



May 2009 | Volume 77, No. 22

PRSA-Detroit presents May 12 program: “Grassroots and the U.S. Army: How to find influential voices in your community to carry your message”

Faced with the challenges of increasing the size of an all-volunteer force while at the same time fighting two wars, the U.S. Army has changed many of its approaches to recruiting. One of the most significant changes has been the use of grassroots tactics in selected markets in order to create an environment more supportive and conducive to Army recruiting.

Denny Shields, vice president at Weber Shandwick in Minneapolis, will provide an overview of how to conduct a successful grassroots campaign based on lessons learned from the U.S. Army. He leads a team that has developed a grassroots outreach program for the Army that was recently recognized as a finalist for PRWeek’s “Community Relations Campaign of the Year” award.



Denny Shields

Denny will be sharing the learnings of the Army grassroots program and will cover the following topics:

- The importance of grassroots campaigns and the role they play in a PR plan
- Why the Army added a grassroots campaign to its mix of PR strategies
- Adapting grassroots strategies for the Army
- Tactics and measurements of success

Denny Shields provides strategic communications, community relations, crisis, media relations and public affairs counsel to clients engaged in public issue advocacy, state/federal government relations and the defense industry. A former Army colonel, he has more than 15 years of experience in military and government public affairs.

He has served as a media spokesperson during numerous crisis situations and has provided communications counsel to senior elected and appointed government officials. Denny is a member of the Twin

Cities Communications Council and serves on the board of directors of STARBASE-Minnesota, a nonprofit corporation that delivers math and science education to public schools in Minneapolis-St. Paul.

This luncheon program will be held Tuesday, May 12, from 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., at Health Alliance Plan, 21700 Northwestern Hwy. in Southfield. Cost is \$15 for PRSA-Detroit members and \$25 for non-members. Reservations can be made via PayPal at www.prsadetroit.org (you do not need a PayPal account to use PayPal). Any questions, please contact Nancy Skidmore at nskidmore@earthlink.net or at 248.545.6499.

**PRSA-Detroit -
 Detroit Tigers Game**
Wednesday, July 22 – 7:05 p.m.

Seattle Mariners
Outfield Box (Section 117)
Tickets are \$32 each
Seats are limited - for tickets call
Nancy Skidmore at 248.545.6499

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

PR still relevant, even in tough times

By Kim Skeltis, APR



Wanted: positive news

As I write this month's column, I can't help but think about the news headlines of the week. General Motors announces a nine-week summer shut down to work down its vehicle inventory. Chrysler files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Detroit is named the most dangerous city in America. It's enough to wonder how we get out of bed every day to do our jobs.

But do them we must. Our companies continue to make good products and provide important services. Our clients still have stories to tell. And if there's anything good about today's doom-and-gloom news, it's that it's fleeting. Our news cycle has been compressed to the point that a person like Susan Boyle can be the most popular person in YouTube history (100 million views in 11 days), and probably someone else will be by the time you read this.

So what do we do? We figure out how to cut through the clutter. At our PRSA March event, "How to pitch a positive story in a negative environment," media reps like Susan Carney of The Detroit News and Rob Davidek of WWJ Newsradio 950 said they are searching for positive story ideas because that is *news*. Now is the time to pitch that contrarian view to the world around us...the bright spot that, in a normal business environment, might not get noticed or picked up.

The changing media landscape of our largest daily newspapers cutting their delivery schedules and going to "e-editions" means there are actually *more* places to pitch stories. For example, the electronic version of the Detroit Free Press at digitalfreepress.com and their supplemental freep.com accessible for free means they now have two places to fill with content.

If we are creative and look for ways to tell our story, we can perhaps take advantage of this opportunity to tell the more positive side of our companies' and clients' work.

PRSA-Detroit positive headlines

If PRSA-Detroit were a newspaper, we would have some positive headlines of our own. Here are a few:

"APR participation triples in 2009 - 13 PRSA-Detroit members go through accreditation process" – Now that's news! The recession is bringing more people forward to find ways to differentiate themselves.

"May program teaches grassroots skills through Army experience" – Our May 12 program with Denny Shields representing the U.S. Army promises to be intriguing (See page 1 for details.)

"New 'Strikes for Scholarships' bowlathon lands VMS as title sponsor" – Even with the change of event from golf to bowling, VMS came forward for its 11th year to be the title sponsor of our annual scholarship fundraiser slated for June 11. (More about the bowlathon on page 3.)

"PRSA members get access to great PR seminar in Detroit" – Detroit has the distinct privilege of being the host city to the American Association of Port Authorities' Public Relations Seminar June 23-25 at the Detroit Marriott Renaissance Center. An added bonus – PRSA members can attend the conference at the AAPA rate of \$765 (\$880 non-members) or \$150 if attending only the PR Strategic Plan Writing Workshop on June 25. (Click here for more details.)

"PRSA plans social outings for networking opps" – We know you want time to get to know each other, and sometimes the best way is in a casual setting. We hope to schedule a few strictly social occasions this year so we can spend time together and network. For example, we have scheduled a Detroit Tigers game outing on July 22. If you'd like to help plan an upcoming social event for PRSA, contact me.

"PRSA-Detroit pilots interactive 'E-Bulletin' edition in June" – We have already migrated to a paperless newsletter, but we're moving toward an interactive HTML version so you can jump directly to the stories that interest you right from your email.

I don't know about you, but I feel better already looking at the great news happening in our chapter. And hopefully, day by day, we'll see brighter spots in our region's news again too.

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PRSA-Detroit Chapter Bulletin

This edition edited by
John Austerberry, APR, and Len Singer.

The PRSA-Detroit Bulletin is provided to all members in good standing of the Detroit Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America, and is dues-supported. Subscriptions are available to non-members for \$50 a year by writing Nancy Skidmore at 1824 E. Greig Avenue, Madison Heights, MI 48071, calling 248.545.6499, faxing 248.545.4944 or e-mailing nskidmore@earthlink.net.

Items for publication should be sent to John Austerberry c/o DTE Energy 2000 Second Ave., Detroit, MI 48226, phone 313.235.8859 fax 313.235.8055 email austerbernj@dteenergy.com.

Deadline for the next Bulletin is May 15.

Visit the PRSA-Detroit Web site at www.prsadetroit.org.

Support PR education through 'Strikes for Scholarships' VMS commits to title sponsorship

For the past 40 years, the PRSA Open golf event has raised funds to support the PRSA-Detroit scholarship program. Due to economic conditions, our chapter has temporarily suspended the PRSA Open and developed an exciting event to reach our scholarship fund goal – Strikes for Scholarships. This new event welcomes bowlers of all skill levels to network, socialize and throw a strike or two for the next generation of public relations professionals.

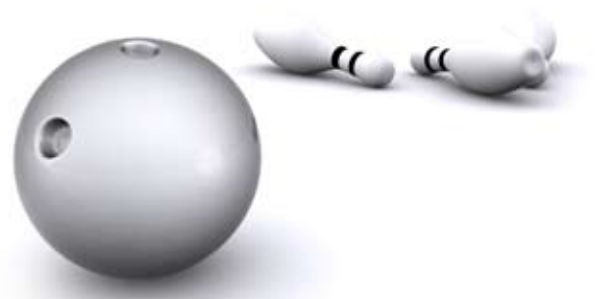
You won't want to miss Strikes for Scholarships on Thursday, June 11, at Thunderbird Lanes in Troy, 400 W. Maple Road. Registration begins at 4:30 p.m. and the event will conclude by 8 p.m. We invite you and your PR colleagues to register a team of five today (\$100), or register as an individual (\$20) and be assigned to a team. If you don't bowl — or if you want to contribute more towards the fundraising goal — consider purchasing a lane sponsorship for \$100.

Our chapter's scholarship fund provides recipients with the opportunity to expand their education and professional development in

the practice of public relations. Since 1993, PRSA-Detroit has awarded 25 scholarships totaling \$42,000.

Help PRSA-Detroit reach our scholarship fundraising goal in 2009 by participating in Strikes for Scholarships!

To register for the event or purchase a lane sponsorship, please contact Kim Eberhardt at keberhardt@hennessycap.com, or at 248.658.3206; Glen Foldessy at glen.foldessy@gmacfs.com, or at 248.263.3453; or Nancy Skidmore at nskidmore@earthlink.net.



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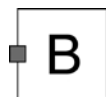
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PRSA offers financial hardship plan for displaced workers

For those who still haven't heard the news, PRSA National recently introduced a new financial hardship plan to help those who have lost jobs or are experiencing a disability. Members who have been in PRSA for five or more years can contact Member Services at membership@prsa.org or at 212.460.1400 to receive an application. The hardship dues rate (a one-time offer) for regular national members is \$115, a savings of \$110 from the full dues of \$225. Please note

that qualifying members will need to pay in full versus the quarterly payment plan. Even members who have recently paid their dues and have since lost a job can apply for reimbursement. The Detroit chapter also is participating at a local level and will offer two free programs up to a total value of \$30 for anyone who has been approved by PRSA National to be on this plan.

WORTH NOTING

Nicole Murphree has joined **pushtwentytwo** as account executive. Murphree, who will be responsible for a number of agency clients, has five years experience in the Detroit area at Solomon Friedman Advertising and at Campbell-Ewald. *pushtwentytwo* also has been selected as agency of record by Peoples State Bank (PSB) to help in all PSB's branding and marketing efforts. These include website, corporate branding and product campaigns, public relations, new and social media efforts, and video and collateral materials.

Identity Marketing & Public Relations has gained two clients recently. Group Associates, Inc. has retained the firm to provide public relations support and counsel. Based in Bingham Farms, Group Associates is a nationwide leader in proprietary benefit management solutions. Paster Enterprises, based in St. Paul, Minn., has retained Identity to provide public relations support and counsel. Paster Enterprises is a family-owned leader in shopping center management and development. The company owns and manages more than one million square feet of commercial real estate.

Tanner Friedman recently provided PR support to promote three premier Detroit area events, including TechNow09, a business mixer to celebrate entrepreneurial Michigan; Carnival of Care to benefit the Michigan Brain Injury Association; and the West Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce's Annual Business Awards Dinner.

Amanda Chaborek, director of communications for Detroit Country Day School, has been named to the Council for Advancement and Support of Education's (CASE) Commission on Communications and Marketing. This international committee is made up of communications professionals from around the world. The committee provides advice and counsel to CASE leadership to help ensure that CASE's programs, services and research respond to member needs and reflect current knowledge, professional trends, emerging issues and the highest standards within the field. Chaborek is one of only six new members who will begin their three-year terms in July.

National Summit looking for volunteers

The inaugural National Summit – a gathering of some of the nation's most prominent business, government and academic leaders – will be June 15-17 at the Marriott Renaissance Center in Detroit. Convened by the Detroit Economic Club, this unprecedented gathering will engage prominent leaders in debate and dialogue in four areas of vital importance to America's future: technology, energy, environment and manufacturing.

With a new administration in Washington and businesses across the country facing economic conditions unlike anything seen in over



a generation, the goal of the National Summit is to bring attention to actions that will improve America's ability to compete in the 21st century. More than 60 speakers from the public and private sectors have committed to participate in the three-day event.

Since local, national and international media outlets are expected to cover the National Summit, there may be opportunities for PRSA-Detroit members to participate as volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering at this exciting event, please contact Len Singer at singerl@deenergy.com.

Calendar

May 12 – Luncheon meeting – *Grassroots and the U.S. Army: How to find influential voices in your community to carry your message* – featuring Denny Shields, vice president, Weber Shandwick – 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Health Alliance Plan, 21700 Northwestern Hwy., Southfield. Cost is \$15 for PRSA-Detroit members and \$25 for non-members. Reservations can be made via PayPal at www.prsadetroit.org (you do not need a PayPal account to use PayPal). For more information, contact Nancy Skidmore at nskidmore@earthlink.net or 248-545-6499.

June 11 – PRSA-Detroit Strikes for Scholarship to benefit the PRSA-Detroit scholarship program – Thunderbird Lanes in Troy, 4:30 to 8 p.m. \$20 per person, \$100 for five-member team. For more information, contact Nancy Skidmore at nskidmore@earthlink.net or at 248.545.6499.

June 23 - 25 – Joint PRSA-Detroit/American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) “Strategic Communications Planning, Execution & Measurement” seminar - Detroit Marriott Renaissance Center - \$765 for PRSA/AAPA members, \$880 for non-members; \$150 a la carte for half-day strategic plan writing workshop on Thursday, June 25 (included in full seminar price). To register, click <http://www.aapa-ports.org/Programs/seminarschedule.cfm?itemnumber=10716> or contact Aaron Ellis at aellis@aapa-ports.org or at 703.706.4714 for more information.

July 22 – Detroit Tigers game – 7:05 p.m. vs. the Seattle Mariners. Limited number of outfield box tickets available to PRSA-Detroit members for \$32. For more information, contact Nancy Skidmore at nskidmore@earthlink.net or at 248.545.6499.