

Tampa Bay PRSA Gulf to Bay

MAY
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RECENT GRADS SHARE TIPS



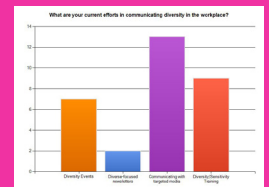
CHAPTER MEETING ROUNDUP



PR+SEO: MADE FOR EACH OTHER



MEASURING DIVERSITY





The Tampa Bay Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) was chartered in 1964. We are one of the state’s largest professional organizations for public relations practitioners, serving more than 160 members across West Central Florida.



President’s Message
by Missy Hurley

As summer draws near, some local PR practitioners are preparing to host summer interns from USF, UT and other universities. Earlier this year, PRSA’s Board of Ethics and Professional Standards developed guidelines and recommendations regarding interns. The ethical use of paid and unpaid interns by public relations firms, businesses, government agencies and other organizations is detailed in the professional standards advisory (link to <http://prsay.prsa.org/index.php/2011/02/10/paid-and-unpaid-internships-in-pr/>).

Consider part of your internship program as participation in the monthly New Professionals meeting on the last Thursday of each month. Encourage (or even subsidize) your intern’s attendance at upcoming PRSA Tampa Bay programs. And I hope you’ll help them get to know your fellow members by attending the programs too.

The next event is Thursday, May 25 and the topic is government relations. Mark your calendar for upcoming programs: Media Roundtable breakfast with FPRA Tampa Bay on June 23 and Professional Development seminar in late July. If you have a

suggestion for a speaker or topic, please let me know at Missy@Bay-viewPR.com.

I hope to see you on May 25!



NEW! facebook fan page

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To enjoy the interactive content of our newsletters, install the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader. **Hilited copy** indicates a live link.



2011 International Conference
 Join thousands of Public Relations professionals in Orlando and become inspired by visionaries in the city where dreams come true! For more information or to register (<http://www.prsa.org/conferences/internationalconference/index.html>)

on the cover:
The focus is on the next generation of pr professionals; you’ve got that degree, now what?



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Got News? Please Share

newsletter@prsatampabay.org

We need your PR themed information — personnel changes, client news, firm or professional awards, contact changes, openings, new business wins — to keep our chapter informed about members activity and the community informed about PRSA.

Chapter Web Site

Visit PRSATampaBay.org for events, chapter information, job listings and more.

 Built with Adobe Creative Suite.
Best enjoyed with [Adobe Reader](#).



photos: (above) Kathy Winter, (inset) John Siebenthaler

Social Conversation: The Heart of Business

by John Siebenthaler

(TAMPA) March 24 marked a small milestone in PRSA Tampa Bay chapter history when Shriners International hosted the first use of Skype internet media, enabling distant presenters to address the members present for the social media event in real time.



Ms. Breaux, left, prepares to address the Skype meeting from her office in Baton Rouge, LA. Ms. Guzman, above, listens to a question from moderator John Siebenthaler before responding from Seattle, WA.

The noon luncheon marked the first time PRSA Tampa Bay utilized the increasingly popular VoIP platform in order to stream live presentations from fellow PRSA member Whitney Breaux in Baton Rouge and Intersect.com Director of Editorial Outreach Monica Guzman.

Moderator John Siebenthaler began the meeting with a Prezi animated preview that in itself was a departure from the traditional bullet list powerpoint presentation most are familiar with. (Prezi is a cloud-based online application; content can be accessed from any computer without having to rely on portable media.)

I first met Ms. Breaux as a new PRAL (Public Relations Association of Louisiana) member at a 2009 Baton Rouge lunch meeting, while my (virtual) introduction to Ms. Guzman and the remarkable social site she represents occurred at Poynter's Social Media Day in 2010. (Ms. Breaux's column, "Building A Personal Brand — Literally From the Ground Up," appears in this newsletter.)

Read more about Intersect's powerful features in the PRSA Tampa Bay chapter January 2011 newsletter [here](#). You can also find out more about Poynter's Social Media Day [here](#), and this March 24 chapter meeting [here](#).

PRSA Advocates For Members

by Geri Evans, APR



Did you know that . . .

1) Responding to members' requests and concerns, PRSA has become much more visible in the national

media, advocating on behalf of the profession.

PRSA has had comments, op-eds and letters to the editor appear in the *Financial Times*, *Economist*, the *Harvard Business Review*, *PR Week UK*, *The New York Times*, *Adweek*, *AdAge*, and on various blogs.

For a full recap of news originating out of PRSA's advocacy campaign, visit the PRSA online newsroom at <http://media.prsa.org> or from the "Newsroom" link in the upper right hand corner of the national website, www.prsa.org.



Chapter functions don't just happen magically. Hundreds of hours of hard work by a handful of volunteers and chapter officers are shaped and guided at monthly board meetings like the one above, conducted here by President Missy Hurley.

2) PRSA, responding to Chapter needs and requests, has among many things- revamped the Chapter Leadership toolkit (through MyPRSA - Leadership Tools); updated and enhanced all Chapter landing pages and microsites hosted by National; created and launched a Chapter

social media policy (find it online under About PRSA - 'Guidelines and Logos') and provided a template for bylaws.

3) PRSA provides several free webinars throughout the year. The next free program will be April 28 about accreditation. The last was held on March 17. There are other free webinars available in the PRSA on-demand library, which you can find under "Learning" on www.prsa.org.

4) Not one, but three, members of the Sunshine District (state of Florida) are members of the national PRSA Board of Directors this year: - Rosanna Fiske, APR, from the Miami Chapter is the esteemed President of the Board - Kathy Barbour, APR, North Florida Chapter, serves as Secretary - Geri Evans, APR, from the Orlando Chapter is a Director, elected from the Sunshine District.

Save the dates of Oct. 15-18 in Orlando, for PRSA's International Conference: Imagine. Create. Inspire - Envisioning the Future of Public Relations.

We hope all of you will invest in yourself and your professional development and attend what promises to be an amazing conference.

Geri A. Evans, APR President, Evans PR Group (Longwood, Fla.) National PRSA Board Member PRSA Director, Sunshine District

Next Issue

Dealing With Binary Nonsense



Individual attempts at formatting are the bane of a pub designer's existence. Find out why it's important when we dissect the problem.

Surf On Over —
Find Out What's New



Need find out about the latest meeting, chapter project, or job postings?

Just point your mouse to

prsatampabay.org. We

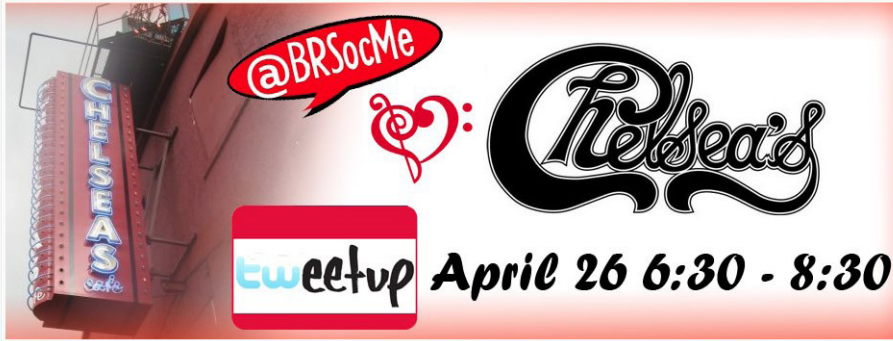
also update on facebook,

LinkedIn and twitter to best

meet our members needs

for staying connected.





Building A Personal Brand — Literally From the Ground Up

by Whitney Breaux



The journey to success is never easy. There are always twist, turns and sometimes even U-turns. But, in less than five years somehow I have managed

to build a personal brand that connects me to the two career fields I love, social media and public relations.

Taking On HR Bias

Before I left the safety and the confines of Louisiana State University in spring 2009, I began an intensive job search. As most new graduates realize, in the job market a lack of “experience” will play a key role in hiring decisions.

I argued many times with HR directors and hiring managers (including my mother, a 30-year HR vet), “how can I get experience if no one will hire me?” Let’s just be honest, we have all told a college student that employers will look at your internships and part-time jobs to qualify your career experience.

The truth is many new graduates are still overlooked despite having multiple internships and years of part-time experience under their belt.

I encountered the same resistance during my job search until one day I noticed a job posting on our local newspapers website about a communications specialist position at Visit Baton Rouge. As I lifelong Baton Rouge resident and a former Miss Teen Baton Rouge, I only imagined how awesome this position could be for a diehard Red Stick fan.

I emailed the name listed on the job description and promoted my love for Baton Rouge from the beginning. Luckily something sparked Theresa Overby, director of communications, to email me back for a job interview. Graduation day at LSU means pretty dresses and excitement for most graduates. For me it would also be a moment of truth as I interviewed for the communications specialist position at Visit Baton Rouge that morning as well.

Social Media Calls

I leaped for joy when I received the phone call from Overby extending me an offer to join the Baton Rouge Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. From that day, I committed myself to doing my part to make Baton Rouge “America’s Next Great City.” I embarked rather quickly on my plans to help launch Baton Rouge into the social media world.

It did bother me that cities like New Orleans got most of the attention from online participants. From Facebook to Twitter and Redstick-

About Whitney Breaux

I met Whitney at a 2009 Baton Rouge lunch meeting of the Public Relations Association of Louisiana (PRAL). She was a freshly minted LSU public relations graduate. We shared a table and conversation, and it didn’t take long for me to realize her passion for communications was matched by her expertise in execution.

Quick to grasp social media’s importance to the business community, first at the Baton Rouge Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, later as founder and executive director of the Baton Rouge Social Media Club, her latest move to the PR shop of Wright Feigley allows her to focus her considerable talent on their social media efforts.

John Siebenthaler

From Facebook to Twitter and Redstickblog.com, we propelled Baton Rouge forward in the online community.

continue reading on page 12



Map Your Own Future — A Guide For Achieving Success

by Anna Williams



I've never been very good at commitment. Not when it comes to jobs anyway. Or study. I changed my major at the

end of every year of my three-year degree and my longest time in a job is 10 months as a Legal Assistant in Austin, Texas. Eventually, last year I graduated with a first class honours in Media with Public Relations from the University of Exeter, UK, and chose to settle in Calstock, the bohemian Cornish village where I grew up.

Luck Favors Preparation

I knew that finding a graduate career in the sleepy, rural Westcountry of England (near Plymouth) would be a challenge, but armed with a part time job as a receptionist and previous experience in weddings and events as well as journalism, I was willing to wait.

Ten months after graduating, I was offered and accepted a position as the Communications Officer for West Devon Borough Council and South Hams District Council. Basically, I'm a press officer working for the state across two adjacent geographical areas.

Politically, West Devon is very liberal, includes huge swathes of moor

land (Dartmoor, a designated area of outstanding natural beauty) and has 26,000 households – more sheep than people.

By contrast, the South Hams is a very affluent, conservative area with 44,000 households. Handling all of the state press and communications for both is challenging, but I love the variety. I've been with the Councils for a month and already there's been a large fire in a South Hams tourist town, an awards ceremony, council elections and an expenses scandal.

We're a team of three – my manager and myself are full time and another Communications Officer works part time. At the start of my second week, I attended the South Hams Executive Council meeting. In front of the Councillors, my colleagues and members of the press, the Council leader introduced me as “new staff member Anna Williams – she's a social media guru.” Now.

Social Media Status Defined

Yes, I grapple with a facebook addiction on a daily basis, but I don't tweet (though I do see the benefits for high profile figures) and I definitely am not a guru. My manager did mention on my first day that she would like me to contribute to the Council Social Media policy at some point, but I hadn't heard any more than that.

Needless to say, I began swotting up on Social Media theory and affecting

About Anna Williams

I was introduced to Anna in one of the ironies of the age; I received a friend invite she'd (mistakenly) extended to my namesake oldest son when both were living in Austin, shortly after signing up on facebook.

What's the resemblance, you're wondering? None - my avatar was hiding behind a full face motorcycle helmet, and might be still if not for continued cases of mistaken identity.

I didn't know then that I could respond to the request without “friending” — one of many continuing fb shortcomings — and approved her invite in order to steer her in the right direction.

Her story is one of inspiration and dedication to her profession. Fittingly so, she's able to share because of facebook.

John Siebenthaler

*The very nature of
democracy means
that feedback
is imperative,
but in such a
politically charged
sector, public
embarrassment
is terrifying.*

continue reading on page 12



Integrating Public Relations with SEO Strategies

by Sarah Skerik

Most companies today employ some form of Search Engine Optimization (“SEO”) and, as a result, are re-thinking many of their communications practices to take full advantage of the power of the Web. Companies are doing a better job of meshing online and offline campaigns and lead generation via the Web is becoming an increasingly common objective, even for departments such as PR that traditionally have not been considered part of the sales pipeline. The good news for PR is that opportunities to deliver real, measurable results abound for the savvy pro who knows how to integrate PR efforts with the company’s larger SEO strategy.

Before we start, however, it’s important to understand what SEO encompasses. Search Engine Optimization is the art and science of structuring a Web site in order to improve the volume and quality of traffic funneled by search engines to that site. A variety of techniques, ranging in scope and complexity from the careful selection of keywords used in site text to the architecture of the Web pages themselves comprise SEO.

It’s true that most PR departments aren’t (and frankly shouldn’t be) concerned with Web site structure. However, the PR department does influence a variety of key areas that are important components of SEO and therein lie the opportunities for the PR pro to contribute to - and benefit from - the company’s SEO program, including:

Language

Understanding how online audiences communicate about your organiza-

tion’s products, services and issues - and then using the same language in your online communications - is one of SEO’s cornerstones. The savvy PR pro should understand and use the keywords that have been identified by the SEO team. Tactics include:

- Using the language in news releases. Write your news releases with search engines in mind and utilize your organization’s operative keywords.
- Optimize your spokespersons’ language. Spokespersons should make using the operative keywords a habit when they talk to reporters, bloggers, analysts and any other external influencers. The same goes for your media training - teach execs to use the language, too. Doing so will increase the likelihood that articles and blog posts about your organization contain those keywords - along with your organization name and maybe even a link to your Web site. Done well, your successful interview could also become an important source of relevant inbound links to your Web site - which has enormous SEO value.
- The organizations’ blog. An up-to-date blog gets a lot of weight from search engines, which are attuned to sources of current information. Your organization’s blog can serve a dual purpose as both a communications vehicle and visibility driver when you weave important keywords into blog posts.

Influential Journalists & Bloggers

The work you do with influential people outside the company can reap big dividends in terms of site visibility. Most bloggers will happily include links to third party Web sites in their blogs and many media Web sites are becoming more amenable to this practice too. You can encourage and support this behavior by engaging in it yourself:

- Bookmark or Twitter interesting stories or blog posts and link back

to those pages. Yes, we’re talking about using social media. In addition to building your own reputation as an influencer online, you’ll be on others’ radar screens as well. This top-of-mind presence can translate into important visibility and publicity opportunities.

- Develop relationships with bloggers and link back to their blogs (via trackbacks) within your organization’s blog when appropriate.
- Treat influential, trusted bloggers the same way you treat influential, trusted journalists by giving them access to information and people.
- And by all means, include blogs in your daily reading. There’s no better way to stay on top of trends and developments in your space and you’ll be amazed at the opportunities for forthright discourse with bloggers and other engaged people.

Embracing the opportunities today’s online media environment affords you - and considering how your publicity efforts can support and leverage your organization’s SEO strategy - will help you produce better results that are highly measurable. Spending some time understanding your organization’s SEO strategy and learning how those results are measured will open up new and exciting opportunities for your PR campaigns.

Sarah Skerik is vice president, social media, for PR Newswire. Her responsibilities include product development, managing PR Newswire’s social media programs and blogging for the Beyond PR blog, where she writes about digital PR, social media and SEO.

Sarah is a frequent speaker on the subjects of social media, search engine optimization and PR measurement. A graduate of Miami University in Oxford OH, Sarah also earned an MBA from Notre Dame.

prsa at the dali



PRSA Members Toast Surreal Experience

by Kelly Prieto, APR

On April 21, approximately 35 attendees came out to The Hangar in downtown St. Petersburg to hear behind-the-scenes insight into the opening of the amazing new Dali Museum.

The museum, which opened on 1-11-11, caught the attention of the worldwide media. The plan, more than three years in the making, was artfully executed by a team of executives and public relations experts from both the museum and Visit St. Pete-Clearwater.

Attendees heard from Dr. Hank Hine, the passionate director of the museum, on the background of the museum, logistics of moving the collection and the state-of-the art building.

Following Dr. Hine, Mary Haban, APR, took the helm and guided David Downing, assistant director of Visit St. Pete-Clearwater and Cindy Cockburn, owner of C.C. Communications and agency of record for the Dali, through a series of insightful questions.



Panelists shared the triumphs - and even some tribulations - of the opening and focused on the team efforts of both agencies to make the week-long opening events a success.

Following the panel, attendees were invited to walk across the street to experience the museum first-hand and enjoyed the evening viewing Dali's works.



2011 PRSA International Conference in Orlando...No Excuses Not to Attend

If you have ever wanted to attend a PRSA International Conference, there has never been a better time than 2011. That's because this year's conference is in our own backyard – Orlando!

Join thousands of Public Relations professionals in Orlando from Oct.

15–18, 2011, and experience the best Professional Development sessions, influential speakers and networking opportunities in the industry — become inspired by visionaries in the city where dreams come true!

The **2011 International Conference** will focus on:

Innovative strategies.
Effective tactics and techniques.
Specialization and practice areas.
The Business Case for Public Relations™.

Look forward to seeing you there!

Update Your MyPRSA Profile

Every year, PRSA encourages members to update their MyPRSA profile.

It is possible your job function may have changed, you joined Twitter or want to add your cell phone. Over the next few months, PRSA will be working on ways to customize your membership experience on a national level and this can only be done with the best data.

PRSA to Stream Digital Impact Keynoters Sohn and Carlson

PRSA will host the Digital Impact Conference May 5-6, in New York City. If you're unable to attend, you can view two keynote speakers via a live stream from the conference.

The Digital Impact Conference features keynote speakers Adam Sohn, senior director of public and influencer relations at Microsoft, and Sean Carlson, manager of global

communications and public affairs at Google.

Sohn will speak on Thursday, May 5, at 9 a.m. EDT. Carlson will speak on Friday, May 6, at noon EDT. The live stream will open a few minutes before the start time.

You must be logged in to your MyPRSA account to view the stream.

Calling All Sponsors

Here's your opportunity to reach a select, qualified audience of public relations professionals. Take advantage of our generous sponsorship levels to extend your brand and distribute your message in print, online and at events.

PRSA Tampa Bay has a limited number of sponsor slots available at the following levels. Members, recommend an event sponsor for this year's remaining programs.

Gold Level Sponsor: \$1,500

- Two monthly luncheon sponsorships
- Two free luncheon reservations for each event

- Web banner placement on chapter Web site home page for one year
- Professional Development Conference sponsorship
- Advertisement in bimonthly chapter newsletter, sent to more than 160 members, for one year (total of six)
- Opportunity to address attendees (up to five minutes) at two luncheons
- Professional Development Conference sponsorship
- Advertisement in bimonthly chapter newsletter, sent to more than 160 members, for six months (total of three)
- Opportunity to address attendees (up to five minutes) at one luncheon

Silver Level Sponsor: \$1,000

- One monthly luncheon sponsorship, with two complimentary registrations
- Web banner placement on chapter Web site for six months

Bronze Level Sponsor: \$500

- One monthly luncheon sponsorship
- One advertisement placement in bimonthly chapter newsletter, sent to more than 160 members

Contact Dena Gregory at 863-688-7407, ext. 52943 for more information.

Recycled Fashion Show: Tres(h) Chic On The Catwalk

by Marissa Segundo

LARGO, Fla. (April 25, 2011) The City of Largo's fourth annual Trashy Fashion, a Recycled Fashion Show celebrated Earth Day by promoting waste reduction and alternative uses of trash. Thirty innovative 'trashion' designs were spotlighted on a 30-foot runway at Largo Cultural Center to a crowd exceeding 425.

Winners were selected by age category and received gift certificates to Midori Salon and Spa.

Elementary Division: Winner

Designer: Julia Jean Violante, 3rd grade at Ridgecrest Elementary. Model: Hailey Winder Design Materials: 38 labels from cans, 1 old pillow case, 39 inches Duct Tape, electrical tape, ribbon from gifts.

Runner up: Designer: Leanne Bell and Julia Laurent, 4th graders at Westlake Christian School in Palm Harbor Model: Heidi Laurent Design materials: Capri Sun pouches, grocery bags, safety pins, candy wrappers, 2 recycled t-shirts, one piece of scrap fabric.

Middle Division: Winner

Designer: Shelby Pogue, 7th grade, Skycrest Christian School Model: Emily Galloway Design Materials: Dress- 1 burlap sack, 1 ribbon, and lots of tissue paper. Purse- about 800 soda tabs, ribbon, wire, felt lining

Runner-Up Designer & Model: Madeline Wilks, 7th Grade, Dune-din Highland Middle School Design materials: Roll of Stretch-Tite cellophane, egg carton, Starbucks cappuccino lids, newspaper delivery bags, product packages from Ramen noodles, potato chips, cookies and crackers, water bottles, soap, handiwipes and paper towels, frozen fruit, candy and even dog bones and birdfood!

High School Division:

Winners Designers: "Plastic Addicts" Brandon Jeffery, Emily Steullet, Sara



Garza & John Fox, Pinellas County Center for the Arts at Gibbs High School Model: Sara Garza Design materials: 20 black and 10 white trash bags which were ironed together to make a long flowing dress.

Runners-Up - Designers: Largo High School National Art Honor Society. Lead designers: Hayley Hollinger and Christina Churchfield Model: Christina Churchfield Design Materials: 32 plastic soda can holders, nearly 400 dryer sheets, a belly

full of candy wrappers and over a dozen discarded men's ties

Adult Division:

Runner-Up Designers & Model: Emma Lewis, St. Petersburg College, pre-med Design Materials: 5,357 soda cans and green balloon strings

Winner

Designer: Michelle Devine, Anchorage, Alaska Model: Latasia Tomlin Design Materials: 10 year old car cover, 8 snaps, tractor inner tube and a pair of rubber disposable shorts.

Trashiest Fashion (Overall Winner):



Designers: Dominick Rauck & Sara Bogdan, Seniors at East Lake High School. Model: Caitlyn Smith Design Materials: 3 magazines, 18 plastic bags, 36 pieces of gift wrap paper, 1 belt, 10 foot of bubble wrap, 2 shoe laces, 4 pieces of cardboard

For more information and photos log on to www.LargoRecycles.com or call (727)586-7424.



Scholarship winners Crystal Price and Sarah Shehorn received their awards at the USF School of Mass Communications Honors & Awards Banquet on April 29, 2011 at Busch Gardens. The PRSSA scholarships accounted for \$2,000 of nearly \$100,000 awarded at the banquet.

PRSA Scholarship Winners Shine

by Steven Solomon

Cassato scholarship winner

Crystal Price is a senior from Lutz majoring in public relations at USF. She is supervisor of the USF Sports Club Program with responsibilities that include communications and marketing.

“Last year I decided to take an officer position in PRSSA. As the club’s secretary I have created and helped maintain many goals as we are in a transitional phase due to previous change of leadership. I plan on running for president in hopes of getting PRSSA back on track in working directly with the Tampa Bay Chapter of PRSA.”

She is also a videographer for a company that sends her across the country on assignments. The scholarship is named for John Cassato, Jr., who was vice president for public relations of the Jim Walter Corporation of Tampa. Previously he was business and financial editor of The Chicago Daily News. He died in 1982 at the age of 51.

Griscti scholarship winner

Sarah Shehorn of Safety Harbor started at FSU and transferred to USF, where she is now a junior pursuing a bachelor’s degree in public relations.

“Up until recently I was actually enrolled in the magazine sequence. On campus I was selected by the current Victoria’s Secret campus representatives to become a member of the program’s street team. Each of us is responsible for promoting the brand’s PINK label. Through all of this I tried to hone in on journalism, however, I just couldn’t ignore this draw to PR.”

She wants to pursue her master’s at USF.

The scholarship is named in memory of Walter E. Griscti, APR, a USF professor of mass communications who was president of the PRSA Tampa Bay Chapter in 1977. He was named PRSA’s Outstanding Educator of the Year in 1977 and was named USF professor emeritus in 1983.

PRSA Tampa Bay New Pros

by Carissa Caricato



The last three months have brought out thirsty new professionals, not only thirsty for strong coffee at the early morning hour

of 8 a.m., but also thirsty for knowledge, connections and insight into the dynamic world of public relations and communications.

New Pros have now connected online through Facebook, our monthly in-person chats and offline through follow-up meetings. What to expect: a casual atmosphere while sharing breakfast with other New Pros talking about business, industry topics and personal advice; motivational in nature and energetic in content.

Join PRSA Tampa Bay New Professionals next time on Tuesday, May 24th from 8-9 a.m. at the Panera on Westshore and Kennedy for a candid conversation around job hunting (targeting, networking, interviewing, etc). More than anything, this is a great small setting to get to know other New Professionals and graduating seniors, share advice and make new friends!

Visit us on our Facebook group (PRSA Tampa Bay New Professionals) or PRSA Tampa Bay Facebook fan page to RSVP. Email anytime Carissa at ccaricato@crisiscenter.com or Jesse at Jesse@BayviewPR.com if you have questions.

build your brand continued

blog.com, we propelled Baton Rouge forward in the online community. It would take a trip to Indianapolis, however, for the idea behind Baton Rouge Social Media Association to spark.

After learning more about pitching travel writers, a PR function, at an annual tourism conference the idea came to me to host bloggers from the Baton Rouge area at a meeting to discuss how they could help Visit Baton Rouge lift the conversation about Baton Rouge online. With over 30 attendees in tow, several of us stayed behind to express our excitement about the Baton Rouge blogger meeting.

BRSOC: The Beginning

The conclusion was reached almost instantly; Baton Rouge should start a social media organization for social media professionals, bloggers and enthusiasts. From that moment, my life would change forever.

Just one year later, **BRSocMe** celebrated its one-year anniversary on April 29, 2011, BRSocMe has grown to more than 200 members and hosts over 12 events a year.

For me, I never anticipated the response I received from local media and business owners. As the social media and public relations director for Wright Feigley Communications, social media and PR are just as important for me as the blood that runs through my veins. It is second nature because I literally grew up in the industry.

As luck would have it, I have been able to assist organizations incorporate social media and public relations into their overall communication plans. More than anything, I am able to enjoy my work because I can go to work each day with a smile on my face knowing I can change the world one tweet at a time.

map your future continued

modesty more than my half-American blood had ever before allowed (sorry guys, but it's true). It soon became clear that the Local Authority decision makers (the elected Council members and the Senior Management Team) had recognised the need to move with the times regarding communication with their Electorate, which was a large part of the reason they had recruited me: at a time when huge public sector job cuts are being widely reported nationwide.

Historically, the public sector has a fractious relationship with social media. The interactive, two-way communication model seems to make legislators nervous. The very nature of democracy means that feedback is imperative, but in such a politically charged sector, public embarrassment is terrifying.

In addition, most of those at the top of the hierarchy not only have seniority in position, but also in years. And with that comes a certain distrust of (or at least apathy towards) social media platforms. Sweeping generalisation I know, but introduce the word 'facebook' at the dinner table and watch the generation gap broaden.

Facebook Explained

When explaining the power of facebook to my colleagues I often cite the time I was researching the Councils online, after my job offer, but before my start date. Both Councils' websites are currently devoid of the now ubiquitous social media links. With no blue 'f' button and no turquoise 't' button, I found myself assuming that the council were not interested in engaging with my demographic. I found myself wondering if I would even meet anyone of my age group at my new job.

At present, the websites are fairly cumbersome and dated (there is a new, joint website in the works). I have explained to Council bosses that people like me click straight through to facebook to read the same articles

in that format, simply because our senses are accustomed to the medium. I likened it to being used to the format of your favourite newspaper. Facebook users will take in the same information much more quickly and easily in blue and white. Because we're practiced at it.

Planning For The Future

As far as the policy goes, I have to admit that I'm no further than a fairly skinny spider diagram, which highlights that it's probably best that the public aren't able to post on Council facebook walls. The other day, a woman went straight to the papers to lambaste the Council instead of appealing a parking ticket. She felt she had unfairly received it for parking in a clearly marked disabled spot without a blue badge, due to lack of signage.

The story was front page in the local paper and made sure to include that the lady's dog was blind. True story. And so lies before me the challenge of interacting with a public who love to hate the council but still need their trash collecting and their youth schemes funding.

If you need me I'll be sticking my head in Eric Quayle's 'Socialnomics' every spare moment I get. If only he would publish it in blue and white.

West Devon Borough Council

<http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/>

South Hams District Council

<http://www.southhams.gov.uk/>

2011 Media Roundtable

by Mike Flanagan

Mark your calendar now for the 2011 Media Roundtable, Thursday, June 23, at Tampa's International Plaza Brio Tuscan Grille. Breakfast and networking from 7:30 to 8 a.m., the program runs from 8 to 9:30 a.m.

The Media Roundtable, one of the year's best PR events, provides a great chance to talk directly with local media contacts about how to generate press coverage.

It gives public relations professionals a rare opportunity to meet and talk in person with about a dozen typically hard-to-reach media contacts about how best to increase chances of generating press coverage for companies and clients.

The format of the roundtable gives attendees a chance to meet with each of the media contacts. Each roundtable will have a media contact, and attendees at a specific roundtable will have about 10 minutes to introduce themselves, ask questions and build relationships.

The Media Roundtable will again be jointly organized by the local chapters of PRSA and FPRA, so it is also a great chance to network with PR colleagues from both organizations. And since the program typically draws 75 or more attendees, there are plenty of networking opportunities.

The format is fast moving, high energy and provides plenty of insight that public relations professionals can take back to the office and use in working with the media.

We will have a great lineup of media contacts participating, and we hope you can join us for one of the best local PR events of the year. Stay tuned for more information coming soon!

Brio offers a comfortable atmosphere for our chapter meetings, like this February Mark Ragan video how-to.

John Siebenthaler photograph

Byron Pitts Headlines Charity Fundraiser

by Angie Pattison, Mgr of Community Donations



Metropolitan Ministries Annual Bridge Builders Event features special guest speaker Byron Pitts, CBS News Chief National Correspondent, Contributing Correspondent, 60 Minutes and author of Step Out On Nothing.

Pitts many achievements are all the more extraordinary when he tells of the many obstacles he faced as a child. Raised by a single mother in a working class neighborhood in Baltimore, Pitts was illiterate until the age of twelve and had a persistent stutter. By staying focused, setting simple and achievable goals and finding strength in faith, Pitts overcame powerful odds.

Pitts shares his remarkable story of transformation. on May 11, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. at the Straz Center for the Performing Arts

Performing with Pitts is Sony Epic recording artist, Committed. The group was featured on the second season of NBC's hit singing competition, The Sing-Off, and emerged as the season two champions. It has been their strong faith, hard work, and creativity that has gotten them to the point of being called one of the nations top ten a cappella groups.

You'll also hear the powerful and inspirational stories of families finding their way from homelessness to self-sufficiency, all through the hard work of the Tampa Bay Community.

Every miracle has a story, and this evening will be no exception. Bridge Builders is a time when we celebrate powerful stories of homeless families finding their way back to self-sufficiency through the generous support of our community.

I look forward to seeing you on May 11th for an evening of entertainment, inspiration, and hope. You don't want to miss it! Individual tickets are only \$25 and can be purchased at strazcenter.org.

For information call 813.209.1034 or visit the website www.metromin.org.





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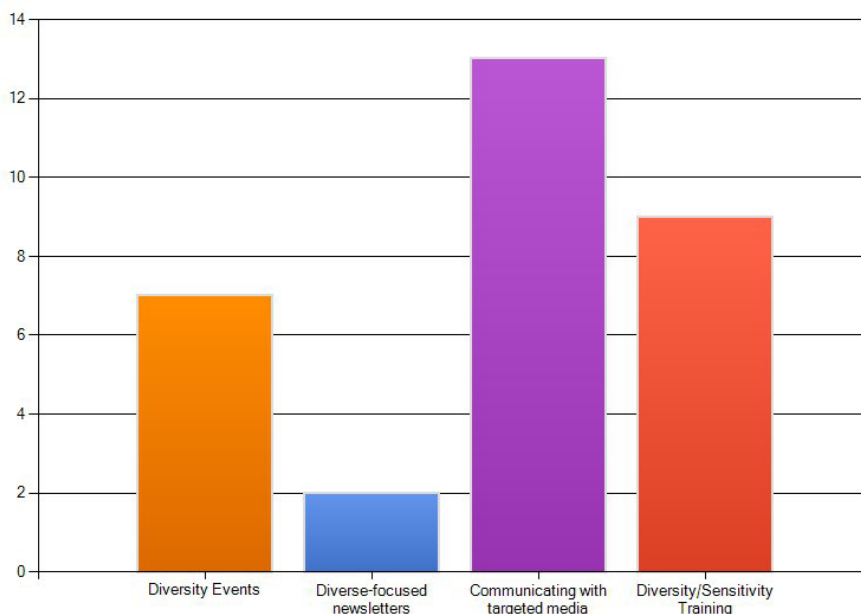
Hillsborough County Planning Commission, Sterling Payment Technologies, Westcoast Brace & Limb and Colliers International Tampa Bay, Central Florida and Southwest Florida.

Bayview is also part of the Mercury Productions team awarded the marketing and public relations contract for Ybor City Development Corp.

Siebenthaler Creative

Attended Adobe's invitation only CS5.5 Tech Preview in Orlando and upgraded to the Master Collection software suite. Read more [here](#).

What are your current efforts in communicating diversity in the workplace?



Diversity Committee Update:

by Marissa Segundo

Thank you to all who participated in our online Diversity Survey. From those respondents the following information was discovered.

What PRSA Tampa Bay members want in their diversity plan:

Top three diverse communities that PRSA member have tried or would like to reach: 1. † Hispanic 2. † African-American 3. † Women

PRSA members are currently utilizing targeted media to communicate with their diverse audiences. (Optional Chart attached)

PRSA Members would like to see the Diversity Committee help them with: 1. Communicating with targeted media 2. Bring in diverse presenters 3. Offer media training for professionals communicating with diverse media

The winner of Publix gift card was selected at random among all respondents was Marialuisa Curran from Full Circle PR.

Reverse Mentoring Study

by Douglas J. Swanson, Ed.D., APR

As a member of the Public Relations Society of America, you are being invited to participate in a study that may lead to greater understanding of how PR professionals of different skill levels work together. The study deals specifically with reverse mentoring, a structured workplace relationship between senior staff and younger or less experienced workers. Typically, reverse mentoring allows senior PR staff to work with younger staff members to increase technological and social media skills.

If you have participated in reverse mentoring or if it is used in your workplace, you are invited to participate in the study. You may complete an online questionnaire that should take no more than 15 minutes of your time.

Two university professors (both of whom are accredited practitioners) are conducting the study with approval of a university human subjects committee. Participation is voluntary. You will not be asked to identify yourself, your employer, or any of your clients or projects.

At the end of the questionnaire, you will be shown the researchers' contact information. If you wish to participate, please click on the link below:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/REVERSE_MENTORING