



# PR Success

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**Summer 2015 Edition**



## **Editor-In-Chief**

*Elise Mills*

## **Publication**

### **Design**

*Kaylee Powers*

## **Writers**

*Erica Stonehill*

*Taylor Dilley*

*Gentry Bennett*

*Hayley Baldzicki*

*Emily Barber*

*Vanessa Copetas*

*Jess Carnprobst*

## **Editors**

*Gentry Bennett*

*Jess Carnprobst*

*Austin Ambrose*

## **Chapter Adviser**

*Dan Farkas*

## **Chapter President**

*Jess Carnprobst*

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# Gary Bridgens: Vice President of Chapter Development

By: Erica Stonehill



Gary Bridgens, senior member of Scripps PRSSA, has recently made the jump from Chapter executive to National Committee member. As vice president of Chapter development, Bridgens is responsible for programming the PRSSA National Conference Chapter Development sessions and Chapter President's Leadership workshop, planning PRSSA's Community Service Initiative at National Conference and the Leadership Training Sessions for the PRSSA National Assembly, as well as coordinating the Phone/Email Outreach Tree. In addition to these duties, Bridgens is in charge of running and promoting the annual FUNdraising Bowl and serving as a resource for Chapters and their leadership.

Gary is a four-year member of PRSSA and has served as the VP of Finance for both St. John's University and the Hugh M. Culbertson Chapters. During his time on the executive board,

Scripps PRSSA reached their highest rate of membership as well as funding. He also worked as an Account Executive on the Ohio University nationally affiliated, student-run firm, ImPRessions. In addition to his leadership roles, Bridgens has done freelance public relations work and blogged for multiple student organizations.

When asked why he ran for vice president of Chapter development, Bridgens said that he saw it as an opportunity to better the Society. "I feel like my experience with Chapter development has left me uniquely suited to handle the responsibilities of this position," explained Bridgens. "I hold PRSSA (and its members) very close to my heart; this position was a way for me to give back to the Society that has given so much to me."

Having served on the executive board for both St. John's University and Ohio University Chapters, Gary has seen two ends of a spectrum. He has been able to see the impact of Chapter development on a smaller chapter, as well as one of the largest. During his time as the VP of Chapter development, Bridgens hopes to assist in making PRSSA the best it can be, starting at the Chapter-level. As for specific goals, he will be focusing on designing a new Leadership Transition Guide

and improving the current Phone/Email Outreach Tree.

The Hugh M. Culbertson Chapter at Ohio University is extremely honored to have Gary serve as a member of the National Committee. When asked how Scripps PRSSA helped to prepare him for the position, Bridgens said he owes much of his success to the Chapter.

"Without Scripps PRSSA, I would never have had the opportunity to serve on the National Committee. The support given to me, in the forms of both professional development and friendship, has been greater than I could have ever hoped for," Bridgens said. "Scripps PRSSA truly is a special organization and an institution on the Ohio University campus." As for other members interested in running for National Committee? Bridgens has one simple piece of advice: "Just do it!"

Gary would like to start his professional career in corporate public affairs, but hopes to eventually work for political campaigns or serve the society in a public affairs capacity. His end-goal is to leave a strong legacy and be able to say that he did everything he could to make an impact in his work.



# The Evolution of the Hashtag

By: Taylor Dilley

Whether you find hashtags to be annoying or trendy, there is no denying that they are effective. From Twitter to Instagram, the use of hashtags is skyrocketing.

Brands have come to rely on hashtags to promote campaigns and help their users follow online. While some companies have misinterpreted a particular hashtag, such as the frozen pizza company, Digornio, misreading and using #WhyIStayed, they continue to add context and value to messages of all kinds, and they are fastly becoming the most used method of tracking content across the board.

A Wall Street Journal article notes, Twitter has become a platform for news distribution, activism, literature – often in short fiction form – celebrity gossip, and of course, brand advertising. With the growing technology and fast paced internet environment, many brands are struggling to stay relevant.

Hashtags came to the rescue. Because they're well suited to content discovery, consumers can use them to find what they seek. This is even more true now that Facebook fully supports hashtags and Instagram practically thrives upon their existence.

What does this mean for brands? It means there lies before marketers an opportunity to

amplify their use of hashtags to make brand interactions more appealing.

Take Instagram, which has a Discover tab where users can search popular hashtags and engage with content under those tags. Users are free to like and comment on those photos and are even encouraged to take their own and add the tag. Twitter works along the same lines.

By using these trending hashtags and creating their own catchy tags, brands can engage with customers on a personal level.

Contests are a huge part of social media strategy and hashtagging. For instance, Naked Juice started a campaign with the hashtag, “#DrinkGoodDoGood.” The company encourages followers to post a picture with a vegetable or fruit and use the hashtag. For every photo posted, Naked Juice will donate ten pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables to a family in need.

This reaches millions of online users and appeals to their emotions. They are doing a good deed and spreading the word and brand of Naked.

This project exemplifies how hashtags can put content into context, presenting them in a way that everyone, even those

unfamiliar with the workings of Twitter, can understand.

For brands, a similar approach might give them back some degree of control. Instead of losing consumers on Twitter, they can compile the content they want the customers to see and put it aside for their online enjoyment. Campaign messages can be prompt and in the moment, like the act of genius that was Oreo's #DunkInTheDark tweet during the Super Bowl blackout.

It is important that brands remind users why they follow the company, whether it is for valuable information or funny, relatable content. The experience should be effortless and customers should always feel invited to engage.

Hashtags are evolving, and in exciting ways. It's never too late to experiment, you might just create the next trending tag.

**Speaking of hashtags...  
Follow along with news  
and comments from  
our members with  
#ScrippsPRSSA**

# "Having My Dream Internship"

By: Gentry Bennet



Almost a year ago, I applied for an internship. A total shot in the dark, I never thought I would make it to the second round. Next thing I know, I am being flown out for an in-person interview, the last of four rounds. Normally, being flown out would cost a company a lot of money...but not Southwest Airlines.

A few weeks later I received the call of my life. I immediately cancelled the interview I had the next morning because I was officially accepted to the No Limits Internship Program at Southwest Airlines Headquarters in Dallas, Texas (now known as the Campus Reach Program).

Everything felt surreal at first, and on my first day I smiled ear to ear as I pulled in and told the

security agent "I'm an intern here." It felt surreal as I got to meet the 128 other interns in the summer program, my managers and the folks I would be working with every day. At some point in my 12 weeks I began to feel at home—it's hard to say when or how, but Southwest Airlines affects its employees in the best way possible.

Excited to go to work each day, I was always working on something new. The Listening Center became my home, and the people in it became my family. Less than a year old, the Listening Center is a state-of-the-art social listening and analysis center. With eight large screen monitors on the wall, employees working in the Listening Center (including myself!) were able to keep the

pulse on what is happening in the world, the airline industry and within Southwest's network. I was able to immediately see trends, conceive reports on activation of those trends and better assess how Southwest activates on trends.

Of course, working at Southwest Airlines isn't all business. On Mondays, when 5 o'clock hits, employees head to the Deck to go to the weekly Deck Party. Live bands, themed food and drink and plenty of laughs fill the outdoor space. From the Deck, you can see all of the Southwest aircraft taking off and touching down at Dallas Love Field Airport. On Friday, interns and employees alike head to the airport with high hopes they can be on one of those planes. My dream internship got even better when I found out I would get free standby flights!

Five days a week, I was grinning and ready to pour out my heart and soul into Southwest Airlines and spreading the LUV airline's message. The other two days a week? I was jet-setting across the country, gaining new perspective and meeting new people. There's nothing like working at Southwest, and if I took anything away from the experience it's that it never hurts to apply. When you see your dream, shoot for it! I did, and it paid off big time.

# NFL Draft Day: From a Public Relations Perspective

By: Hayley Baldzicki



Every year in late April/early May, the National Football League holds Draft Day. This is an annual event in which NFL teams choose eligible NCAA players to join their team; it is essentially the most common form of recruitment.

Each team is ranked in drafting order in reverse of how their record was the previous season. The team with the worst record picks first, and so on. The idea is to give the worst team the opportunity to recruit the best possible player. Currently, the draft consists of seven rounds.

**So I know you're probably thinking, what does this have to do with PR?**

Draft day is a day where many college athletes become a professional athlete. This is a day where these players have the opportunity to represent themselves for the first time as a professional player.

Players prepare statements to resonate with the coaches, fellow teammates, and of course the fan base. Some share these statements at the draft if given the opportunity, or more typically during post-draft press conferences. Going into the draft, ESPN broadcaster Chris Berman said, "you have to be careful how you are perceived by public opinion."

All of these players are coming right out of college so some of

them have off-the-field scandals that have come out throughout their college playing career, which has shifted the public's view of said athlete. What Berman is saying is, these players have to be conscious of these scandals going into the draft, and know that that behavior is not tolerated in the NFL, especially by the fans. Therefore, these players can rebuild their reputation by making a statement directly to fans once drafted, stating their focus on winning games and keeping a good name on and off the field.

In the 2015 NFL draft, Jameis Winston (Florida State quarterback) was the first overall pick by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. His statement was, "I'm a young man, but now I'm going to the next level to take a grown man's position. And that's important to me. Football is my passion. I've been doing this since I was young, and I know the responsibilities that I have to take on when I'm going to be the face of someone's franchise."

People love passionate individuals. By Winston reaffirming his love for the game of football, he is showing how he will bring this passion on the field in Tampa Bay. He is also stating his awareness of being a professional player, and what it



means to represent an NFL team on and off the field.

Dante Fowler Jr. (defensive end at the University of Florida) was the third overall pick by the Carolina Panthers. In his interview as he shed tears he said, "My dream is coming true today, and I knew I was the perfect pick for the Carolina Panthers."

By showing this emotion and truly feeling that he is the perfect pick for Carolina, he shows fans his enthusiasm to be joining this team, which is very important.

Every year there is one player that is considered the biggest pick. This year it was Jameis Winston, last year it was Johnny Manziel. Whoever the pick goes to is also big for the team itself. **Who a team picks is a big deal.** A team can go from being one of the worst teams in the NFL, to a team everyone is talking about- just because of the draft.

This is exactly what happened to the Cleveland Browns last year when they picked 2012 Heisman Trophy winner, Johnny Manziel. The Browns went from being a team no one cared about, to being a team no one could stop talking about. This shift in public opinion can positively affect a team's notoriety and confidence.

Not a lot of people view the NFL draft as PR, but it is. It is a player's opportunity to make their first address to the public as a professional player, and a team as an organization's opportunity to address how a player will enhance the team. How a player portrays themselves to the fans

is so important, because these players are the team's future. While it is important for a team to stay young, it is still pivotal that they keep a good name for the organization. These NFL team's front office must have the confidence in these players that

they will give not only their team, but also their city a good name. Then, the fans put their trust into their favorite team's front office.

The NFL draft every year is a representation of new life, and can determine the success of an

# Effects of Blogging

By: Vanessa Copetas

Back in the olden days (circa. 1990s), many people secretly wrote down any personal thoughts in diaries. Usually closed by an easily breakable lock and a pretty cover, the diary held your deepest thoughts (ranging from crushes to the embarrassing moment that happened in 3rd grade). Fast-forward to 2015 and just like many other outlets, diaries changed to a more Internet -based form: blogging.

Blogging, at first, was essentially an online journal. Blogs were open to anyone and usually included thoughts or comments. Most of these blogs were generalized and focused on the interest of the writer. As time went on, blogs became more angled to a certain topic.

More recently, blogging focuses on a main topic and is written based on that. Fashion blogs, travel blogs, beauty blogs, food blogs and video blogs all became increasingly popular.

Blogging now has become a huge step into the changing world of journalism. Blogging is essentially

column writing. Although blogs usually follow a common topic, you are essentially an editor and decide what to write about. You are also in charge of how often to write. Blogging has become extremely important to budding journalists because of the amount of experience you gain from it.

However, experience isn't the only thing you can gain from blogging. Today, blogs have become a business and you can get paid for your writing. Certain websites can help you create a blog and you usually are paid for the ads around your article and how many viewers click on that.

Although the concept of blogs is moderately short columns, the process to make it big takes a while. Millions of people have started their own blogs so don't be discouraged if you aren't making an income after a couple months. **The most important thing to do while blogging is to make sure you are enjoying it.** Passion for writing or the content you are writing about is the only way to successfully blog long term. **Happy blogging!**

# Industry News

By: Emily Barber

In an ever-changing industry, there's always something to talk about! Here are some of the latest news and trends in PR:

## Honest (Company) deals with media backlash

It's common PR knowledge that adding a celebrity's name and face to any brand will increase awareness. With this awareness comes responsibility. Whether the celeb is a sponsor, founder or owner of the company, when a personality is associated with a brand, that individual is the representative for anything that happens with the company, good or bad.

Jessica Alba's Honest Company, which offers home and personal care products such as soap, diapers and sunscreen, has taken a few hits recently.

In early August, many customers voiced complaints that the sunscreen sold by Honest did not work properly. Photos of burnt beachgoers who had used Alba's product went viral. Soon after the scandal arose, Alba and Christopher Gavigan (co-founder of Honest) made a statement promising that the product had been tested thoroughly and met government standards. They also ensured that all customers' complaints would be heard and gave contact information.

While Alba and Gavigan apologized for negative experiences, they stood behind the products, promising their effectiveness and safety.

The Honest Company was still dealing with cleanup from the sunscreen issue when news of a lawsuit came out on Friday, September 4th. A consumer filed the lawsuit on the basis that many of Honest's products are falsely marketed as "natural." The plaintiff also remarked that the company name instills a sense of trustworthiness and leads consumers to take all marketing literally. Alba replied to the \$5 million lawsuit, saying that the allegations are "baseless and without merit."

After both of these incidences, Honest may have a difficult time recovering. The company will be under greater pressure to perform, and with a well-known celebrity as a founder, it'll be hard to stay out of the spotlight.

## Google introduces "Alphabet" and new logo

Google has been making some changes lately. August saw the announcement of "Alphabet," the new umbrella name for Google and all of the company's other interests, including areas like healthcare. Alphabet will include a variety of companies; Larry Page, the CEO of Alphabet, stated in the

official press release that Alphabet "allows us more management scale, as we can run things independently that aren't very related."

The appearance of Alphabet was followed closely by Google's new logo. A slimmer, more modern take on the existing logo, this change seems to represent the innovation and modern thought that is happening within the company.



The logo still keeps some of its old flavor, with the same color scheme and the quirky rotated 'e', while a new font brings an updated look.

It's apparent that Google is embarking on a new adventure, and it will be exciting to see what comes next for the company.

## Chevy speaks emoji in June press release

On June 22, Chevy put out a press release. Only this press release was unlike anything we've ever seen before: it was written entirely with emojis. The only English words read #ChevyGoesEmoji at the bottom of the release. Mixed reactions followed, as the message wasn't entirely clear.





# Everyday Leadership Lessons at PRSSA Leadership Rally

By: Jess Carnprobst



On June 29th, I arrived in Scottsdale, Arizona for the 2015 PRSSA Leadership Rally. This is a rally where all incoming PRSSA Chapter Presidents come together and prepare for the coming year.

I had flown in straight from Bangkok, Thailand so I was understandably exhausted and nervous for what the weekend had in store for me. By the time I left on Sunday afternoon, I had a stronger passion and excitement for what was in store in the coming year.

Our weekend started out with a Friday night welcome. We played some ice breaker games and got to know our fellow Chapter Presidents a bit better before turning in for the evening.

On Saturday, we had breakout sessions throughout the day motivating us for the year and teaching us how to set tangible goals and become successful Chapter leaders.

On Sunday, part of the day consisted of similar sessions,

but we were also separated into groups based on Chapter size. This way, we could discuss problems and solutions together with effective feedback.

This year, we were also given cohort groups with similar Chapter size groups. Now, we have a group of around seven people to bounce ideas with and get advice from throughout the entire year.

**Throughout these three days, I received a lot of advice that we can all incorporate into our daily lives. These are the four that meant the most to me:**

**1. Leaders are important, but it's the first follower that makes the difference.**

In one of our sessions, we were shown a video of a group of students on a lawn. One person started playing music and dancing in the middle of everyone else. He was alone until one other person came up to join him. After the first follower joined in, everyone started getting up and dancing too. It wasn't the leader that made everyone dance, it was the first follower.

**2. Truth is the foundation, and with success it will bring value, but with failure it brings trust deficiency.**

When you build a house, the foundation is the most important part. Without a strong foundation, the floors, walls and roof will never be able to stand. Without truth as the foundation of your organization or group, all of your walls will come crashing down.

**3. We should always lift others up, instead of tearing them down.**

This one seems so simple, yet in practice it can be much more difficult. As leaders, we should always be working to help others become the best they can be. It's easy to work towards your success without thinking of others, but in reality, our greatest success comes from helping others achieve their goals and reach their dreams.

**4. Just because we're elected into a position doesn't mean we're automatically a leader.**

Earning the title "leader" is something you earn with time and hard work, not something that's given to you the second you take a title or position. If we remember this, we'll never settle with what seems perfect now, because there's always something we can do to make our time as a leader more successful.

No matter where you are or what you're doing, you have the opportunity to be a leader and help others achieve their dreams. It's how we apply our knowledge and skills that determines whether we're successful or not.

The 2015 PRSSA Leadership Rally helped to prepare me for the challenges ahead, but it mostly prepared me to lead with confidence, passion and integrity.



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