement in the chapter. In two months I'll step down as president, but continue to be immersed in activities at least through next year as immediate past president (is that another way of saying retired?). For a few years, I've been part of a team that identifies candidates for 14 board and leadership positions. What stands out is the willingness of a core group to contribute so that our approximately 425 members can take part in programs, read News & Views, checkout our web, and connect with peers.

I am pleased that about a half dozen new people were interested in becoming active next year. Some will join the board while others will be involved with the seven committees: Programs and Professional Development, Accreditation, Sponsorship, PRSSA for students, Grants/Endowment, Communications, and News & Views. Most committees can always use new members for one project or ongoing involvement. For example, do you have a programming or professional development

Letter from the President
By *Howie Sholkin*

idea or do you want to lead a monthly event? Contact Jeff Seideman, jseideman@mediaone.net. Would you like to contribute an occasional article to News &

Views? Contact Steve Quigley, stevequigley@mediaone.net. Have you wanted to be an editor of a prestigious publication such as News & Views? Steve is looking for an editor starting this January. Have you done or would you like to learn how to conduct a sponsorship program which is the financial life blood of the chapter? Contact me at hsholkin@mediaone.net. If you feel passionately about APR and its importance to our profession. Contact Ann Getman, anngetman@aol.com.

If PRSA Boston is going to prosper as one of the largest chapter's in the nation then we must continue to attract talented and active members, not just dues paying professionals. If the programs and activities are to be engaging and stimulating, then we need many ideas from across industries and from varied experiences. Please choose your point of entry to PRSA Boston.

Universal Accreditation...

The Process

By Kirk Hazlett, APR
Co-Chair 2001 Accreditation Committee

Why professional accreditation? The answers are deceptively simple, yet for the committed public relations professional, very revealing.

Taking the Public Relations Society of America's "Universal Accreditation Examination" is truly a test...a validation, if you will...of your knowledge, experience, professional judgment, and understanding of the public relations profession.

The designation "Accredited in Public Relations" (APR) is a mark of distinction for public rela-

tions professionals who demonstrate their commitment to the profession and to its ethical practice, and who are selected based on broad knowledge, strategic perspective, and sound professional judgment.

APR tells your colleagues, your peers...and your employer...that you have achieved a high level of public relations experience and competence. Not only do you walk the walk; you have proven that you talk the talk!

Eligibility is relatively simple. You must have at least five years of paid full-time experience in the professional practice of public relations, or in the teaching or administration of public relations courses in an accredited college or university.

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And you must take...and pass... a comprehensive exam comprising an all-day written portion and an oral exam that tests your practical and theoretical knowledge of the public relations profession. (See related articles in this newsletter on ways to effectively prepare for the exam.)

You must also maintain your accreditation by demonstrating ongoing education, professionalism and service.

The 2002 Universal Accreditation Examination test cycle will be from Friday, March 8 through Sunday, March 17, 2002. The actual dates for both the written and oral portions of the exam will be announced in early January.

Deadline for you to submit your application to take the exam is Monday, February 4.

APR-AT-A-Glance

What: Accreditation in Public Relations

·Granted by Universal Accreditation Board, administered by chapters

·Exam given in two parts: an 8-hour written exam, and a 1-hour oral exam with a panel of three APRs

·Maintenance to demonstrate ongoing education, professionalism, service

Who: Open to PRSA members and non-members belonging to partner organizations ·Eligible applicants have 5 years or more paid professional PR experience, Or

·5 years teaching or administration of PR courses in an accredited school

When:

two exam cycles a year, spring and Fall

·Register by Feb 4, 2002 for the March exam

·Register by Aug 5 for the September exam

·Recommended study time: 8-10 weeks

Why: knowledge, prestige, distinction and recognition (read on)

How much:

·\$275 for application (member price)

·\$385 members of partner organizations

What else: for more information on accreditation and maintenance, visit [www. PRSA.org](http://www.PRSA.org) and

Standing Out from the Crowd

Interview with

Joan Schneider, APR

By Steve Quigley, APR

Has any member of PRSA Boston sponsored more APRs than Joan Schneider, APR, president of Schneider & Associates? Probably not. By my rough count, Joan has cajoled, encouraged, mentored, prodded and, ultimately, sponsored ten Boston Chapter APRs.

Those who know Joan realize she doesn't do anything half-way. When Joan believes in something, whether it's the value of the APR designation, mastering the art of "launch public relations," or collecting Art Deco furnishings, she goes all-out. Joan is a passionate ad-

vocate of continuing education. For her, the APR process provides PR pros with an extraordinary refresher course. "The review course and the exam process are a unique opportunity to put all the pieces of the profession together," says Joan. "Its' a chance to learn, or re-learn, the strategies, the tactics, the theories behind everything we do."

For Joan, earning the APR designation means moving past the role of tactician to the role most of us prefer - that of a genuine counselor. Inspired by Edward Bernays, whose 100th birthday gala she helped orchestrate for the Chapter, Joan shares Bernays' quest for high standards of professional practice. While she differed with Bernays on licensing, she sees accreditation as one way to move the profession away from Bernays' oft-cited public image as "flacks and quacks."

But in the final analysis, Joan's support for the APR process boils down to one word - pride. Joan readily points out that only 5% of PRSA members have earned the designation. Joan likens accreditation to passing the bar or earning the CPA designation. "It takes hard work, experience, knowledge, and ambition," Joan suggests. She points with pride to one of her staff members who just passed the test. "She was so proud of herself when she learned the results. It's an esteem builder and a morale builder for professionals who want to stand out from the crowd."

The Value of Accreditation Boston APRs Reflect on their Experiences

"I took the APR exam because I wanted to have a formal credential. Taking a review course and studying for the exam gave me a valuable overview of communications theory and practice that I find useful to this day. The APR is helpful when you're dealing with accredited professionals in other fields--it helps put you on an equal footing with them."

**Henry Stimpson, APR,
Stimpson Communications.**

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"All professions have programs of professional development or certification, and many require continuing education leading to recertification. And so it should be true for the professional practice of public relations. I decided to go through the accreditation examination process because I believed then, as I do today, that the awarding of the APR designation signifies that I have decided to follow a path similar to professionals in other disciplines. The fact that not all pr practitioners elect to follow this course, or that the designation is not yet widely understood or broadly embraced, does not diminish its intellectual or financial value. Survey after survey indicate that APRs are compensated at a higher level than their fellow practitioners who are not accredited."

**John Sheehan, APR, Sheehan  
Early Associates**

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"For me, it's about two things: needing to understand the big picture and feeling a strong connection to ethical standards. At first, when I found myself in the business, I was focused on learning the tools of the trade. After a while, I felt the need to understand the principles behind the tactics. I guess I wanted to know more about the elephant than just the toes. The APR review course, and the exams, helped me put the individual pieces together into a more meaningful whole. I was also concerned about the mess that the elephants sometimes left behind. I wanted to march in the most professional parade I could find and not have to figure out where to step all by myself."

**Steve Quigley, APR Quigley
Communications/Boston Uni-
versity**

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"The accreditation process proved to be a great icebreaker upon my return to the area; new professional contacts then are permanent friends today. I've found my APR designation to be well received by clients. Skeptics are universal for knowing very little about it. While I've yet to see an employer request this credential explicitly, having an APR designates you as a legitimate member of an impressively seasoned industry network-many being hiring decision makers!"

**Loring Barnes, APR, Chaloner  
& Associates**

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"After nine years of practicing public relations I took the APR exam in 1990. I had come into the field from practicing Sociology, and I didn't know what might be missing, what else I needed to know. The study process deepened my understanding and respect for public relations, its evolution, best practices, and a framework for putting strategy into program implementation. I caught up with what I'd missed in courses, clarified terminology, and got acquainted with the body of knowledge in our field.

The credential gives me collegiality with peers and credibility with clients. It's like an advanced degree demonstrating mastery of all aspects of PR practice, and commitment to its ethical standards."

**Ann D. Getman, APR, Getman
Strategic Communications**

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"Taking the APR exam was something that I thought about doing for some time, even after being in the public relations field for more than 15 years. It was another challenge that I decided to give myself, following the completion of my MBA. Studying for the written and oral exams both served as a refresher course and an opportunity to demonstrate my expertise by drawing from actual career experiences. It was an accomplishment to pass the exam in 1997 and begin using the APR letters after my name, as recognition for meeting the highest standards set by the profession.

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For anyone looking to further their professional development and be rewarded for their extra efforts, I would recommend taking on this challenge as a worthwhile pursuit.

**Susan E. Schumacher, APR, Brodeur Worldwide**

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"I was encouraged to take the APR exam by a dear friend and mentor, who hired me for my first agency job. My incentive was eligibility for Counselors Academy, and I joined Counselors as soon as I passed the exam. Since then, I've also been able to stand for election as an officer of PRSA/Boston -- a benefit I didn't anticipate when I signed up for APR 10 years ago. As a liberal arts major in college, I never had the communications strategies courses that are part of a public relations curriculum. My APR studies enabled me to round out my "coursework" and gain new insights into the practice of public relations. And, study I did, but the end result was worth the commitment.

While I probably haven't enjoyed more income as a result of my APR, I do know I've earned greater respect from clients with that designation after my name."

**Barbara Wellnitz, APR, Ryan Wellnitz**

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"The Accreditation Examination was, for me, a reality check...a way to determine if I really had a clue about my somewhat haphazardly chosen profession. (Started out planning to be the

"world's walking expert" on James Boswell!) Did I think accreditation would help me get promotions and raises? NO! Those come through hard work and documented successes.

Accreditation HAS been a valuable "selling point," though, when negotiating for a promotion, raise, or new job. Earning my "APR" has been a personal victory...a validation that, in the opinion of my peers in the profession to which I have devoted nearly 30 years' service, it hasn't all been "dumb luck"...I really DO know what I'm doing!"

**Kirk Hazlett, APR Massachusetts State Automobile Dealers Association**

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"I earned my APR accreditation in 1995 thanks to the support of Joan Schneider, Laurel Keith, and Steve Quigley at Schneider & Associates. Joan Schneider is one of Boston's strongest supporters of the accreditation process, and has been personally responsible for mentoring and advocating the APR exam to scores of professionals at varying career stages since she launched her agency in 1980.

I took the APR exam to both advance my career and my knowledge of public relations, and received extensive agency support. I found the process educational because it was my first formal education in the industry, and the exam materials were an interesting and comprehensive study of the history, ethics and foundation of public relations. Today I am an independent prac-

itioner, and the APR accreditation on my business card provides me with stature within PRSA and the communications industry as well as in new business pitches. I believe the APR designation is also a great positioning tool with clients and associates who have achieved accreditation within their own fields.

In a recent new business pitch, I was told that "the other candidate" promised a specific number of media placements. Stuck in an unpleasant moment, I stood on the PRSA Code of Ethics to explain that I could not ethically guarantee media placements, and educated the prospective client about the challenges and intricacies of working with the media. The accreditation process provided me with a credible platform and a level of confidence about my position."

**Julie Dennehy, APR, Dennehy Public Relations**

## ACCREDITATION STUDY GROUPS

### An Interactive Approach by Ann Getman, APR

When you decide to take the Accreditation exam, you have a number of options in how to prepare. You can lock yourself in a room with the recommended textbook and PRSA's APR Study Guide to **memorize facts, dates and cases**, and read the code of ethics till you can recite it in your sleep. You can

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## **FACING and ACING the ORALS EXAM**

Tips from Orals Coaches  
Julie Dennehy, APR, and Ann  
D. Getman, APR

There are many right ways to go about the orals exam. We've had the privilege in the last few years to be on the orals board of the chapter APR committee, administering the orals part of the examination after the candidate has completed the written exam. We've observed a variety of approaches and expectations in candidates from trepidation to exhaustion, calm professionalism to glib cockiness. We offer these tips on approaching the orals to help you feel confident and at ease.

- First things first: Introduce yourself and ask the panel of examiners to do the same: smile, relax, and don't be afraid to make yourself comfortable.
- Repeat the question to be sure you've heard it correctly, and don't be afraid to ask questions for clarification. Bring paper and a pen to jot notes to yourself to take the pressure off remembering what you want to say, especially for a multi-part question.
- Just as you'd write great press releases, answer the question in short form first and include all the "5W's" in brief so the examiners know that you understand the question and know the answer. Expand on your answer as concisely and completely as

you feel comfortable. When you think you've said too much, you probably have.

- Answer the Questions as fully as you can without wandering off track. A simple yes or no or two-sentence reply may get you to the right answer but won't tell the panel much about how you arrived at the answer, or how you bring your experience and knowledge to the question.
- Give examples from your professional experience whenever possible.
- The questions are required to be asked verbatim of each candidate, and the examiners do not interact with candidates with personal observations or anecdotes, agree, disagree, or otherwise express approval of your responses. Examiners may ask you for clarification, or repeat the question if they feel

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## **Accreditation... 'Top-Down Emphasis Gives Credibility'**

PRSA Boston welcomes its newest Accredited member...  
Juliana Lear, APR!

By Kirk Hazlett, APR

A University of Hartford graduate, Julie is an Account Supervisor at Boston-based Schneider & Associates where she has spent the past 6-1/2 years adroitly handling a variety of consumer accounts.

Julie's rationale for having gone through the rigorous preparation for the Universal Accreditation Examination is pretty straightforward. "When I first started at Schneider & Associates, three agency executives were studying for the exam. As a Junior Account Coordinator, I was really impressed that these senior-level people were working so hard to get prepared."

"It also certainly helps that Joan Schneider (APR), the agency's founder and president, was and continues to be a big promoter of accreditation. And that's what has made it easy to accept and aspire toward...when the emphasis comes from the top, the concept gains credibility."

"From the beginning, I had always wanted to earn my accreditation; it was always a goal. Now that I've actually gotten there... gone through the process...I feel like I've really accomplished something important. It takes real discipline. The onus is on you...the individual...to get yourself prepared. But I personally feel it was worth it!"

Julie joins a small but growing group of communications professionals in the Boston area who have achieved the distinction of earning APR status.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of PRSA Boston and an appreciative Chapter membership, congratulations, Julie!

## Accreditation? No Thank You!

Op-Ed

By Burt Peretsky

Opposing PRSA accreditation, or APR, is a little like opposing prayer in public schools - good people with good intentions are on the other side!

But, can we advance our profession by stubbornly clinging to an exclusionary process that only a tiny percentage of our peers have embraced, by having our professional organization limit national office-holding only to APRs, or by starting down the slippery slope of licensing of PR people?

PRSA has about 20,000 members. In the US alone, at least another 150,000 people probably practice some type of PR activity. Yet, the total number of "accredited" PR practitioners is a mere 4000, or 2.4 percent of this conservatively estimated population. These numbers speak dramatically of the failure of accreditation.

Also, by coupling national office-holding and accreditation, PRSA denies the vast majority of its membership the right to help shape the policies of our organization. How does this advance the profession?

Is accreditation exclusionary? PRSA literature says so, in stating that accreditation "demonstrates that individuals have the knowledge, ethics and experience that set them apart." Hey, what about the rest of us who don't choose accreditation?

With accreditation, PRSA purports to define what PR is and what it isn't. And, if you want to pass the APR test, you've got to be well-versed in PRSA's broad definition of PR. While that knowledge may be necessary to acquire a degree in public relations at a university, it doesn't say squat about the professionalism of those of us in the business who ably practice in only one or two areas of PR.

Finally, many would argue that accreditation is the first step toward licensing of PR practitioners, a chilling prospect given PR's close ties to journalism and our Constitutional guarantees of free speech and free press.

Instead of continuing to prop up accreditation, PRSA should emphasize a wide range of professional development programs, support university degree-granting programs in PR, and open our leadership ranks to all and not merely to the elite few who support a failed policy.

Accreditation? No, thank you!

### NEWS TID BITS

**Zoulas Communications has added two new clients: Cambridge College of Cambridge, MA and Bay State College of Boston. Zoulas Communications specializes education communications.**

**PRSA Boston Webmaster Milo's Newest Creation Sarah and Milo Caruso announce the birth of their daughter, Audrie Suzanne Caruso, on Oct 26, 2001 at 6:50 AM. Seven pounds, 21 ounces. Congratulations!**

## National Board Reviews Accreditation Program

By Paul Wetzel, APR

National Board of Directors

As we are well aware, the debate over the viability of the Accreditation Program and the effect it has on the leadership of the Society has gone on for some time. At the Board level "APR" has been on the agenda for review and discussion at every meeting for some time.

The problems with the APR Program are well known. It is expensive. It is very expensive when we consider the cost per new APR enrolled. As the percentage of Accredited members available for leadership positions declines it is increasingly difficult to find APRs to fill positions that require the designation.

Many Chapters both small and large face this problem. The Boston Chapter with 50 of its more than 450 members accredited has difficulty filling slots for Assembly delegate, PRSSA liaison and other positions. The District has to find APRs to fill its leadership positions and even finding a representative for the National Board seat I now hold can be a problem. In smaller Chapters this means APRs have to be willing and able to serve in multiple posts.

The entire Accreditation Program, in my view, is at a critical crossroads.

The Committee in charge of this

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Shown above, left to right, are CIO Executive Editor Derek Slater, PRSA Boston President Howard Sholkin, Mass High Tech Editor Dyke Hendrickson and Bob Brown of Network World.

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and build from there.” He mentioned a case where PR professional arranged an interview with a CIO and prepared the CIO to talk about the good and bad of the product. Following the interview, the PR representative provided a five page summary. As it turned out, Slater relied heavily on that summary. His tape recorder malfunctioned and he wrote much of the story from what he was given.

Brown found company supplied experts lists to be helpful when he is looking for contacts to comment on issues and trends. With product announcements, he urged the audience to make technical people available. Given its editorial mission, CIO magazine isn’t interested in product news and Mass. High Tech usually links product stories to its calendar.

In response to a question about exclusives, all the editors said they are frustrated by supposed exclusives that appear elsewhere first. Slater of CIO magazine said that there “isn’t a wall” between IT trades, dailies, and

business publications. Journalists compete with publications in and out of their particular media segment. Nonetheless, all the editors are interested in exclusives, and Brown added, PR professionals should ask a reporter for a quick decision on the level of interest.

The editors do rely on industry analysts, but Network World’s Brown said a quote from an end user or IT person will win out over an analyst if all things are equal. He said his staff prefers smaller trade shows where customers are likely to be. With travel cutbacks, Brown anticipates that show coverage may increase as a service to readers.

Mass. High Tech’s Hendrickson said the publication recently introduced a daily news email report to subscribers and he needs news for the morning distribution. Hendrickson, who spent a short time doing PR at a start-up, said news releases may be most appropriate for these daily news reports. Showing some empathy for the audience, Hendrickson admitted that he was discouraged when his “good pitches” didn’t attract any editorial interest.

The high-tech editors panel discussion was sponsored by Factiva, a Dow Jones & Reuters Company, which provides global news and business information from nearly 8,000 sources through its Web sites and content integration solutions.

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your answer hasn’t addressed all key points.

- If the question requires you to imagine yourself in a scenario you’ve never experienced in the real world, be prepared to use conjecture. For example, if you don’t know the answer, tell the examiners what you would need to know in order to arrive at the answer - that demonstrates your experience and knowledge.
- Know the code of ethics by heart, along with its applications. Memory devices such as songs, acronyms or top ten lists add some spice to studying as well. Julie was taught by a mentor to learn the PRSA Definition of PR to Schoolhouse Rock’s “We The People” song... it worked like a charm!
- Discuss and role-play the code of ethics with a study buddy or peers at work or within the Chapter. In preparing, go beyond the letter of the correct answer and think aloud about how the ethics codes applies to your own practice, what kinds of situations have or might come up, and how the ethics code would guide you. Be proactive in responding to questions about ethics.

And remember, this part is less about your book-learning than about how you apply knowledge and what you bring to it: it’s your chance to engage your peers so they can evaluate your knowledge and professionalism.

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activity has worked extremely hard for nearly two years to overhaul the Program. They engaged a consultant for a comprehensive survey of members, both APRs and others. They are working on a re-engineering of the exam and preparation programs. They intend an outreach to recruiters and corporate executives involved in hiring communications people to build awareness of Accreditation.

Importantly, they have as one of their priorities making the Accreditation Program financially self-sustaining. They embarked on a fund raising program for the re-engineering and review activity. APRs received letters asking for personal contributions and major support is being sought from corporations, agencies and others.

My personal view is that we will know with a year or so, if the APR program can be a viable part of PRSA. We simply cannot require the APR designation for leadership positions if it means those positions cannot be filled by experienced interested professionals who are not Accredited.

The strength of PRSA lies in the extraordinary number of members willing to devote their time, talent and energy in volunteer positions on all levels. To diminish their interest or lose their talent because of one activity which they choose not to take part in would be a shame. It simply cannot be allowed to happen.

## SOME COMMUNICATIONS TIPS FOR COMMUNICATORS

**Paul Wetzel, APR**  
Chapter Administrator

As professional communications people we earn our living because we are presumed to have superior communications skills relative to other people. However, judging by my experience responding to calls and email messages to the Boston Chapter too many of us perform well below average. In fact, if some of the callers were in my college class they would flunk.

Therefore, with tongue only partly in cheek, I offer the following thoughts on communicating with the PRSA office, or anyone else for that matter.

As you know, most of the messages involve requests for membership information, registration for programs, and questions on a variety of subjects. Leaving a message involves at minimum leaving your name and telephone number and sometimes adding an address and/or credit card number.

Let's start with your name. Your name is the single most important item you have to identify yourself. Many people don't seem to understand this. They blurt out a single name in an undecipherable fashion. Now, other than Sting, all of us have a first and a last name. Use it. Messages to "call Joe" or register "three people from such and such agency" don't fly.

Let's move to another funda-

mental rule of communications. You cannot speak faster than people can listen. I repeatedly receive calls from people who deliver two minutes worth of information in eleven seconds. These e.e.cummings disciples say: "thisismelissaatexcitingprina ndoverandwewanttosendtwopeopletothethursdaymeetingandweillpayatthedoorandifyouhaveanyquestionscallmeat\*2#\*4567823andhaveaniceday." (The first person who figures this message out and sends me an email goes to the next meeting free.)

So, let me make MY message clear. Speak slowly and clearly. If you have an unusual first or last name, spell it. Bob Jones I can understand. With others I need help. If I don't return your call within 48 hours try again. And, have a nice day!

**Solo Act - Notes from the Boston PRSA Soles Collaborative**  
*A Compelling Influence*  
By Peter Golden

What are the qualities that define a leader, those essential attributes that communicate the readiness of an individual to build consensus, define direction and take initiative? Leadership styles vary, but true leaders invariably draw respect, loyalty and action from their peers. Julie Dennehy represents all of those qualities, while exerting a compelling influence on behalf of a close-knit group of over 70 public relations sole practitioners in Boston.

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ask your company, agency or PRSA Chapter for a **mentor**, someone who has been through the process successfully and can coach you one to one on learning and applying information. You can assume you know everything but commit some facts to flashcards and **study casually** during lunch, which is pretty risky (and a missed opportunity to enjoy your lunch). Or you can join or start a **study group**.

In a study group, you get peer support, structure, interaction and exchange of ideas, humor and tips on retaining facts, and a chance to think aloud or role play how the facts apply to problems in practice. Because the accreditation exams are not a competition with a limited number of winners, you can all be invested in each others' success.

The fun of a study group is that people bring different perspectives and experiences to it. What makes no sense to you, you can learn from a peer who can explain it with examples, as you can teach others what comes naturally to you. What you don't know or haven't experienced about another practice area you'll learn experientially from each other. You can brainstorm, argue, teach, agree, laugh, learn, vent, explore and breathe life into the study process in a group.

Yours can take whatever shape you agree on: groups have been loose affiliations, cohort groups going through professional development courses together, or an organized group with rotating

facilitators and responsibilities: find what works for you. Start early (8-10 weeks before the exam), meet weekly and keep in touch by e-mail, and follow the path set out in the study guide and text; the process will correct for different learning speeds and styles.

The **Study Guide** covers the broad areas practitioners and educators need to know to flesh out their practice skills. It will give you a good grounding in all the practice areas, from community relations to investor relations, employee communications to media relations - and everything you need to know to be able to rise to the occasion in practice, whether you choose corporate, nonprofit, government or agency work.

The recommended **textbook**, Cutlip, Center & Broom, is a standard in teaching public relations. It's a survey book, covering history and best practices, facts and cases from several points of view with different applications and examples. It's repetitious, but it's comprehensive, so don't dismiss it as a snooze; pick and choose how deeply you read into things you've already mastered and been practicing. Discuss what you've read and retained with your group: they'll find and fill the gaps in your knowledge.

The greatest value of the study group comes at the end, when you **role-play** the process of thinking through the sample questions for the orals part of the exam. You'll get - and give -

constructive feedback on how well you organize your thinking; capture the intent of the question; express yourself clearly and engagingly, and answer accurately and fully. The orals are designed to see how well you can use what you've learned, and this exercise will serve you well.

Study groups require commitment, discipline, and follow-through. Despite changing schedules, crises at work, sleep deprivation, business travel and a million things competing for your time and attention, a study group is worth the investment. You'll learn, practice, laugh, and develop a cohort group you can call on for reality testing, networking and problem-solving for years to come.

Finally, a group approach takes the personal fear out of the process and introduces some whimsy. The year I took the exam (when we spent the day in a BU lab with typewriters and white-out), my cohort group brought talismans for comfort and luck ~ pictures of kids, stuffed animals, worry beads, framed degrees, and bedroom slippers. That year, we ALL passed the accreditation exam.

For information and support in starting a study group, contact the accreditation chair in the Boston Chapter. Good luck!

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For those of us who labor in the relative anonymity of private practice, Julie's leadership has been invaluable. In the company of an exceptionally strong group of senior colleagues she stands out, first for her quiet modesty, then for her impeccable organization and "can do" style.

Since the group's inception, Julie has taken on many "roll up your sleeves" tasks that have helped sustain the Boston PRSA "Soles Collaborative" while building internal coherence and external visibility. "I'm really the group's coordinator, and a leader by default," she jokes. "I believe it is my responsibility to help support the community of professionals who have supported me." The genesis of this refreshingly modest approach has grown from experience first gained when Julie learned the business at the Advertising Club of Greater Boston and at local agencies.

Attracted to the fast-paced industry, she takes pleasure in recounting her early days in the field, which started when she was still in high school. Early on she came in contact with exceptionally able communications professionals, which helps explain the high regard in which she holds her colleagues to this day. Julie believes in the profession, practices it with pride, and generously shares her time and vision. "Everything you do comes back tenfold," she says, and she means it.

Most of all she credits her colleagues for giving her the opportunity to break out on her own and build a vibrant PR practice. Julie's forte - media relations, promotions and special events for retailers and consumer product companies -- has helped her build a thriving business that has nicely weathered the current economic downturn.

Straight talking like a true journeyman, she explains the fundamentals of her specialty business: "It's about creating a buzz," she explains, noting that she chooses a high-energy combination of special events, publicity, community relations, and "street level" promotions and events for her clients. "I cover the New England and Northeast territory for some major retailers and brands who expect a great deal of dedication from their network of PR professionals," she says, with typical modesty understating the cachet of a client list that would leave many large agencies drooling.

Married with one son and a daughter due in March, Julie's college years at Syracuse University consisted of a whirlwind of studies and student activities. When not working at the Carrier Dome, she juggled on-air shifts and promotions for WJPZ-FM. Now she juggles her business with the help of Clark MBA grad Casey Baird, who handles account executive chores.

"Thanks to Casey," she says, "we've developed a fulfilling and demanding business

serving loyal clients in a cooperative effort with 25 other practitioners in the national Public Relations Consultants Group. Working with the Group, for whom we exclusively cover New England, we have provided regional support for publicity tours for Levi's, barnes&noble.com, Pantene, and Land Rover, among others."

"Julie has the logistical skills of an army general," says fellow sole practitioner Henry Stimpson, who collaborated with her on a non-profit client project. "Yet she's cheerful, relaxed and just a pleasure to work with. In all respects she's a consummate professional."

Julie is on the board of the International Special Events Society and is Immediate Past President of the Publicity Club of New England. She has received ten Bell Ringer awards in a career that is just beginning to gather momentum. The Boston Sole Practitioners Collaborative is fortunate to benefit from her experience, enthusiasm, intelligence and hard work. In a profession noted for occasionally erring on the side of overstatement, Julie stands out for her sense of personal understatement. How fortunate we are to have her.

**Got Something to Say!?**  
**Send it to:**  
[stevequigley@mediaone.net](mailto:stevequigley@mediaone.net)

## **Bring Your Resume!**

### **Top PR Head Hunters Offer Advice At November Meeting; Roundtable Discussions To Reveal Secrets Of Job Search; Election of 2002 Chapter Board Members**

#### ***National Chair and CEO Lewton On Industry Career Trends; Election Of 2002 Slate***

With hundreds of Boston area PR professionals laid off in the last year and widespread fears that many more may follow, the November meeting of the Boston Chapter of PRSA is focusing on the job search, with personal tips and advice from some of the area's biggest names in public relations employment. Roundtable discussions will give job hunters, regardless of seniority or experience, the chance to talk about their strategy, find out where to look, learn how to pitch and (gulp) get a pro's evaluation of their resume!

PRSA national chair and CEO Kathy Lewton, who will be in town to meet with the heads of some of the area's largest agencies, will give her views on industry trends and what we have to look forward to in the coming year. Capping off the meeting will be a brief election for the Chapter's slate of officers for 2002 (only PRSA members may vote).

The meeting, at the Government Center Holiday Inn, at the intersection of Cambridge and Blossom

Streets, starts at 6 p.m., with networking and dinner, followed by the formal program at 7 p.m. The meeting is open to both PRSA members and non-members. If you're job hunting, or think you might be, this is the meeting to attend.

Leading the evening's roundtable discussions will be Ted Chaloner, president of Chaloner Associates, Jim Ward, president of The Ward Group, and Kerry Buckley, PR practice leader with Winter Wyman & Co. Both Chaloner Associates and The Ward Group are retained search firms specializing in public relations; Winter Wyman is a large staffing firm with a specialized practice in public relations.

#### **When:**

Thursday, November 8, 2001  
6:00 - 7:00 PM Social hour, networking and buffet  
7:00 - 9:00 PM Program

#### **Where:**

Holiday Inn, Cambridge Street, Boston (corner of Blossom St.)

**Cost:** \$45 for members, \$55 for non-members (non-members must pay in advance).

Advance registration is required. RSVP by Tuesday, November 6. Send a check, payable to PRSA/Boston Chapter, to Paul Wetzel, APR, Chapter Administrator, 45 Broad Street, Boston, MA 02109, no later than Tuesday, November 6, or, use the fax back form, or e-mail: [wetzelpaul@msn.com](mailto:wetzelpaul@msn.com). Master Card and VISA are ac-

cepted.

NOTE: No-shows will be billed: if you must cancel your reservation please do so by end of day, Tuesday, November 6, to avoid being billed.

## **Professional Connections**

***Clean Air-Cool Planet (CA-CP)*** seeks a talented individual to plan and implement its outreach and media strategies. CA-CP works throughout the Northeast to promote solutions to global warming and we need a communications professional with a strong commitment to environmental issues to join our small team. Based in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, CA-CP is engaging communities, campuses and corporations to take actions that lead to rapid cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. We offer competitive salaries and an excellent benefits package.

### **Position Opening**

**Job Title:** Communications Manager

Send resumes and requests for main job responsibilities and information to:  
Resumes with letters of introduction and at least three references should be sent to: Roger Stephenson, Counsel, Jackson, Jackson & Wagner, 14 Front Street, Exeter, NH 03833-2795 [cacposition@jjwpr.com](mailto:cacposition@jjwpr.com).