



PR Success

Winter 2015 Edition



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Dan Farkas: The Man, The Myth, The Legend

By: **Morgan Borer** // @MorganBorer



Imagine building a time machine and using it to travel back in time to our beloved Athens, OH. Picture our beautiful red bricks, rolling hills, Court Street shops and iconic Halloween parades nearly two decades ago. You probably can't, but professor Dan Farkas, E.W Scripps School of Journalism professor and 1998 OU alum, might know a thing or two about it. This month, I sat down with professor Farkas, Scripps PRSSA's faculty adviser, to learn a little more about his experiences with teaching, communications and his journey through OU.

What courses do you teach?

This semester, I am teaching Strategic Communication Writing, Radio and Television Reporting and Writing and the Strategic Communication Capstone. I have done a 4900 class on measurement and HTC tutorials on analytics. I think that's everything.

What were some extracurriculars you were involved with?

I did everything. I was a broadcast journalism major, but I did PR for Student Senate and I worked at WOUB. I lived at WOUB. I was in ACRN for awhile. Those were my main three activities. Then, I got a political communication certificate, political science, and at the time it was interpersonal communication. So, I worked both sides of the fence.

Tell me a little about the company that you run.

We do everything I teach in class. There is video work that I do. I try to do more podcasting. I do a ton of writing and a fair amount of media relations work. It's very much what I talk about in class--I don't view it as purely public relations and that's it. It basically is, someone has a story to tell. How do I tell it? There are no barriers how to tell it. It can be some social media; we can recommend advertising options. It's basically, here's a problem and let's solve it. That's what we try to do.

Tell me your favorite spot on OU's campus and why.

I lived at 17 South Lancaster St., which is across from the middle school. I don't know how dilapidated the building is now--it was not in great shape when I was there. That is probably my favorite place on campus and where I lived senior year. I am still virtually best friends with all three people in that house. Sometimes, I will drive by that house on my way back

from Columbus. There is a spot by Alden in the front on College Green that is shaped like the state of Ohio and it has a name--I don't remember it--I did my first reading assignment for Intro to Ethics and I read there. It was nice weather. That spot still resonates. The third floor of RTV as well because that's where ACRN used to be and that's where WOUB is now.

Tell me something that students might not know about you.

Once, I went to Hawaii on a station trip. 75 people in Northern Michigan flew with me to go to Hawaii as part of some promotion. That was fun. Everyone should do that. That was pretty impactful because we got to see all of the Pearl Harbor stuff. That's a different kind of getaway.

Where do you see yourself in ten years?

I don't know what I'm having for lunch today. Who knows. I like what I'm doing. I can't fathom a circumstance where I would do this somewhere else, but I've never stuck to a five year plan. You know, if the students are happy with what I'm doing, and the faculty is happy with what I'm doing, if I'm happy with what I'm doing, then let's keep it. I'm not good at those ten year plans because I literally would have never fathomed this as a ten year plan. In my first job, I wasn't supposed to anchor. One anchor quit, and that's how I anchored.

#ScrippsPRSSAtoCbus

By: Megan Newton // @_megannewton



On February 19, 2016, members of Scripps PRSSA headed up the road to Columbus, Ohio for a day of networking with some of the coolest and most innovative companies in the city. Students were split into two groups and visited Fahlgren Mortine, NR Media Group, Geben Communication, Resource Ammirati and Jeni's Ice Cream. The goal of Scripps PRSSA's annual networking trip is to expose members to unique professional opportunities and assist them in forming relationships with inspiring professionals. For me, the Columbus 2016 networking trip did exactly that.

As a graduating senior, attending a networking trip this year had a much heavier meaning to me. Over the years with Scripps PRSSA, I've visited Philadelphia, Columbus, Charlotte, Cleveland and Nashville. As a younger member I viewed the networking trips as an exciting opportunity

to see a new city and travel with my best friends, but as a senior I viewed it as a chance to reconnect with professionals and take my job hunt to the next level.

The last Columbus networking trip we went on was my sophomore year. On this trip, we visited Geben Communication. At the time, the non-profit and tech based agency had a total of five employees and called a small office in the German Village home.

"There is so much more to this organization than Monday night meetings."

I kept up with the company over the last two years via social media, and continued to admire CEO Heather Whaling. The company

recently expanded, more than doubling their employee count, and re-located to a new office downtown. Needless to say, I was ecstatic to visit the new space and meet the new employees. I re-connected with professionals I admire and formed new relationships with ones whose shoes I would love to be in. I received so much great advice I will keep with me as my career begins.

While I was already a Geben fan, I loved getting to visit new companies as well. I learned so much about the world of communication on this day - and that's something about PRSSA I have always admired - it instates in us a hunger for knowledge and a passion for lifelong learning. Even as a senior, I took so much away from this day.

I wish more people understood the value of Scripps PRSSA. There is so much more to this organization than Monday night meetings. This organization shaped me into the person I am by providing me irreplaceable opportunities. By attending these trips over my four years in this organization I have learned by doing, and am ready to find my place in a company after graduation.

#ScrippsPRSSAtoPitt

By: [Emily Swanson](#) // [@EmilySwanson430](#)

This past February, I had the opportunity to attend a professional networking trip with Scripps PRSSA. I had never attended a networking trip before, much less one that was in another state.

During this trip, I was able to visit and talk with three different agencies and companies.

Being in Pittsburgh for the day was amazing! It was a nice change of pace from the small, but wonderful, town of Athens.

Over the course of the day, multiple people told me that they chose to come back to Pittsburgh after living in bigger cities which speaks to the growing appeal of the city. I had not been back to Pittsburgh for almost four years so it was really nice to see its continued progression into, what I think, is an up and coming city, especially for millennial graduates.

Every company was different and I was able to take something positive away from each visit. The visit to Eat'n Park stood out to me the most because of the advice the manager of brand and publications left us with. Her top five pieces of professional advice were:

- **Do not ever burn bridges,**
- **Do not forget where you came from,**
- **Pay it forward,**
- **Find what you are passionate about, and**
- **Find an opportunity in every job.**

Overall, all the professionals who graciously took the time out of their busy schedules to meet with members of Scripps PRSSA were extremely welcoming and willing to answer any and all the questions we had. If given another opportunity, I would most definitely attend another professional networking trip with Scripps PRSSA.

Not only did this networking trip give me the opportunity to meet new professionals, but it also allowed me to bond with other members of Scripps PRSSA that I otherwise would not have known. From this trip, I was able to gain both professional and personal connections.



Industry News

By: **Brigitte Meisse** // @meisse2spicy

In February of 2016, Facebook launched a new feature that will completely alter the future of social media and the ways in which companies analyze consumer responses. These Facebook “reactions” now give users the ability to love, laugh, show surprise, anger and sadness at a post, aside from the well known “like” feature. Previously, public relations practitioners and marketers were able to determine how to adjust their posts to target specific audiences according to the amount of engagements they received through likes, comments and shares. Now their research can become far more in depth. Although it is too early to tell exactly how professionals will be using this feature, several estimates can be made.

Companies will test ideas for potential products

What better way to gage popularity of a potential product than to ask your consumers directly? Typically this can be done through the tedious process of using surveys and focus groups, but Facebook could potentially eliminate much of the time and money involved in this process. For example, pretend Apple is planning on coming out with a new laptop that has never been seen on the market before. Prior to announcing its official release, they post a brief description of the product and a sample image on their Facebook page. Apple can then take the next few weeks to analyze the various reactions that the product has received and what sort of media coverage has been given. Based on the overall attitudes, Apple would be able to determine whether or not releasing the product is worth their time and money. On the other hand, such experimental posts could also take an undesirable turn.

Negative feedback can now take new forms

In terms of testing new products and campaigns, undesirable

opinions and seemingly useless products will receive a quicker and more in depth response. If a Facebook post were to receive an extreme amount of “angry” reactions, the potential of the post going viral rises. Initially, people perceive “going viral” as an achievement, but it also could create a negative stigma towards your brand according to the type of consumer response in which that post received. Once anything is placed on the internet, it becomes a part of your “digital footprint” and never goes away. Too much negativity through Facebook reactions would eventually hurt the overall brand reputation and digital footprint.

There will be a higher need/usage of customer service

Whenever negative feedback arises, customer service representatives and public relations professionals must reach out to those experiencing the problems in order to boost the reputation and establish brand loyalty. Facebook reactions create another way for employees to monitor responses and reach out when needed. If those in charge of customer service take this aspect seriously, faster solutions

could be made and products will be drastically improved upon. Prior to the creation of these reactions, professionals had to rely on customers physically making grievances on their posts or through private messaging. Now if a user reacts as “sad,” a direct message can be sent to them in order to assess the problem and provide potential solutions.

There may be some difficulties with smaller, technical details

While on this concept, there are multiple angles to consider. First, posting a Facebook reaction is slightly more inconvenient than simply hitting the like button or just doing nothing at all. Many users have actually reported being confused on how to access the feature since it is not set up similar to the “like” button. Consumers may not care enough to make the effort to react. Additionally, humans have an instinct to conform to the actions taking place around them. If a restaurant that you follow posts about a new dish on the menu and the vast majority of people “love” the post, will you feel pressured to do the same even if you are not feeling as

nearly as excited about it? Such variables are highly important to take into consideration when reviewing feedback. Finally, content producers must maintain a higher attention to detail because the context of the post changes the way the reactions should be perceived. Anger and sadness are not always a bad trait, while laughing is not always good. Paying attention to details also takes high importance for

political figures and celebrities because there is not a defined line over whether or not a “laugh” or “love” is synonymous to an endorsement. Truly understanding how people interpret such messages will take time, but in the meantime be conscious of what is being posted in order to avoid miscommunication. All new technology contains unknown risks. The fluidity of public relations is something that

forces us all to adapt in order to succeed. This adaptation can be something as major as a new social media platform or as minor as a new feature on a platform. Staying informed and embracing your creativity will help you and your client be the best. While it takes time to understand the many changes that we experience on a regular basis, it is critical to experiment and pave the way for future professionals.

How PR Makes the Holidays the Most Wonderful Time of the Year

By: Sarah Kelly // @s_kelly14

Carols on every radio station, Christmas trees everywhere and lights hung all around. No matter what you celebrate, this time is filled with joy and happiness amongst families, people and most importantly, brands. The holidays provide the perfect time for companies to take advantage of the values people associate with the holidays and play them up in their branding and advertising. 'Tis the season to be jolly, and every commercial and advertisement is centered around spreading this. And honestly, what would the holidays be without these PR efforts?

Companies slowly start to alter how they portray themselves by encompassing the values that people associate with the holidays, such as family, togetherness and joy. Companies offer seasonal editions of their products to encompass the holiday spirit and attract consumers. Who doesn't want to eat holiday themed mac and

cheese while watching Christmas movies by the fireplace? Companies also promote their products by using advertisements that tug at your heartstrings with the stories they tell, showing soldiers returning to their families for the holidays or sharing a touching story about children on Christmas morning. While holding back tears, consumers are sucked into these advertisements and become exposed to the brand the ad is promoting. The emotional appeal seems to be a favorite during the holidays, and companies don't hesitate to alter their brand accordingly to attract more consumers.

Even television stations revamp their brands during the holidays. All shows feature holiday episodes, and many channels play festive movies on repeat. My personal favorite is ABC Family's 25 Days of Christmas, which has become a staple of their brand during this time of year. They also feature a countdown to their 25

Days of Christmas to make the public even more aware of their television event. Thanks to them, I think I have been able to see my favorite movie “Elf” at least 20 times so far. The holidays don't last very long, so stations purposely play popular holiday movies on repeat to give consumers the movies they crave but only watch during a certain time of the year. By doing this, companies expose more consumers to their brand, and consumers get to watch their favorite holiday movies, so it's a win-win for everyone.

Thanks to public relations, the public is unable to avoid all the holiday cheer and excitement. The holiday season is often referred to as the most wonderful time of the year, and because of the extensive part that public relations has in promoting the values of the holidays, I think it is only fair that we recognize public relations for helping to give the holiday season its title.

All Guys Panel



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Pat Nemeth

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What made you want to get involved in PRSSA?

Pat: I used to be all for the science field, but then summer before senior year I read a book by a journalist I really enjoyed, so I started looking into the field since I always enjoyed writing. My good friend's dad worked with Aaron Brown and got in contact with him. He introduced me to all that Ohio University has to offer in terms of public relations and PRSSA, and so my senior year that's where I shifted my focus

Garrett: I got involved with PRSSA when some of my friends from my fellow Strategic Communication majors told me they were going to go check it out, so I thought it would be a great opportunity to put myself out there

What drew you towards PR?

Austin: I was drawn to Public Relations because it was very strategic work and I loved having a chance to promote a brand that I believe in.

Garrett: I love talking to people as well as the competitive business mindset of public relations, so naturally I just went in that direction.

What do you want to after graduation?

Austin: After graduation I actually want to be a teacher. I have loved my work with PRSSA and ImPReSSions but my true passion is to serve the students that don't have the resources to receive a proper education.

Pat: I liked the idea of building a brand. I'm still working on the plan for after I graduate. I'm not big on social media, but I've liked the idea of brand journalism so I may look into that.

Do you have a PR role model? If so, who?

Austin: I don't have a person as a PR role model but I do appreciate the Honey Maid brand because of their incredible work to spread the true image of the American life and love for everyone.

Garrett: My PR hero isn't a single individual but rather a company. I think the minds behind Taco Bell's social media campaigns are absolute genius. They are something I really strive to emulate in my future career.

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