



UPDATE

Public Relations Society of America

Greater Spokane Chapter

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April Program

Use of Strategic Political Communication to Influence Media, Public Opinion

**Friday, April 4
7:30 - 9:00 a.m.
Caltaldo Dining Hall, G.U.**



David Domke

As the United States' "war against terrorism" has unfolded since September 11, 2001, and now moves into Iraq, another campaign has been waged by political leaders on the hearts and minds of Americans closer to home. One of the most significant casualties in the battle over U.S. public opinion during these months

may be the vital and unencumbered role of dissent in America civil discourse, according to David Domke, a mass media expert and communication professor at the University of Washington.

Domke will present his most recent research analyzing the use of strategic political communication to influence the media and public opinion at our April 4th meeting.

Domke's research suggests that how news and political leaders interact to shape discourse about issues has considerable influence on individual perceptions and behavior. Topics examined in his research include: U.S. national identity, race relations, crime, immigration, health care, euthanasia, gun control, and education. Most recently, Domke has analyzed the Bush administration's post-September 11 communication strategies in the war

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on terrorism as well as the media response and the impact on U.S. public opinion.

Domke received his Ph.D. in mass communication from the University of Minnesota and received the Nafziger-White Award for the outstanding dissertation in the field from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. He has published numerous articles in academic journals on the relationship between political communication, mass media and public opinion.

Formerly a journalist for such newspapers as the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and the *Orange County Register*, Domke joined the faculty of the University of Washington Department of Communication in 1998. He teaches courses on mass communication, journalism, political communication and public opinion. Last year he received the UW Distinguished Teaching Award, the university's highest honor for teaching.

Chapter Briefs

- Chapter member **David Brukart, APR**, has been promoted to Vice President and Treasurer of Avista Corp. He will continue to oversee investor relations. David was also recently appointed to serve on the Spokane Airport Board of Directors.
- The Murrow School of Communications at WSU is planning a **Murrow Career Day April 16**, as part of the annual Murrow Symposium. Communication organizations and agencies are invited to participate in the event, which is expected to draw 1,500 communications and media students across the state. To register on-line, visit www.careers.wsu.edu. For general information, visit www.wsu.edu/murrow/commcareerday.

Day on the Job

is

Wednesday, April 2

4 - 6 p.m.

Gonzaga University

We are still looking for public relations practitioners to spend two hours sharing professional experiences and networking with PRSSA members.

**More event Sponsors
are also needed.**

Contact Maggie Crabtree
623-0471 or mcrabtree@shrinenet.org

**It's not too late to help
advance the profession!**

News From National

- PRSA's Professional Resource Center is holding an **inventory reduction sale!** Selected books, and all PRSA logo giftware and videos are being offered at reduced prices. Visit www.prsa.org and click "Resources" for the full listing of featured items. Quantities are limited. Members may also call 212.460.1459 or fax orders to 212.995.5024.
- Join PRSA's newest professional interest section! **Independent Practitioners Alliance** will provide resources and a virtual gathering place for independent practitioners. The Alliance will enable independent practitioners to network and share their entrepreneurial spirit. Contact Chris Tearno by phone at 212.460.1420 or by email at chris.tearno@prsa.org for more information about this new section!

Use Your Membership to Your Full Advantage



By Nancy Goodspeed, APR,
Spokane Regional Convention
& Visitors Bureau

While membership in PRSA offers extensive and valuable professional development, career insight and networking opportunities, there are additional ways in which members can get involved in their specific fields of work. This is through membership in PRSA's "Professional Interest Sections." Each section provides a focus on the elements of public relations that relate specifically to that individual member's industry.

Sections include: Corporate, Counselors Academy, Counselors to Higher Education, Educators Academy, Employee Communications, Environment, Financial Communications, Food and Beverage, Health Academy, International, Multicultural Communications, Public Affairs & Government, Technology, and Travel & Tourism.

Additionally, a brand new section, Independent Practitioners Alliance, has just been launched to provide resources and a virtual gathering place for independent practitioners, whether they work alone or in teams, from home, small or shared offices.

All of the sections offer leadership opportunities, professional development seminars, and in some cases, national conferences. Currently, more than 6,000 PRSA members are also members of Professional Interest Sections.

I joined the more than 500 members of the Travel & Tourism professional interest section a year ago and soon thereafter attended their national conference in Albuquerque. That conference was by far the best conference I have ever attended, from both a professional industry and a personal development standpoint.

Featured speakers included the head of corporate communications for American Airlines who described September 11th and how the airline had to work to provide information to the media, manage the impact of the tragedy with passengers, family, co-workers and personal friends, and deal with a fleet of planes that for the first time in history had been grounded; the head of Utah State Tourism talked about the challenges involved in setting up and staffing the International Media Center for the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City; other top national speakers, major media reporters and travel writers provided case studies and discussed strategic media relations and communications. The conference involved two and a half days of some of the most thought-provoking and stimulating speakers, information and discussion I have ever witnessed. Even the Saturday morning/farewell coffee klatch had great attendance, simply because the content and panel members were so good.

This year, I am fortunate to be a member of the board for the Travel and Tourism section. We are planning this year's national conference for Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in conjunction with the Society of American Travel Writers. We have worked diligently to combine these two national events at one time and in one location to address attendees' dwindling conference travel budgets. If you're in the hospitality industry or related trades, this is the place you'll want to be!

Similar opportunities exist whether you're in high tech, financial communications, media relations or work for an agency, or freelance. I encourage you to check out Professional Interest Sections, <http://www.prsa.org/Networking/pis/>. I know you'll be glad you did!

Announcing...

...the first ever PR Roundtable for Women-Owned Firms, June 6 & 7 in Chicago. Contact Patti Londre, APR, at www.londre.com for more information.

Journalists' View on PR...

“...Training Your Expert to Give Good Interviews”

The following excerpt comes from the March 12, 2003 edition of *Bulldog Reporter's Journalists Speak Out* a free online newsletter delivered via email every other week by Infocom Group. To subscribe, email bulldogreporter@infocomgroup.com.

What can your CEO, source or expert do to score more ink? Follow Jeff Kagan's lead, apparently. After all, the telecom analyst went from 15 press mentions in 1995 to 638 in 2002. This according to George Mannes, a senior reporter of TheStreet.com, who adds that Kagan is beloved by many journalists as a go-to source who “is key to press coverage of the telecommunications industry” and whose “disappearance would bring telco reporting to a grinding halt.” His strategy:

1. **Return calls quickly.** “[Kagan's] the man you depend on in the clutch,” wrote Mannes in his piece. “That's because Kagan, a telecom industry analyst, has that rare and beautiful quality that reporters treasure: He returns your call promptly, and he gives you a quotable comment you can drop in your story when you're minutes away from deadline.

2. **Push opinions, quotes and contact info.** Mannes praises sources who -- like Kagan -- give reporters easy access. “In his case, they can call his cell phone. They can page him. Or they can visit his website,” he says. “Or, they can just use the ready-made quotes he emails them on days when news breaks. Kagan has hundreds of reporters on his email list. When he started sending out little quotes, reporters would call him back for clarification.” According to Kagan, reporters now often simply quote straight from his email notifications. But judging by his story,

Mannes isn't thrilled with the practice -- which some label “sloppy journalism.”

3. **Deliver substance -- not muddled metaphors.** Mannes says he finds Kagan's quotes and insights to be just “OK.” In other words, they're heavy on hype and light on detail, qualitative analysis and facts. “They're not bad. They're not wrong. But they aren't remarkable, either.” His advice: “Be colorful -- but don't get carried away. Always know exactly what you're talking about.” Here are some examples of Kagan's tendency toward metaphorical grandstanding and what Mannes calls “Business-talk” cliches:

- Printed in the Roanoke Times: “Customers love bundled services, but hate watching the clock.”
- In an email offering commentary on Qwest: “Investors have been waiting for the other shoe to drop... With this step, we are now starting a new chapter in what will be a long book on reforms. Now is when the rubber starts meeting the road.”

4. **Avoid overexposure -- or risk bad ink.** Mannes' comments seem to revolve around one core criticism -- namely, that Kagan's name is everywhere. In particular, Mannes says his research showed “that USA Today likes Kagan. We mean, really likes Kagan. As in, ice cream four times a day. In fact, writers at the paper have named him as a source seven times in the past two months and 12 times last year.”

The lesson? Overexposing your source might lead to backlash among reporters -- particularly those at competing outlets. Our advice: Spread the wealth and offer your source only when he has something unique, factual and substantive to say. Your efforts might otherwise land you the same bittersweet ink that Mannes happily heaped on Kagan this week.