

News & Views

In This Issue

[Five Questions with Janey Bishoff of Bishoff Communications](#)

[Howard Sholkin Returns to PRSA Boston's Leadership Team](#)

[Journalist Spotlight: Chuck Jaffe of MarketWatch](#)

[President's Letter: Best Job in the World](#)

[Community Notes](#)

['You Can Quote Me ...'](#)

[Photos from PRSA's Summer Party](#)

Five Questions with Janey Bishoff

Bishoff Communications' CEO on entering the field of PR and the industry's future



This month, we got the chance to speak with long-time PRSA member Janey Bishoff, CEO of Bishoff Communications. Her Back Bay firm has worked with a number of clients in a wide range of industries including real estate, architecture/engineering /construction, health care, retail and hospitality, as well as other business to business and business to consumer companies, non-profits and government organizations.

Janey's work has garnered accolades from organizations such as the the Publicity Club of New England, Women in Communications Clarion Awards, and Bronze Anvils from the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA).

Janey has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Boston History and Innovation Collaborative since its inception, and is on the Boards of the Boston Museum, Boston Ronald McDonald House, the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee. She holds a Masters Degree in Urban Studies & Planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Boston University with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science.

From the Editor

It's official -- Labor Day is just a memory and the days are getting shorter. After a restful summer, we have put together a great set of stories for your reading pleasure.

This month, we speak with long-time PRSA member Janey Bishoff as well as Boston-based MarketWatch columnist Chuck Jaffe. We also get a chance to hear a member's take on crafting CEO quotes.

As always, happy reading!

Chris Ranjitkar
News & Views
Editor

Lunch with HARO Founder, Peter Shankman

Special October PRSA Boston Program

On October 14, join fellow PR practitioners at a special luncheon with Peter Shankman -- author, PR & marketing strategist and founder of Help a Reporter Out (HARO).

In under a year, HARO

Can you talk a bit about your background and how you came to PR?

I grew up in Minnesota in the 1960s and early 1970s, a time of great change. Inspired by President Kennedy's call to public service, I came to college in Boston, specifically to study public policy. I wanted to work in government and did so for a number of years. I loved the communications aspect of my role - and focused on public education.

My graduate degree was in urban planning and I eventually wound up working for an architecture firm, where I was originally hired as a planner. However, I transitioned into public relations and marketing soon after.

As a long time practitioner, what do you believe PR will look like in the future?

As the number of ways for direct communication increases, so will the need for skilled, experienced PR staff. Public relations will play a broader role and grow in importance as more companies need to directly engage with their audiences. However, I do not think that traditional media is dead - nor will it die in the future. The increase in methods of communication means that companies will need public relations counselors who can help them clearly focus and deliver their messages.

As a long time member of the Boston business community, what do you believe will help lift Boston out of the recession?

Throughout history Boston has always been a center of innovation. World-changing innovations, not only in technology, but also in health care, financial services, education, and social services were born here. I am confident that innovation will continue to occur in Greater Boston and ultimately will help our economy recover. In the future, I believe we will see new and innovative business models, as businesses must innovate and adapt to the new environment. I also believe we will see continued growth of strategic partnerships as companies collaborate with clients, peers and even competitors to remain successful.

Having worked with several non-profit organizations, can you provide any tips for non-profit campaigns?

This is obviously a challenging time for non-profits with the economic downturn affecting contributions from donors and patrons. In such a competitive environment, non-profits need a disciplined approach and informed, strategic marketing communications plans. These organizations must ensure that they are utilizing their resources wisely-towards activities which will yield the greatest pay-off.

It is also critical that the boards of directors of these organizations realize the importance of marketing and keeping the organization visible.

What has been the most memorable and rewarding moment of your career so far?

I have been fortunate to have many wonderful experiences. Some memorable moments include creating a Town Meeting event in Boston for Vice President Al Gore and his reinventing government initiative, and accompanying the Duchess of York to meet with patients and their families at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute and the Ronald McDonald House. But the most personally rewarding moments have been times when I have stepped into challenging crisis situations to handle communications and have been thanked by extremely grateful individuals facing those difficult, and sometimes tragic situations.

[Back to Top](#)

New Chapter Head of Collegiate PRSA

Howard Sholkin returns to PRSA Boston leadership team

Boston has a new liaison with the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA). Howard Sholkin, past president of the Chapter, takes over from Steve Quigley. Steve and Kirk Hazlett have served as liaisons for most of this decade.

Six schools -- Boston University, Emerson, Simmons, Northeastern, Salem State and Bridgewater State -- are full-fledged PRSSA institutions while several others are unofficial participants. Sholkin spent the summer connecting with faculty advisors at 10 colleges to plan 2009-2010 programs. While the Chapter readily invites students to be more involved with programs and other activities, PRSA Boston is keen to learn what's most important to faculty and students.

"Kirk and Steve built a base of interest through their teaching at Curry

emerged as a *de facto* standard for thousands of journalists on deadline looking for news sources. Today, HARO is the largest free repository of sources in the world, conveying more than 1,200 queries per week for media outlets all over the globe.

Hosted at the Seaport Hotel and sponsored by Medialink, the luncheon will feature Peter's take on viral marketing, social networking and media relations -- a program not to be missed!

Take advantage of [early-bird pricing](#) and act quickly to get tickets for this event. [Click here](#) for more information, or go directly to our [registration page](#).

Quick Links

Stay connected with chapter members



facebook

Visit PRSA National's blog



College and BU and their outreach efforts," Sholkin said. "I hope to grow that base and interest PRSSA members in Chapter activities while providing resources for the students."

Sholkin is Director, Communications & Marketing programs, at IDG Communications. Students and instructors interested in joining the PRSSA initiative should email him, hsholkin@comcast.net, or call 508-988-7696.

[Back to Top](#)

Journalist Spotlight

MarketWatch Senior Columnist, Chuck Jaffe



This month, we got the chance to interview MarketWatch senior columnist, and Boston Globe alum Chuck Jaffe. His work is syndicated nationally and includes the columns "Stupid Investment of the Week" and "Your Funds," the most widely read feature on mutual fund investing in America. He also provides regular guest commentary for Nightly Business Report on public television, and for "All Things Considered" on National Public Radio. Jaffe has also worked in radio, hosting "MoneyLife" and "Your Money, with Chuck Jaffe" on WBIX-AM in Boston.

Prior to joining MarketWatch, Jaffe spent nine years as personal finance and mutual funds columnist at The Boston Globe. He previously wrote for The Morning Call in Allentown, Pa., The St. Petersburg Times and the Bradenton Herald, both of Florida. Chuck is the author of two books, "The Right Way to Hire Financial Help" and "Chuck Jaffe's Lifetime Guide to Mutual Funds."

To reach Jaffe, email him at cjaffe@marketwatch.com.

As a former member of The Boston Globe team, what is your take on the current media landscape in Boston?

In Boston financial circles, there used to be a saying that it was better to be FROM Fidelity than AT Fidelity. These days, that saying applies to the Globe. It is better to be FROM the Globe than At it.

That said, you are looking at an interesting situation in Boston, in that the city has remained a two newspaper town much longer than anyone believed possible, and you have seen the significant erosion of the newspaper presence in the community, much faster than anyone believed possible.

I don't think Boston is any different from most big cities in the country, which means the media here will be in flux for the foreseeable future. You look at Detroit, where the News no longer is printed on certain days of the week, but the Web site is vital and you may have a vision of what the future holds. Compare that, by the way, to nearby Ann Arbor, my college town, where they closed the Ann Arbor News but kept the Web site and the site is miserable and lacking in coverage, and you have the blueprint for what you want, and what you don't want.

As someone who started out in print, how has your transition into broadcast radio/tv and online news been? Do you see yourself focusing on one medium in the future?

I'm still in print, through syndication. It's a bit like making buggy whips - demand is waning as newspapers cut their pages, eliminate business sections and more.

But my transition was seamless. My work, fundamentally, is the same (though I added the Stupid Investment of the Week column when I joined MarketWatch). And there's no way ANYONE will focus on just one medium in the future. If you write, you will do podcasts (audio and/or video), and you will do web chats and all kinds of other stuff. And if you are on the radio or television or Internet, you will do blogs or newsletters or whatever. Focus on a single medium and you not only are making buggy whips, but you are making sure that you never diversify your product line.

Where do you usually get topic ideas?

I get my ideas from anywhere and everywhere. From readers, from press releases, from industry sources, from the news, from the mail, from regulatory filings, from chatting with really smart people ... almost anything can turn into a column idea for me. That said, my column ideas are frequently NOT what others come up with, even if we look at the same things; if I get a column idea from a press release, it may well be from what I read between

the lines, rather than what the issuer actually said.

What are your pet peeves about PR people?

If you are pitching me, know what I do. I generally don't write about new mutual funds, for example, though I want to know what is out there and being created. I am happy to look at everything and anything, even stuff that is not straight up my alley. But if you send me something that's not a fit, don't compound it by following up with a phone call or badgering me. I have no problems calling people back when I am interested in something.

That said, if your phone doesn't ring, it's me -- and I have probably moved on and let your release pass. It's not personal, it's just not for me, this time. And if you doubt that I have received your note, because you are sure I would have responded, send it again. If your phone doesn't ring a second time, you've got your answer.

I am frequently seen as an adversary by PR people, because I am writing things that are critical of their clients or their business, etc. Stonewall tactics make me crazy, if only because my columns are always better balanced when I have both sides, and if I am offering you the chance to get your side out, you ought to take it. Ever since the Nixon Administration, the words "no comment" have been read as "I'm guilty" by the American public.

In your opinion, what makes an effective pitch? What do good PR people do that make them 'good'?

A good pitch knows what I tend to look for, and knows that I am frequently looking for stuff outside the ordinary. It's not made in response to one of my columns ("You just wrote about X, if you decide to write about it again, consider this [source, idea, etc.]"), but is made before there is a column. And it typically does not involve the PR person's company or idea as the sole focus of what I am doing.

You can probably count on one hand the number of times in a year where my focus is on one guy, one company, one source. Even if you pitch me the best idea I have heard all year, I will talk to multiple sources about it. Your source will likely get a quote in there, assuming they are semi-literate, but if you think I am going to take their word for it or not talk to the competition or other sources, then you need to find someone else to pitch an idea to.

Good PR people know that. They know that business is business, and that I don't hit the delete key on an e-mail with malice, I do it because I made a business decision on this ONE idea. If it takes them 100 tries to pitch me and get one, they will make the hundred efforts. Bad PR folks are the ones who make a pitch and are stunned that I didn't jump at the chance to work with them, when their idea was ordinary or their source was average. If you want to pitch me an interview chance with a guy who is on my top-10 wish list for interviews, that's one thing - if you want to pitch me the chief economist of NoOneHasHeardofUs.com, you'll need to be a bit more patient.

[Back to Top](#)

President's Letter

Best Job in the World

Dear Colleagues:

Two or three times a day, as a rule, I receive email from recent college grads chasing their first PR job. Sometimes messages arrive in bunches, as though a group of them attended a networking workshop; the seminar concludes and everyone clicks "send" at once.



My first paycheck as a comm professional feels like a long time ago. Yet if I live to 120, I'll never forget what it felt like to be in their shoes: yearning for the First Job Out of College. Crafting that initial resume -- can there be a more awful writing task? Making endless phone calls, following up leads. I have a huge supply of empathy for the latest batch of job seekers.

So, as time permits, I try to respond and offer meaningful advice. It's my way of thanking folks who donated a few minutes when I was the newbie trying to break in. Sometimes, though, hearing supplicants earnestly describe the work they're pursuing, a mischievous part of me wants to tease them about certain career assumptions.

"Why would you ever want to go into PR?" I'm tempted to counter. "Is it the polite interaction you always have with reporters? The night-time, weekend and holiday hours? The outsider's frequent comment that PR is 'just like' advertising?"

Given the number of jobless grads, their mounting despair and the job market's tenor, you'll be happy to know that I avoid playing any laugh-lines. And, in forcing myself to behave, I find myself making comments like:

- Few other jobs allow me to engage with so many smart, accomplished people.
- I operate in an organization's nerve center, and touch nearly every function.
- In everyday situations or in crisis, I occupy "a seat at the table" where decisions are made.
- What I do can make a difference.

I thought that taking a moment to help today's job seekers was a way of acknowledging past acts of kindness shown me. Ironically, it also reminded me to "stop and smell the roses" on why a career in PR can be one of the best in the world.

How about you? Add to the list -- or challenge it -- on the Chapter's [Facebook](#) or [LinkedIn](#) pages.



Jack Jackson
President 2009-2010
JJackson@PRSABoston.com

[Back to Top](#)

Community Notes

PRSA Hardship Policy

If you are currently unemployed or temporarily disabled but need to renew your PRSA membership, you may be eligible for the PRSA Hardship Policy. To qualify, you must have been a PRSA member for three years or more. Part time workers are not eligible. Recently lapsed members may still apply, and those who recently renewed may receive a monetary hardship credit.

The plan is also available for those who are temporarily disabled (i.e. maternity leave, etc.). National members who fit these criteria can renew their memberships at the hardship rate of \$115 (a \$110 savings from the standard \$225 rate), while still receiving all member benefits. Hardship dues must be paid in full and cannot be combined with any other payment program. Each member may only apply for hardship one time. To begin the application process, notify a Member Services representative at membership@prsa.org or (212) 460-1400. Please visit www.prsa.org/membership for more information.

Kirk Hazlett Elected to PRSA College of Fellows

Boston PRSA member and Curry College Professor Kirk Hazlett, APR, has been elected to PRSA's College of Fellows. A member since 1982, Hazlett served concurrently as president of the Boston chapter and chair of the Northeast District board of directors in 2005, and now serves as a director-at-large of the Educators Academy. He has committed countless hours of time to starting up PR student association chapters at Simmons, Stonehill, Bentley and Curry colleges in the Boston area, and mentoring students who are members of those chapters as well. Hazlett has served as public relations counsel to chief executives of highly respected nonprofit organizations and also has been an actively engaged volunteer on boards of directors of numerous nonprofit organizations. The formal induction will take place on Nov. 7 in San Diego Calif.

'You Can Quote Me ... '

The art of how (and how not) to craft quotes

I cringe 90 percent of the time whenever I read the direct quotes in a press release. They're usually so obviously canned. And dull, dull, dull.



The quote usually starts, "We're delighted to" Tell us something we didn't know.

The quote usually goes downhill from there, meandering into a long paragraph of pallid palaver no human would speak. Like the recipient of an Academy Award, the speaker goes on to thank everyone from his mom on down, anyone who could have made this "great success" possible.

It's too bad most quotes are so silly. A good quote or two can advance your cause.

Here's why.

A good release should read like a news story and avoid commercialism in the main text-rules that most releases violate, putting off readers who want information, not a baloney sandwich.

Quotes - along with the boilerplate at the end -- are the only places where you can sneak in your marketing message. Since it's a named person who's speaking in the quote, not the impersonal third-person voice of the release, it's okay to put in some marketing spin in the quote. (But for heaven's sake, don't overdo it.)

How can you get a good quote?

Start out by briefly interviewing the people involved -- the key executive or expert at your organization or client, or, if another organization is an important part of the story, someone there. Real people usually say much more interesting things than anything you can make up.

If it's not feasible to interview the principals, use a little creativity. Imagine what a living breathing person might have to say about this exciting, interesting piece of news. Tell readers something they can't get in the rest of the release.

Keep 'em brief and pithy. One or two sentences per quote -- three tops -- is/are plenty.

If you feel that coming up with a good quote is impossible, just skip it. It's far better to have no quotes in a release than inflating it with trite gas.

Henry Stimpson, APR, is owner of Stimpson Communications in Wayland. He can be reached at Henry@StimpsonCommunications.com or 508-647-0705.

[Back to Top](#)

You Could Be in Pictures ...

View photos of PRSA Boston's annual summer party, Sip by the Sea, by clicking [here](#).

[Back to Top](#)

News & Views is a monthly newsletter by and for members of New England's largest association of PR professionals.

Associate Editor: Kim Cole
News & Views Editor: Christopher Ranjitkar

PRSA Boston Corresponding Secretary: Jackie Lustig

To contribute articles, news or information on upcoming events, please contact the *News & Views* at info@PRSABoston.com.

