

The UPDATE

Dates to Remember...

March Monthly Program

7:30 a.m. Friday, March 5
Cataldo Hall,
Gonzaga University
\$9 for PRSA members
\$7 for students
\$11 for non-members

Teleconferences

See Page 4

Meaningful Measure for Web Sites and Intranets
March 4 (pay at the door)

100 Years of Our Mistakes
March 11 (register by March 8)

Accreditation Study Sessions

See Page 3

March 2 – Basic Concepts
March 9 – Publics and Public Opinion
March 16 – Communication Theory
March 23 – Research 1
March 30 – Research Methods

Visit us online at
www.prsaspokane.org

Experts to share award-winning tips

Desautel, Hege speak at monthly meeting

With the SPARC awards and the PRSA Bronze Anvils right around the corner, It's time to talk about perfecting the work plan!

On Friday, March 5, Cher Desautel and Michelle Hege from Desautel Hege Communications will present strategies for improving your award entries and, more importantly, research and planning techniques for strengthening your everyday work from small projects to big campaigns.

The joint breakfast meeting of the Greater Spokane PRSA Chapter and the Spokane Public Relations Council begins at 7:30 a.m. Friday, March 5, at Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University. Cost is \$9 for members, \$7 for students and \$11 for others.

Cher Desautel, MS, APR, president and CEO of Desautel Hege Communications holds a Master of Science degree in communications from Eastern Washington University and is accredited in public relations



Cher Desautel (left) and Michelle Hege will present Friday's program.

through the Public Relations Society of America.

Michelle Hege, MS, APR, chief operating officer of Desautel Hege Communications, holds a Master of Science in communications from Eastern Washington University, a Bachelor of Arts from Whitman College and is accredited in public relations through the Public Relations Society of America.

Winners of PRSA's national Best of Silver Anvil in 2001 and SPRC's 2000 Dussault Award, Cher and Michelle will share some of their own lessons learned in award writing and campaign planning.



Greater Spokane Chapter

Board of Directors

President & PRSSA Liaison

Maggie Crabtree, APR
Shriners Hospitals for Children
mcrabtree@shrinenet.org
509.623.0471

President-elect & Member Communications

Garry Matlow
matlowpr.com
matlow@comcast.net
509.487.7240

Past President & Accreditation Chair

Melanie Rose, APR
Eastern Washington University
mrose@mail.ewu.edu
509.359.4868

Secretary & Treasurer

Tamitha Anderson
Spokane Symphony
tamithaanderson@spokanesymphony.org
509.326.3136

Membership Chair

Mary Joan Hahn, APR
Rockey-West Public Relations
maryjoan.hahn@hillandknowlton.com
509.744.3350

Programs

Ann Nolan
The Write Design
janolan3@juno.com
509.928.1251

Professional Development

Jean Farmer
Northeast Community Center
jfarmer@aimcomm.net
509.487.1603

Special Events

Vicki Simmons
ICM Asset Management
vickis@icmasset.com
509.455.3588

Ethics Officer

Jessie Wuerst, APR
Avista Corp.
jessie.wuerst@avistacorp.com
509.495.8578

Chapter Briefs

Melanie Rose, APR, has joined Eastern Washington University's Division of Educational Outreach. She is the new marketing manager responsible for planning, directing, organizing and tracking strategic marketing as well as identifying profitable and diverse opportunities for expansion of services provided by the division. Melanie also serves as accreditation chair for the Greater Spokane PRSA Chapter. She was most recently with the Spokane Regional Health District.

Don't neglect to take advantage of the Greater Spokane Chapter's **free job-listing service** on our website, www.prsaspokane.org. Click on "Members Only" and then "Job Info" to reach the job page, where you'll find current openings as well as a link to "post a position" and have your opening available to PRSA chapter members as well as Spokane Public Relations Council members.

Membership drive continues; initiation fee waived in March

The "Taste of PRSA" membership campaign continues in March, so be sure to alert your colleagues to the opportunity to join this leading public relations organization with no initiation fee!

And for those who've let their membership lapse, there's no reinstatement fee either!

During "Taste of PRSA," the national organization waives the \$65 initiation fee and provides a \$20 merchandise voucher.

We've had several inquiries from leading PR practitioners looking for membership information – and your board is available and eager to handle more.

Share names of people you think would benefit from the resources and benefits of membership in this national network of more than 20,000 public relations professionals with Chapter's membership chair, Mary Joan Hahn, at (509) 744-3350 or (509) 624-1606. We'll reach out personally with information to help in their decision-making.

Accreditation

It's not too late to join APR study sessions

It's not too late to join us! The 12-week accreditation study session series begins this week for members interested in pursuing their Accredited in Public Relations (APR) credential.

Led by Accredited chapter members, the topic-specific sessions are running on Tuesday evenings from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

The location is at Shriners Hospital for Children, 901 W. 5th Ave., Spokane. The sessions will take place in the private dining room adjacent to the cafeteria on the fourth floor of the hospital (turn left after leaving the elevator). Persons wishing to order dinner in the cafeteria need to get there early, as the cafeteria stops serving food at 5:15 p.m.



The topics of the study sessions are as follows:

- **March 2 – Basic Concepts** – History, definition and function of public relations; how helps management and benefits society.
- **March 9 – Publics & Public Opinion** - The publics of PR and the public opinion process; The Tipping Point
- **March 16 – Communication Theory** – Two models of communication theory
- **March 23 – Research 1** - Four-step standard process of research
- **March 30 – Research Methods** - Content analysis; sample size and accuracy; types of research; the scientific method
- **April 6 – Planning** - How to organize the PR function; components of a PR or communications plan
- **April 13 – Diffusion** – Theory of communication adoption including process, sources, pattern and curve
- **April 20 – Law & Ethics** – PRSA Code of



Ethics; elements of libel and copyright

- **April 27 – Information Technology** - Online resources, permission marketing and other considerations about information technology
- **May 4 – Case Problems** – An analysis of various case studies including AIDS activism; an art gallery; sanitary landfill; Association's PR program is questioned and forestalling classroom cutbacks
- **May 11 – Business Literacy** – Knowledge of company and industry issues; understanding all levels of management, marketplace trends
- **May 18 – Personal Presentation** - Speaking, interviewing, listening and presentation skills

The APR is a mark of distinction for public relations professionals. It signifies a high professional level of experience and competence. PRSA members with at least five years of 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 are eligible to apply for Accreditation.

If you are interested in pursuing your APR or would simply like to attend a few of the sessions (which are open to all Greater Spokane PRSA Chapter members), contact Melanie Rose, APR, our chapter's Accreditation Chair at (509) 359-4868 or mrose@mail.ewu.edu. More information about Accreditation can be found at www.accreditationboard.org.

Learn website measurement, biggest mistakes of PR careers

ALL PROGRAMS WILL BE
PRESENTED AT
THE TELECONFERENCE CENTER
FOLEY CENTER
GONZAGA UNIVERSITY

Thursday, March 11
Noon – 1 p.m.

Back by popular demand is this interactive teleseminar from PRSA leaders who presented it at the 2003 PRSA International Conference.

Pay at the door for
**Meaningful Measure for Web Sites and
Intranets**
Thursday, March 4
Noon – 1 p.m.

Everyone knows you shouldn't measure hits, but what should you measure? This teleseminar gives you the tools you need to quantify your current Web site so that you can develop the site to deliver better business results for your organization.

Decide on which measures of site usage are most important for you and your management to base decisions. Translate reams of usage data into key metrics that you'll want to track over time. Use focus groups and survey techniques to determine how your electronic channels help achieve your organization's business goals.

Presented by Angela Sinickas, ABC, president Sinickas Communications Inc.

Cost: \$15 PRSA members; \$25 non-members

Register by March 8 for
100 Years of Our Mistakes

Four seasoned panelists provide examples of the biggest mistakes of their careers while examining the mistaken strategy, execution and results for each case. They discuss how all can learn from their mistake and will field questions. Avoid these mistakes by identifying the warning signs that a strategy is not a correct path.

Presenters: Marty Campanello, APR, Fellow PRSA, Bayhealth Medical Centers; Del Galloway, APR, PRSA president, Husk Jennings Galloway & Robinson; Kathleen Larey Lewton, APR, Fellow PRSA, Fleishman-Hillard; David Richey, APR, AmSouth Bank.

Cost: \$15 PRSA members; \$25 non-members

A minimum of 10 registrants per program are required to bring each of these events to Spokane. Register by telephone or email to Ann Nolan at 928-1251 or janolan3@juno.com. Include your name, company, postal address, telephone number and email address – and specify which program you are registering for. We'll look after the technical details. You arrive on time, ready to learn! Pay at the door.

Share your experience with a student at PRSA 'Day on the Job' April 7

As a public relations professional, you know the critical importance of real "on-the-job" experience. No doubt you also know how difficult getting that experience can be . . .

Introducing PRSA Day on the Job Wednesday, April 7, 2004

Share your insights and professional knowledge with enthusiastic communications students from Washington State University, Gonzaga University, Eastern Washington University, the University of Idaho and Whitworth College.

- You will be contacted with the name and phone number of your student March 31.
- Plan on meeting your student between 8:30-9 a.m. April 7. Allow them time to shadow you for the morning, explaining what you do as you go through your daily paces. Take your student to a meeting, ask them to share their creativeness, take them on a tour of your work site, or put them to work.
- Join other participating professionals and students for lunch at 12:30 with our students as our guests, and listen to a PR professional share a vision on public relations and marketing.

If you are interested in sponsoring a student for a half a day, **please email mcrabtree@shrinenet.org or fax this form back by March 19 to Maggie Crabtree at (509) 623-0474.**

Name _____ Title _____

Company _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Please indicate what type of work you do: ___ Agency Work ___ Non-Profit ___

___ Special Events ___ Sports ___ Higher Education ___ Corporate ___ Public Affairs

___ Health Care ___ Technology ___ Government ___ Other: _____

___ **YES!** I will sponsor a student for this event in April. I (We) can host ___ student(s).

___ **YES!** I will plan on attending the lunch with my student.

If you have any questions regarding this event, please call Maggie Crabtree at (509) 623-0471 or email mcrabtree@shrinenet.org.

How to write a better news release

What to include and what to avoid in a successful media relations piece

BY ANN WYLIE

President, Wylie Communications Inc.

Depending on which study you look at, 55 percent to 97 percent of all news releases sent to media outlets are never used, according to Dennis L. Wilcox and Lawrence W. Nolte in *Public Relations Writing & Media Techniques* (Longman, 1997).

No wonder!

Most of the news releases I review for my training programs and consulting work are old-fashioned, formulaic and dull.

Never mind the enormous changes in media technology, vast increases in information overload and an almost complete transformation in readership habits. Virtually all the releases I see rely on the same writing techniques PR pros have been using since Edward L. Bernays began the practice during World War I.

So how can you create news releases that are among the 3 percent to 45 percent that actually get the word out? Use this checklist to craft a release that gets quick attention and demonstrates the value of your story to today's editors and reporters:

Grab attention in the headline

The best press release headlines are newsy and interesting.

- Telegraph a single newsworthy story.
- Keep your headline to eight words or fewer.

That will help editors and reporters understand your point at a glance.

- Check your verb. The verb -- the "what happened" -- is the story. Is yours strong? Is it the second or third word in the sentence, or is it buried behind a nine-word product name or the names of each of your company's 17 project partners?

Sell the story in the deck

Once you've gained attention in the headline, use the deck -- a.k.a. the subhead or summary

Use this checklist to craft a release that gets quick attention and demonstrates the value of your story to today's editors and reporters.

blurb -- to sell the reporter on the story.

- Telegraph a single point in no more than 14 words. That's a length that's easy to read and understand.
- Don't repeat words from the headline in the deck. This is San Francisco real estate. Make every word do new work.
- Don't drop the deck. This second layer of information is essential to communicate to today's audience of flippers and skimmers. It also helps you take a load off (and words out of) the headline.

Whet the appetite in the lead

Congratulations! Your headline and deck have convinced the reporter to read the first paragraph of your story. Here's how to make your lead pay off.

- Answer "What happened?" and "Why should the reader care?" in one or two short sentences. Remember, you don't have to explain everything in the lead. That's what the body of the release is for.
- Avoid old-fashioned P.R. 101 techniques like "the fact pack" (cramming who, what, when, where, why and how into the first paragraph) or using the dated "today announced" approach. Both methods slow the story down, appear unsophisticated and are too formulaic to stand out from the competition.

- Consider a strong benefits lead. One formula I counsel my training and consulting clients to use: "X (product or service users) who have struggled

with Y (problem your product or service solves) will now be able to Z (what the product or service will do for them), thanks to A (the product or service).” Notice how much more newsworthy and interesting that approach is than the traditional announcement release, which is overused and tedious.

Develop the story in the body

If the reporter has gotten this far, you are really a pro. Use the body of the release to build out the story angle you introduced in the lead.

- Organize your piece so that idea follows idea logically and seamlessly to create a story. Too many news releases are just a pile of facts with no real structure or flow.

- Don’t make the mistake too many press-release writers do and make abstract claims without backing them up with concrete evidence. Use tangible, quantifiable “proof” -- numbers, comparisons, examples and third-party testimonials, for instance.

- Make your news release as long as it needs to be, but not too long. Keep a target in mind of 500 words or fewer, not counting the boilerplate. If your release is much longer than that, consider breaking it into a two pieces. And don’t forget, there’s no commandment against a release that’s just a couple of paragraphs long.

Use this checklist to make your news releases more relevant, interesting and valuable. That will help you put your next release among the 3 percent to 45 percent that actually get the word out.

Learn to write a better news release, pitch or e-mail pitch

Want to learn more about what to include -- and what to avoid -- in a successful media relations piece? Join Ann Wylie at PRSA’s “Anatomy of a News release, Pitch and E-mail Pitch” teleseminar on April 15, 2004. Register or get more details, contact Genevieve DeLaurier at genevieve.delaurier@prsa.org.

About the author

Ann Wylie runs a company called Wylie Communications Inc. Ann works with communicators who want to reach more readers and with organizations that want to get the word out. To learn more about her training, consulting or writing and editing services, contact Ann at (816) 502-7894 or awylie@WylieComm.com. Get a free subscription to Ann’s email newsletter at <http://www.wyliecomm.com>.

Copyright © 2003 Ann Wylie. All rights reserved.

Ethics in the workplace: employee communication dilemma

By JESSIE WUERST, APR

Great Spokane Chapter Ethics Officer

You have been charged with providing a means for employees to stay abreast of current information relative to your company, the industry in which your company competes and the business world in general.

You determine the best way to do this is to scan the online news media each day and highlight articles that meet these criteria. Some of the online news media are subscription only and others require users to establish a sign-in and password

for free access. You want to make it as easy as possible for your fellow employees to get the information each day, so you copy articles from their online source, make a PDF file of each, upload them on your corporate intranet, and send out links to the articles via an all-employee e-mail.

What are the legal and ethical principles that impact this communication practice? How will you (re)solve them?

Watch the April PRSA newsletter for the answers to these questions, and be sure to attend the April PRSA/SPRC meeting, presenting useful information on ethical practices in the workplace.