

The UPDATE

Dates to Remember...

January Monthly Program

7:30 a.m. Friday, Jan. 9
COG Building,
Gonzaga University
\$9 for PRSA and SPRC members
\$7 for students
\$11 for non-members

Membership survey helps our Chapter serve you

Your 2004 Board is holding their annual retreat this Saturday to plan the year's activities and events.

If you haven't already completed the 2004 Membership Survey (e-mailed to all members earlier this week), please take a few minutes to tell us what you think. Your input is extremely valuable to help the Greater Spokane PRSA Chapter meet your needs! Thanks!

Accreditation coming soon!

Planning is under way to offer our members the opportunity to earn the Accredited in Public Relations (APR) credential.

Is it tough? Yes. Is it worth it? You bet! If you are a public relations professional with at least five years of experience and a desire to build your professional skills and abilities, this opportunity is for you! Find out more by contacting Melanie Rose, APR, at (509) 324-1688 or mkrose@spokanecounty.org.

Stake your reputation on first meeting of 2004

Whether implementing a new organizational strategy, initiating a pivotal project, or simply nurturing a team, success in today's world requires much more than traditional management competence. It takes leadership!

Our Jan. 9 program, led by Roger M. Ingbretsen, a coaching and organizational consultant with three decades of leadership experience, will focus on professional development with a presentation on "Exemplary Leadership: Developing your Reputational Capital."

Ingbretsen's presentation will cover a series of tools for helping public relations professionals take responsibility for their own professional PR.

Ingbretsen recently launched his own leadership and organizational consulting business building on a successful career in operational and leadership



Ingbretsen

Organizational consultant Roger Ingbretsen will tell how "reputational capital" impacts leadership at the PRSA/SPRC joint meeting at 7:30 a.m. Friday, Jan. 9, at the COG at Gonzaga University.

positions in the military and in business. Most recently, he served as director of executive development for Itron, Inc., where he is credited with "raising the bar" for the successful company's leadership team.

Ingbretsen has a master's degree in organizational leadership from Gonzaga University and a dual undergraduate degree in economics and business administration from Park University, as well as 1,500 certified hours of training in technical disciplines.

He's published more than 40 articles, numerous white papers and two books, including the recently released "Personal Knowledge to Shape Your Future."



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Chapter Briefs

Local member moves to new position

Join us in congratulating **Teresa Stueckle** in her new position as Customer Technology Project Manager with Spokane Transit Authority (STA). Formerly STA's Customer and Public Relations Manager, Teresa will now be focusing her talents on coordinating and implementing several high tech projects – a new fare box system with Smart Card technology, a new telephone system and website enhancements to allow on-line bus pass purchasing. *Way to go!*

National Briefs

2004 PRSA International Conference issues Call for Presentations

Be sure to visit www.prsa.org early this month for the online Call for Presentations. This is your opportunity to find out how to submit a proposal that can become part of the 2004 PRSA International Conference as a Professional Development workshop or Pre-Conference seminar or – new in 2004 – as a Master Class.

The 2004 Conference will be in New York City, Oct. 23-26. The **deadline** for submitting (on-line only) presentation proposals is **Friday, Feb. 6**.

PRSA seeking annual awards entries

Considered the preeminent awards competition in the profession, PRSA has issued the call for entries for the 2004 Silver and Bronze Anvils and PRSA's Individual Awards program. Entry forms were recently mailed to PRSA members and are posted online at www.prsa.org.

The Silver Anvil section of the website also contains copies of the winning summaries from 1968 to the present, tips and tactics. Deadlines for each award category vary, with the Silver Anvil **deadline -- Feb. 27 --** coming up first in the series of national awards.

Ethics in the workplace

The Case of the Blabbermouth PR Staffer

By **JESSIE WUERST, APR**
Ethics Officer
Greater Spokane PRSA Chapter

If you'll remember, our ethical dilemma from last month centered on a junior PR agency staffer who, in direct violation of a nondisclosure agreement and after too much wine at a civic function, divulged specifics about a client's potential new product to none other than the editor of the local newspaper.

According to the PRSA Board of Ethics and Professional Standards (BEPS), the key values of this situation include *honesty* (we adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth); *independence* (we are accountable for our actions); *loyalty* (we are faithful to those we represent); and *fairness* (we deal fairly with clients, employees, employers, competitors, peers and others). The specific core principle violated by the young PR staffer is "Safeguarding Confidences: to protect the privacy rights of clients, organizations and individuals by safeguarding confidential information."

Well, what now? BEPS suggests that the client should be informed immediately to allow them to make a decision as to next steps – which may include an early product announcement and perhaps a discussion with the newspaper editor to request a hold be placed on the information. In light of the non-disclosure agreement, there may be legal action taken by the client that could make the PR



agency responsible for any potential loss of future market share. At the very least, BEPS suggests the junior staffer be dismissed from the agency so, according to BEPS, "other staff members would realize that they must keep information on a confidential basis."

One other point should be made. Let's assume the Worldwide Widget Co. (WWC) is a publicly traded company. In this case, the Fair Disclosure Act (Reg FD) of the Securities and Exchange Commission may come into play. Basically, this regulation demands that information which would cause a reasonable investor to buy or sell the stock be disseminated in an equitable and broad manner. So, as the young PR staffer shared confidential information about a new product that could potentially materially affect WWC's revenue, the company must then issue a press release, across a business wire (PRNewswire, Business Wire, etc.) to reach the broadest audience possible. And the discussion with the newspaper editor would be not only inappropriate, but useless.

In this world of increasingly complex and competitive business operations and rapidly emerging federal disclosure regulations, public relations practitioners often become the primary advisors to senior management on ethical and regulatory issues. As this scenario shows, many times these issues overlap and can have significant bottom-line impact.

For more information about PR ethics, go to the PRSA site at www.prsa.org. For more information about SEC regulations, go to www.sec.gov and type reg fd into the search engine.