

SPREAD THE WORD

If you have news or information to share with fellow PRSA members, let them read it in ...*innercom*.

Contact Ray Scroggins at Scroggins Associates, Ltd., P.O. Box 662, Watertown, WI 53094-0662. Telephone (920) 261-7968 Fax (920) 261-7986 E-mail: rscrogg@execpc.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 20

Panel Discussion on Finding a Good PR Job in a Down Economy, at the Italian Community Center.

FEBRUARY 23

Save your Saturday for this Back-to-Basics program, "A Grammar and AP Style Refresher," at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Check the Chapter's Information Line (414-297-9491) or Web site (www.prsawis.org) for up-to-date information on these and future programs. And don't forget that you can register online through the chapter Web site, using your credit card.

NOTE: If your company affiliation, address, e-mail or telephone changes, notify Brookfield Executive at 225 Regency Court, Suite 200, Brookfield, WI 53045-6166, to be sure your directory listing remains up-to-date.

Today's Growing Focus on Focus Groups

By Maria Dendromiris Watson, Zizzo Group Advertising

Ask any marketing or public relations person about the role that focus groups play in providing valuable information about a product, service or issue and you'll get a similar answer. Focus groups have become a much-valued staple in evaluating campaigns and strategies.

Speaking at the November PRSA meeting, Sharon Chamberlain, president of the Madison-based Chamberlain Research Consultants, spelled out ways that focus groups can enhance public relations campaigns.

The first thing to do when planning a focus group, she said, is to establish an agenda. Determine whether you want to use a traditional focus group, an alternative focus group, or in-depth interviews. "Focus groups should probe the mind, heart and soul," she said.

The next step is deciding the questions to ask during the focus group. Make sure, too, that the group represents the target market and that it is kept as homogeneous as possible.

"The focus group should be a representative base of your target audience," Chamberlain emphasized.

She also stressed the importance of choosing a moderator well informed on the issue. When conducting the focus group, the moderator must probe, probe some more, restate, and ask for confirmation.

After the focus-group session ends, an executive summary should be prepared to include detailed

findings, as well as a transcript. Results also should include recommendations and drafts of any surveys that were used.

An effective alternative to asking a series of questions during a focus group is to conduct a "mind-mapping." In mind-mapping, the product or issue being studied is used as the focal point and participants map out qualities and characteristics relating to that topic. The results, she noted, can be very interesting.

When conducting a traditional focus group is not an option, several other methods can be used. They include online focus groups, streaming video, video conferencing, and teleconferencing. Chamberlain explained that these methods are gaining popularity as companies encourage their executives to travel less.

These alternatives work well when it is difficult to gather everyone for a focus group. And when hosting a focus group is absolutely out of the question, in-depth interviews can always be conducted. Whatever method is chosen, you still get the results needed to help evaluate your program.

Overall, she concludes, if you're looking for a way to add value to your marketing or public relations campaign, a focus group is a solid choice. ●

What's Ahead for the Industry in 2002

By Maria Dendromiris Watson, Zizzo Group Advertising

As journalists and politicians throughout the world made predictions for 2002, Milwaukee's PR practitioners at their December meeting listened to forecasts for the public relations industry in 2002.

Looking into the crystal ball was *PR Week's* Chicago reporter, John Frank.

After a year filled with recessions, client losses and job cutbacks, audience members hoped for some positive news. Frank gave them a little, predicting that there would be better growth for the industry in the new year, but that growth would remain relatively slow.

He also offered five 2002 recommendations for the public relations industry:

- 1) **PR be nimble, PR be quick.** He noted the advantages that smaller public relations firms have over larger firms during a recession.
- 2) **If you can't measure it, don't bother trying to sell it.** "Measurement is key," he stressed.

Researching ways to measure your objectives not only shows the excellence of your campaign, but also proves your worth to the company or client.

3) **If you're not an expert, don't go to the party.**

4) **It's a good time to be king or queen.** Frank predicted that 2002 would be kind to consultants and experts in their particular fields.

5) **Adversity produces opportunity.** Recessions, he said, traditionally have spun off new public relations firms.

Frank also outlined what he believes will offer the greatest opportunities in 2002: crisis communications, internal communications, health care and consumer goods. Each, he said, is becoming more popular in the profession and is likely to provide a good source of growth. ●

PRSA Job Bank on E-mail

Are you looking to spread the word about a job opening within your company? The Southeastern Wisconsin PRSA chapter offers a great opportunity. You now can post public relations job openings on the PRSA Web site for free! All you need to do is contact Mindy Farrar at (414) 276-6237 or by e-mail at mfarrar@zeppos.com and provide her with general information regarding your

organization and the position. You then will be able to post a position and description at www.prsawis.com for up to 45 days. In turn, any interested person searching the Web site will have access to the most recent public relations positions in Southeastern Wisconsin. Take advantage of this easy, fast and free service now available through PRSA. ●

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REGISTER FOR THE SPRING APR EXAM

The Spring Accreditation examinations will be offered in March, with the written exam held on March 9 and the oral exam on March 16. Candidates must have registered with the national PRSA office by Feb. 4 and informed John Luecke (jrluecke@aol.com) and Ann Knabe (knabea@mail.uww.edu) via e-mail by that date. There will be no formal pre-exam study sessions for the spring cycle. Three free, full-day review sessions will be offered this summer prior to the fall exam. ●

NEW CHAPTER MEMBERS

Please welcome these new members: **Julie Stopler Dieckelman**, Marketing & PR Consultant, Waukesha; **Mary C. Elliott**, PR Coordinator, Ruekert/Mielke, Inc., Waukesha; **Christine Grant-Davidian**, Senior Counselor, Cramer-Krasselt; **Jeff Fleming**, PR Director, the Zizzo Group Advertising; **Matthew M. Hamrin**, Senior Associate,

Morgan&Myers, Milwaukee; **Carole J. Herbstreit-Kalinyen**, PR Manager, W.H. Brady Co.; **Traci Huntemann-Piatt**, Manager-PR & Marketing, Comstar, LLC, Waukesha; **Bridget B. Lafferty**, Convention Sales PR Manager, Greater Milwaukee Convention & Visitors Bureau; **Phoebe D. Lange**, Owner, Lange Communications, Whitewater; **Bryan M. LeMonds**, VP and Director-Public Relations, BVK; **Sandra P. Malone**, Director-Public Affairs, Society of St. Vincent de Paul; **Erik Raba**, Marketing Specialist, Journal Communications; **Kim Marie Rahfaldt**, Public Relations Manager, InfoGraphic Systems, Racine; **Lisa Reib-Shea**, Marketing Communications Specialist, Hunter Business Group. ●

NEWS ABOUT MEMBERS

Jeff Bentoff, APR, who recently achieved his accreditation, is affiliated with SBC Ameritech, not with his previous employer the City of Milwaukee, as

originally noted. **Dave Fantle**, who spent more than 13 years with Wisconsin Gas and most recently with Wisconsin Electric, has joined Kohl's Department Stores as public relations manager. He can be reached at dave.fantle@kohls.com. ●

PARAGON AWARDS DEADLINE APPROACHES

It's time to start putting together your entries for PRSA's 2001 Paragon Communications Awards. The competition is open to any Wisconsin-based professional communicators and features a wide variety of public relations categories. Deadline for entries is March 1, 2002. To receive an entry form or obtain more information, please call Eric Vallee at (414) 227-1448 or go to the PRSA's Web site at www.prsawis.org.

We're also looking for nominations for the Paragon Communicator Award and the Dorothy Thomas Black Award.

The Paragon Communicator Award is given to a business, community or religious leader

who has effectively employed public relations principals and practices in the heading of a business or providing leadership on a community issue. The Dorothy Thomas Black Award recognizes sustained, superior performance in public relations, typically rewarding the lifetime achievement of a public relations professional who is a member of the Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter of PRSA. Nominations for both of these awards must be sent to Eric Vallee, Eric.vallee@heart.org, by March 1, 2002. ●

PRSA...innercom Ray I. Scroggins, APR, Editor

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