

PRSAnotes

A newsletter by and for the members of Central Iowa Chapter, Public Relations Society of America

(Deadline for the November 2003 PRSAnotes is Friday, Oct. 31. Send your news to wdavis@iastate.edu.)

October 2003

Panel will focus on crisis management at October luncheon meeting

Panelists familiar with crisis management and reputation restoration situations will speak from their own experience in a discussion following the Oct. 16 luncheon at the Hotel Fort Des Moines. Meeting time is 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Panelists are Perry Beeman, *The Des Moines Register*; Cyndi Harmeyer Fisher, Public Relations Supervisor, Flynn Wright, and Gary Hagan, marketing coordinator, Des Moines International Airport (invited). Here's how Sarah Rasmussen, program chair, described their approach:

When a crisis strikes, what do you do? What are your messages? Who are your target audiences? What is your plan? How do you work with the media? Planning and training are essential elements to manage the possibility of a real crisis. The most challenging part of crisis communication management is reacting – with the right response – quickly.

After the fire comes the challenge of working to restore your reputation, if needed, and we'll walk through some local events that lead to quick-response messages and advice given to clients such as Easter Seals Iowa and the Better Business Bureau. We'll hear examples from a seasoned reporter on how responding to interviewers' questions with honest, open answers helped not only public understanding of events, but the company's image as well. And, finally, we'll learn how the Des Moines International Airport has adjusted its crisis planning in the aftermath of Sept. 11.

Meal options are Vegetarian Pasta Primavera or Chicken Parmesan. Cost is \$18 for PRSA members, \$23 for non-members, and \$10 for students.

Sara Wille gave tips on mergers, acquisitions at September meeting

Sara Wille, Senior Communication Consultant at The Principal Financial Group, addressed communication during mergers and acquisitions at Central Iowa Chapter's Sept. 25 luncheon meeting.

She addressed the role of the communicator during the M&A process, including:

1. fact finding
2. analyzing audience need
3. devising strateg
4. managing the messag
5. consulting in the "top secret" M&A environmen
6. identifying opportunities for integration

Wille used a case study – The Principal's recent acquisition of BCI Group – to highlight how these principles work in practice. She noted that a communications strategy doesn't just end with the announcement of a merger or acquisition, but continues for months after, as acquired employees adjust to life with the parent company.

As part of the research process in preparing for a merger or acquisition, the speaker recommended examining other companies that have recently gone through the process, analyzing what they're doing well, and what they're not doing so well.

Rob Schweers, APR, chapter president, extended special thanks not only to Sara for sharing her expertise, but also to Aaron Putze, APR, and Holly Coppola at the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation for hosting the event.

Member news . . .

Murray Williams is panelist on National PRSA teleconference

Murray Williams, Director of Public Affairs for the Iowa Credit Union League, will be one of four participants in a National PRSA teleconference on "the paperless office" sponsored by the Association Section Oct. 8. Registration deadline was Sept. 30.

Williams will be joined in the teleconference by Jim Craig, Director of Communications, American Petroleum Institute; Carl Rich, Membership Marketing Associate, National Council of Teachers of English, and Brigid O'Connor, At East LLC, moderator.

Called "Going Paperless: Challenges for associations that are moving into the www," the teleconference expects to explore the benefits and drawbacks to going paperless in public relations efforts. Williams said participants will learn how to attract reporters to an on-

line media center, how to make the transition to an on-line newsletter, how to decide when a printed magazine is still worth it, and how to communicate with those constituents who love the new technology and those who still don't have an e-mail address.

A flyer promoting the teleconference described the panelists as "PR professionals whose associations have changed the way they communicate."

Jane Keairns, APR, earns master's degree at Drake

Jane Keairns, APR, web manager at the Principal Financial Group, recently received a master's degree in Integrated Corporate Communications from Drake University. Graduation day was Aug. 1.

Job opportunities . . .

Manager, Employee Communications

Rockwell Collins, Cedar Rapids, IA

This position is responsible for the development and implementation of corporate employee communication strategies including print, electronic and face-to-face communications and is responsible for leading and coordinating the activities of two communications professionals. Principal accountabilities include, but are not limited to, developing and directing the implementation of comprehensive internal communication programs, including responsibility for various employee publications, the Rockwell Collins intranet/employee portal, Rockwell Collins News Network, CEO leader meetings and all-employee business update meetings, as well as employee communications research and print/video employee collateral materials.

This position requires a bachelor's degree in appropriate discipline, or equivalent, and a minimum of 8-10 years of specifically related experience including supervisory or project management responsibilities. Master's degree in communications-related field and/or PRSA accreditation preferred. Experience in a high technology electronics industry preferred.

In addition, this position requires the ability to create and present effective oral, written and visual communications, as well as the ability to develop and maintain effective and confidential working relationships with key leadership and employees at various levels throughout the enterprise. The ideal candidate will have experience developing innovative solutions to complex assignments.

To apply, visit www.rockwellcollins.com/careers. Job search # is EMP000000A.

Marketing Communications Consultants

HighTechConnect

HighTechConnect, a corporate PRSA member, is looking to build a database of qualified marketing communications consultants in the Des Moines area for one of its clients.

Preferred applicants will have a minimum of seven years experience in marketing communications within the finance or insurance industries, developing collateral material, writing, communications and project management. The project management work requires on-site availability (in Des Moines) but the writing projects are more flexible.

This opportunity is similar to a freelance position – HighTechConnect's client is looking for the company to manage a group of professionals with various experience and expertise to use on an "as needed" basis.

Review of resumes and references checks will begin immediately. A HighTechConnect representative will be in the Des Moines area in early November to conduct interviews and would like to have references checked and phone interviews conducted by then.

Interested parties should send their resume, cover letter and references to Tammy Robertson, Vice President Business Development, HighTechConnect, 678/938-4761, www.htconnect.com

Account Executive, Public Relations

Reporting to: Public Relations Account Supervisor

FUNCTION: Responsible for formulating and executing public relations and media relations activities in a manner which enables the agency to maintain a strong, long-lasting relationship with the client account.

DUTIES:

Develop and execute public relations and media relations activities on behalf of assigned client sales areas.

Write and edit public relations copy including news releases, media alerts, story backgrounders/pitches, direct mail, correspondence, media kit contents and collateral material as assigned to meet public relations and media relations needs of client.

Develop and execute public relations and media relations activities to support assigned client product lines, potentially corn and soybean crop protection, forages and Industry Select efforts.

Travel as required gaining understanding of and providing support for client's business.

Coordinate and/or assist with media events as required.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Length and Type of Experience Normally Required: Five or more years experience in public relations, media relations, editorial or general agricultural communications. Agricultural background preferred, crop protection, animal nutrition experience beneficial.

Education Normally Required: Bachelor's degree.

Technical skills: Proficient in Windows applications including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook

Personality Traits and Other Requirements: Excellent writing skills. Organized. Self-starter. Analytical. Strong knowledge of editorial writing style. Well-developed interpersonal skills. Able to effectively prioritize and manage multiple tasks for multiple people and consistently meet deadlines. Understanding of agricultural marketing a plus.

Interested parties can apply to Dee Weeda at weeda@mccormickcompany.com or Dee Weeda, McCormick Company, 10550 New York Ave., Suite 100, Des Moines, IA 50322.

Agricultural Public Relations Account Executive

Midwestern marketing communications agency is seeking a communications professional to join our team handling media relations and public relations activities for a major seed and crop protection account. Strong writing skills required and agricultural media relations experience preferred. This fast-paced account offers a wide variety of communications assignments in the areas of crop production, crop protection and livestock nutrition. Minimum five years experience in agricultural marketing communications required. Inquiries may be sent to Dee Weeda at weeda@mccormickcompany.com or to Dee Weeda, McCormick Company, 10550 New York Ave., Suite 100, Des Moines, IA 50322.