

PRSA 2011 State of the Society



PRSA Public Relations Society of America

Advocacy

In 2011, the PRSA Board of Directors, volunteers and staff focused their time, attention and collective efforts on seven key operational areas, which can be easily remembered with the mnemonic device 'A, B, C, D and Es.' Following are progress updates and highlights for each of these areas.

PRSA's mission is to advance the public relations profession and professional. One way we go about delivering on our mission is by making certain we represent our members' viewpoints on the professional issues they care most about: the business value of public relations, ethics and diversity.

Throughout 2011, PRSA's voice was frequently heard on these topics, in both traditional and digital media.

To enhance public relations' business value, PRSA released the results of its MBA Initiative research, showing that American business leaders view recent MBA graduates as being under-prepared in the areas of strategic communication and reputation management. Articles touting this research specifically, and PRSA's MBA Initiative generally, were published in *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *U.S. News & World Report* and other media. These pieces were complemented by an op-ed in *The Financial Times* explaining why CEOs need better public relations skills to navigate the reputational challenges their companies face today.

During 2011, PRSA spoke out frequently about the importance of ethical communications practices.

PRSA also explained public relations' value in *The New York Times* Public Editor's Blog; advocated the merits of using public relations to create awareness of a company's values in a *Harvard Business Review* op-ed; and explained the rising power of public relations in the digital age in a keynote address before the national Hispanicize

Conference for Latino professionals in social media, marketing, entertainment and innovation.

During 2011, PRSA spoke out frequently about the importance of ethical communications practices. In keeping with our position on ethics education, our goal was to inspire, motivate and illustrate for our members, and professionals everywhere, what ethical behavior is and is not.

PRSA was the only voice among the major public relations member organizations to speak out on a widely publicized (and criticized) instance of a public relations firm failing to reveal the sponsor of an interest it represented. In addition to our own blog commentary, PRSA's 2011 chair and CEO, Rosanna M. Fiske, APR, was quoted on this issue in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA TODAY*, *The Financial Times*, *The Telegraph* (UK), *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *MediaPost*, German news-magazine *Der Spiegel* and *paidContent*. Her comments not only explained why such indiscretions are unethical, but also calculated the potential implications for the firm, its client and the profession at large.

PRSA also addressed two issues consistently making news: the ethical use of interns and concerns regarding public relations firms representing dictators and fascist regimes.

The interns issue gained international attention via a BBC expose into the use of unpaid interns within the fashion public relations industry. We ensured PRSA's position on the proper treatment of interns was advanced in a series of editorial commentary pieces, blog posts and a letter to the editor of *The New York Times*, all of which were reinforced by our endorsement of *PRWeek's* campaign to eradicate the use of unpaid interns within the public relations profession.

Throughout 2011, we lent PRSA's voice to the growing condemnation of public relations firms and professionals who represent dictators. We addressed the issue through a series of high-profile media commentary pieces, none more prominent than an op-ed published in *The Hill*.

Finally, PRSA was a vocal advocate of the need for the public relations workforce to more closely mirror the changing demographics of the communities in which we live and work. ❖



Rosanna M. Fiske, APR, served as PRSA's 2011 chair and CEO.

The New York Times

the guardian



PRWEEK

BusinessWeek

The Boston Globe



AdvertisingAge

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

U.S. News



The Business Case For Public Relations™



The Business Case For Public Relations is a PRSA campaign aimed at fostering more accurate and better-informed perceptions of the value and role of public relations in the diverse organizations it serves.

One of our most ambitious Business Case undertakings to date has been the “Public Relations Defined” initiative, which is helping to modernize the definition of public relations. Through an open and collaborative effort, PRSA and 12 global industry partners are providing a platform for public relations, marketing and communications professionals to add their voice to a new definition of public relations.

Launched in November via an exclusive announcement in Stuart Elliott’s advertising column in *The New York Times*, it sparked a global discussion about the modern role and value of public relations.

The first phase of the project, a two-week crowd-sourcing effort, produced more than 900 individual definition submissions, 80-plus comments and dozens of media reports and blog posts about the campaign. *PRWeek* endorsed the initiative, extolling its success in bringing together the collaborative wisdom of the profession.

A new, modern definition of public relations — as based on industry feedback and a vote by the profession — will be unveiled in February 2012. PRSA will adopt this definition as its own, and will encourage its

initiative partners, along with the rest of the public relations industry, to do the same.

Another critical effort under the Business Case banner, PRSA’s MBA Initiative, continued its work to advocate the importance of including public relations skills and understanding in MBA programs.

A major milestone was reached when PRSA published the results of a survey of American business leaders, which showed that nearly all view recent MBA graduates as being under-prepared in the areas of strategic communication and reputation management — critical skills seen as necessary to effectively manage today’s corporate reputation and communications challenges.

To help address this lack of training, PRSA created a turn-key program based on course curricula developed over three decades by Paul Argenti, professor of corporate communications at Dartmouth College’s Tuck School of Business, ranked by *The Economist* as the world’s best MBA program.

PRSA is in the process of identifying four charter schools, in addition to the Tuck School of Business, to take part in a pilot program, through which the schools will formally integrate the public relations course into their MBA programs for their fall 2012 semesters. PRSA set a timeline to launch the initiative with MBA programs nationwide in 2013.

We further promoted the business value of public relations through the production of a video series on the evolving role of internal communications in a networked work environment. This series, which will continue in 2012, is hosted by Helen Ostrowski, APR, retired chairman and CEO, Porter Novelli.

In addition, PRSA continued its partnership with AMEC (The International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communications). Along with other international public relations associations, agencies and suppliers, AMEC developed best practices concerning public relations measurement — the Barcelona Principles. To put these principles into actions, AMEC has developed a series of metrics frameworks to demonstrate how and what to measure with different types of public relations campaigns.

In 2011, PRSA and the American Statistical Association collaborated to develop a best practices guide for the use of statistics in public relations campaigns. The guide serves as a primer for public relations professionals on the role and value of statistics in communications campaigns. ❖

PRSA published the results of a survey of American business leaders, which showed that nearly all view recent MBA graduates as being under-prepared in the areas of strategic communication and reputation management.

Public Relations Means Business

If you ask business executives how important organizational and brand reputation are to their jobs, they’re likely to answer ‘extremely’. The difficulty is, if you ask them how much formal education they’ve had in these disciplines, the answer usually falls between very little and a blank stare.

Anthony D’Angelo, ITT Senior Communications Manager, APR, Fellow PRSA

9 in 10

business leaders surveyed admitted that executives at their companies need greater training in core communication disciplines

2013

Launch of MBA initiative with programs nationwide

In today’s world, business leaders must build trust and relevance among stakeholders to succeed, and those skills can’t be learned exclusively on the job.

Michael Kempner, MWW Group President and CEO

59% of business leaders say their companies have hired recent MBA graduates, only

4 in 10

find the skill sets of these graduates to be extremely strong in building and protecting the company’s reputation and credibility

59%



98% of business leaders agree existing MBA programs lack much needed instruction on corporate communications and reputation management strategy



93% of survey respondents indicated that PR is just as important to their companies as other forms of communication

Four charter schools, in addition to Dartmouth College’s Tuck School of Business, will take part in a pilot program, and integrate the PR course into their MBA programs for their fall 2012 semesters





Community

Membership

As of Dec. 31, 2011, PRSA membership had increased by 400 members over 2010, representing a 2.5 percent increase from the previous year.

In 2011, PRSA's membership team planned the Leadership Assembly, which led many initiatives that will ensure our sustainability for years to come. Assembly Delegates rated the 2011 Assembly as the best one in our history.

Meanwhile, PRSA continues to focus on recruitment and retention through several innovative programs. The membership development team assembled working plans to augment recruitment and engagement strategies. The team aims to build off of the success of group memberships, which have grown an average of 30 percent annually. The team also seeks to increase member satisfaction through more tangible benefits from PRSA's new affinity partnerships with GEICO, Marsh U.S. Consumer, DigiClips, gifftree.com and NewsCactus.

Chapters

PRSA's 112 Chapters continue to be regional thought leaders for public relations practitioners throughout the United States.

Our Professional Development offerings, networking opportunities and recognition by local and national communities are fueling our growth. We continue to support our local Chapters and provide the framework for growth through initiatives such as the annual Leadership Rally in June. The 2011 Rally included many well-respected guest speakers, such as Richard Edelman, president and CEO of Edelman, and Ken Luce, global COO of Hill & Knowlton.

Professional Interest Sections

Professional Interest Sections remain a robust networking medium for our members. Our Sections membership increased by nearly 12 percent in 2011. Membership in the New Professionals Section has especially flourished — a promising indicator for the future of the organization. Additionally, the Professional Interest Sections dedicated to Corporate Communications and Employee Communications had particularly sturdy growth this past year.

Sections undertook new initiatives in 2011 to highlight our vibrant New Professionals Section, including our first-ever New Professionals Week, which promoted the many resources available to new public relations practitioners.

Public Relations Meets Public Good

In 2011, PRSA introduced PRServing America™, a program that recognizes and rewards our Chapters, Districts and Sections whose pro-bono efforts strengthen and preserve local communities. Our members are committed to fulfilling the promise of better lives for future generations. We are excited to recognize that service at the local and national levels with the launch of PRServing America™. ❖

Diversity

PRSA is committed to promoting a workforce that more closely mirrors the racial and ethnic makeup of the communities in which we live and work. Our members understand that increasing diversity within the profession will be key to their organizations' success in the years ahead, as businesses continue to seek culturally nuanced perspectives for their communications initiatives.

In 2011, we made important strides toward this commitment.

Bey-Ling Sha, Ph.D., APR, chair of PRSA's National Committee on Work, Life & Gender, continued her seminal research into the public relations profession's gender-pay gap. Sha advocated PRSA's stance on the need for equitable pay and executive representation by female public relations professionals by participating in a panel on Capitol Hill that explored gender-pay discrepancies in the professional services.

Throughout the year, PRSA's Diversity Committee provided free programming that focused on the African-American and Asian-American markets.

Additionally, the PRSA Diversity Today blog and PRSA's national newspaper *FORUM* provided a showcase for the Diversity Committee's thought leadership through a series of posts and articles.

The Diversity Committee also reprised the awarding of the Multicultural Scholarship, which provided \$1,500 scholarships to two deserving undergraduate students of diverse backgrounds studying public relations.

Attendees at the PRSA 2011 International Conference in Orlando, Fla., were able to take advantage of several sessions on diversity-related issues, including diversity in public relations, diversity in the career track, multicultural competencies and the LGBT market. The Conference also featured a well-attended Diversity Mixer, where the Minnesota and Orange County Chapters received Chapter Diversity Awards for their outstanding efforts in providing diverse programming to their local members.



Oscar-nominated actor Edward James Olmos and PRSA's 2011 Chair and CEO Rosanna M. Fiske, APR, were keynote speakers at Hispanicize 2011.

Manny Ruiz, Hispanicize



PRSA continued to provide a high-profile national voice on diversity-related matters to members and the profession throughout the year.

To commemorate Black History Month, we turned over the PRSAY blog, PRSA's executive forum for thought leadership, to members of the African-American public relations community. They shared their perspectives on some of the challenges they have faced as minorities in the profession and new opportunities they hope will open up for African-American practitioners.

PRSA hosted a similar blog series for Hispanic Heritage Month. Rosanna M. Fiske, APR, discussed her role as PRSA's first Latina chair when she hosted the Hispanic Public Relations Chat in October.

Fiske also delivered a keynote address at Hispanicize 2011, the second-annual Hispanic PR and social media conference in Hollywood, Calif. The conference featured Oscar-nominated actor Edward James Olmos and executive-level multicultural PR and social media speakers from corporations and organizations such as PepsiCo, Unilever, Nestle, General Mills, Sprint, McDonald's, Verizon, General Motors and Wal-Mart. ❖

PRSA continued to provide a high-profile national voice on diversity-related matters to members and the profession.

lic relations training offered by the Society remains unchanged.

For the first time, PRSA co-hosted the North American Summit on Public Relations Measurement with the Institute for Public Relations. The 9th Annual Summit was held in Philadelphia Sept. 18–20.

Accreditation

From our member surveys, it's clear that the Accredited in Public Relations (APR) credential remains valuable to those practitioners who earn it; to the agencies, clients and organizations they represent; and, perhaps most important, to the profession itself.

To help applicants prepare for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations, PRSA worked closely with the Chicago, Houston, Orlando and Central Michigan Chapters on developing and hosting APR Boot Camps. These camps featured three-day preparation programs that culminated with an opportunity to sit for the Examination. Four APR Boot Camps were held in April, August, October and November, with similar programs planned for 2012.



PRSSA

In continuing its tradition of annual growth, the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), ended the year with 324 Chapters and more than 10,600 members.

Members continued to receive an array of benefits designed to prepare students for a lifelong career in the profession and in PRSA. Expanded benefits offered in 2011 included invitations to participate in PRSA Professional Development opportunities, such as webinars and brown bag teleconferences, and the increased sharing of industry and Society content via social media platforms.

In 2011, Certification in Education for Public Relations (CEPR) recertifications were awarded to Ball State University, Radford University, Western Kentucky University and La Empressa in Argentina. The Ball State graduate program, Lee University and the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh received new certifications. Rosanna M. Fiske, APR, conferred the PRSA endorsement of "the global standard in public relations education" on 31 new programs. ❖

Education

Professional Development

Outreach to new partners and speakers led to more opportunities for PRSA Professional Development. PRSA partnered with the Society for New Communications Research and the PRSA Technology Professional Interest Section in the spring for the PRSA 2011 Digital Impact Conference, bringing a fresh crop of presenters and content to the annual event, which attracted more than a 25 percent increase in attendance.

Other advancements included adding a "leadership and management" track to the PRSA International Conference line up, with sessions addressing these topics by top faculty from university partners.

PRSA Professional Development developed a strategy to extend all webinars free of charge to members in 2012. This opportunity not only increases member value but also ensures that the caliber of pub-



Special Events

International Conference

The PRSA 2011 International Conference, held Oct. 15–18 in Orlando, Fla., attracted nearly 3,000 professional and student members. Attendance reflected not only a serious commitment to Professional Development and networking opportunities, but also to the value of the Conference as the must-attend industry event for sponsors, exhibitors and attendees.

The theme of the Conference was “Imagine, Create, Inspire,” and its premier sponsor, Walt Disney World Resort, was the ideal fit. Orlando, with its rich legacy of inspiration, provided the backdrop for learning opportunities that included 90-plus Professional Development sessions on the hottest issues facing the profession. General Sessions featured Soledad O’Brien, anchor and special correspondent, CNN; Peter Diamandis, chairman and CEO, X PRIZE Foundation; Chris Brogan, president, Human Business Works; and Joe Rohde, senior vice president and creative executive, Walt Disney Imagineering.

International Conference General Session speakers included Soledad O’Brien (left) and Chris Brogan.



Silver Anvil

In June, the stars of public relations came out to celebrate the profession's finest work at PRSA's 2011 Silver Anvil Awards Ceremony. The 2011 Best of Silver Anvil Award went to the "Text4baby: Going Mobile With Pregnancy Education" campaign, which provided and promoted a free service that sends weekly text messages to educate women on how to have a healthy pregnancy and baby. The founding partners of text4baby include the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, Johnson & Johnson, Voxiva, CTIA — The Wireless Foundation, and Grey Healthcare Group (a WPP company). Johnson & Johnson is the founding sponsor. This unprecedented public-private partnership hired Hill & Knowlton to promote this valuable resource.

During the same event, the coveted Public Relations Professional of the Year Award went to the Pepsi communications team for helping organizations and communities bring good ideas to life.

The team was represented by Peter Land, senior vice president, communications, PepsiCo, Inc.; Melisa Tezanos, senior director, communications, PepsiCo Beverages America; Andrea Canabal, manager, communications, PepsiCo Beverages America; Weber Shandwick Pepsi Refresh Team; and Edelman Pepsi Refresh Team. ❖



The "Text4baby: Going Mobile With Pregnancy Education" campaign received the Best of Silver Anvil Award. PRSA awarded the Public Relations Professional of the Year to the Pepsi communications team, represented by Peter Land and Melisa Tezanos.



Ethics

The ethical use of interns was one of the major issues PRSA tackled in 2011. We released a Professional Standards Advisory in February, in which we made clear our belief that it is unethical not to provide some type of compensation to interns, whether monetary or college credit.

In September, PRSA hosted our annual "Ethics Awareness Month," which seeks to inform and educate the public relations profession about ongoing issues and concerns regarding ethics.

PRSA wrote a series of commentaries and blog posts, held discussions, hosted webinars and developed other events that helped public relations professionals, as well as the clients they serve and the public they interact with, better understand the evolving issues surrounding public relations ethics and how their work can meet the profession's high ethical standards.

The 2011 "Ethics Awareness Month" also featured an innovative weekly Tweet chat series, the first of which PRSA and the Chartered Institute of Public Relations co-hosted. This helped expand the discussion to an international level and provide better understanding of the global nature of public relations ethics.

These efforts complemented and extended the impact of PRSA's advocacy efforts, through which PRSA used a series of ethical transgressions on the part of the profession as teachable moments to demonstrate what constitutes ethical practice (and what doesn't), and reinforce the importance of ethical communications practices. ❖

Excellence in Society Management

Finances

Last year was the latest in a series of difficult economic times dating back to 2007. Although the cost of doing business increased each year, our policy of tightly controlling spending allowed PRSA to emerge from this challenging period in solid financial condition, while increasing member benefits by 35 percent over the same time period. Between 2008 and 2011, PRSA has cut \$1.5 million from its expense budget, while at the same time introducing more than 20 new benefits.

Recognizing this challenge, the Leadership Assembly passed a proposal by the PRSA Board of Directors to increase member dues, for the first time in 10 years, by \$30, effective Jan. 1, 2012.

This year will usher in valuable new benefits for PRSA members, including free webinars and loyalty programs to reward our most-involved members. These cross-channel programs will facilitate the engagement, retention and growth of PRSA's member base and, by improving the value proposition of PRSA membership even further, will aid in recruiting efforts by our Chapters and Sections.

PRSA is on course to meet its net financial goals for 2011. We will post our complete 2011 audit report and related financial statements on our website in the spring as soon as it is submitted, reviewed by the Audit Committee and accepted by the PRSA board. ❖

Photos by Albert Chau

Follow PRSA on



Twitter (@prsa)



Facebook



LinkedIn



YouTube



Flickr



The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is the nation's largest community of public relations and communications professionals. We provide training, set standards of excellence and uphold principles of ethics for the global public relations profession. As a leading voice in the industry, we also advocate for greater understanding and adoption of public relations services.

PRSA's 21,000 professional members represent nearly every practice area and professional and academic setting in public relations.

Headquartered in New York City, and chartered in 1947, PRSA is comprised of 112 local Chapters organized into 10 geographic Districts; 14 Professional Interest Sections focus on issues, trends and research relevant to specialized practice areas, such as technology, health care, financial communications, entertainment and sports, and travel tourism.