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I am a big believer in gratitude, not only feeling it but also expressing it. I mention this here because during the past year and a half, we have worked tirelessly to maintain our equilibrium while continuing to help our members expand their knowledge and advance their careers. You, our valued partners, sponsors and exhibitors, have pivoted along with us every step of the way as true collaborators and colleagues.

As ICON once again became an all-virtual event due to the ongoing situation with COVID-19, you joined with us in strategizing and implementing innovative solutions, helping to ensure we delivered a highly successful event that received strong attendance and rave reviews. And the same is true for the many other regional conferences and events that have taken place throughout this challenging period.

All of which is to say that we are truly grateful for your steady support, adaptability and professionalism, in difficult times and, on the horizon, better ones.

Thank you!

Michelle Olson, APR
2021 PRSA Chair
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Contact Information:
Name: Amazon
Addresses: 2121 7th Ave., Seattle, WA 98121
Phone Number: (206) 740-7216
Email: kimhardy@amazon.com
Key Contacts: Kimberly Hardy or DJ Cabeen
Website Address: https://www.amazon.jobs/en/job_categories/public-relations

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Contact Information:
Name: Brandpoint
Address: 850 5th St. S., Hopkins, MN 55343
Phone Number: (952) 278-0780
Email: contact@brandpoint.com
Key Contact: Melissa Wexler, Vice President
Website Address: https://www.brandpoint.com

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Contact Information:
Name: Business Wire
Addresses:
- San Francisco Corporate Headquarters: 101 California Street, 20th, Floor San Francisco, CA 94111
- New York Corporate Headquarters: 40 East 52nd Street, 14th, Floor New York, NY 10022
Phone Number: (888) 381-9473
Email: info@businesswire.com
Key Contact: Serena Ehrlich, Director, Product Marketing
Website Address: https://www.businesswire.com/
As a global leader in PR, marketing and social media management technology and intelligence, Cision helps brands and organizations to identify, connect and engage with customers and stakeholders to drive business results. PR Newswire, a network of approximately 1.1 billion influencers, in-depth monitoring, analytics and its Brandwatch and Falcon.io social media platforms headline a premier suite of solutions.

Contact Information:
Name: Cision
Address: 130 E. Randolph Street, 7th FL, Chicago, IL 60601
Phone Number: (877) 297-8912
Email: marketing.team@cision.com
Website Address: cision.com

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Contact Information:
Name: The Coca-Cola Company
Address: One Coca-Cola Plaza, Atlanta, GA 30313
Phone Number: (404) 229-1277
Email: srosenthal@coca-cola.com
Key Contact: Sara Rosenthal
Website Address: https://www.coca-cola.com/home

The School of Professional Studies (SPS) at Columbia University designed the M.S. in Strategic Communication program with a unifying vision: to respond to the industry-wide need for strategic perspective, critical thinking and exceptional communication skills at all levels of the workplace and across all types of organizations. Taught by distinguished academic faculty and leading practitioners in the field, our offerings provide students with an educational experience that is immediately applicable in the workplace. Contact the Admissions Counselor to learn about the following flexible part-time formats designed for working professionals.

Contact Information:
Name: Columbia University School of Professional Studies — M.S. in Strategic Communication
Address: 203 Lewisohn Hall, 2970 Broadway, MC 4119, New York, NY 10027
Phone Number: (212) 854-9666
Email: communications@sps.columbia.edu
Key Contact: Gina Malara, Admissions Counselor
Website Address: sps.columbia.edu
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**Contact Information:**
Name: Day One Agency  
Address: 307 7th Ave, FL 21, New York, NY 10001  
Phone Number: (888) DAY-ONE1  
Email: work@d1a.com  
Key Contact: Christina Flynn, Recruiting Director, christina@d1a.com  
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**Contact Information:**
Name: Florida International University // Master’s in Global Strategic Communications  
Address: 3000 NE 151 St., AC2 130, North Miami, FL 33181  
Phone Number: (305) 919-5674  
Email: langsamm@fiu.edu  
Key Contact: Meira Langsam, Senior Coordinator, Academic Support Services, Department of Communication  
Website Address: https://carta.fiu.edu/gsc/

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**Contact Information:**
Name: The George Washington University – Strategic Public Relations Program  
Address: 805 21st St N.W., Washington, D.C. 20052  
Phone Number: (202) 994-6000  
Email: ryanarey@email.gwu.edu  
Key Contact: Ryan (Arey) Byington  
Website Address: https://gspm.gwu.edu/strategic-public-relations
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Contact Information:
Name: Microsoft
Address: 1 Microsoft Way, Redmond, WA 98052
Email: jenny.moran@microsoft.com
Key Contact: Jenny Moran, Chief of Staff, Communications

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Contact Information:
Name: Notified
Address: 1350 Broadway, Suite 2500, New York, NY 10018
Email: marketingteam@notified.com
Key Contacts:
  Sylvie Harton, SVP, Strategy & Global Head of PR and IR Solutions
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Contact Information:
Name: pressrelations Inc.
Address: 4516 Burleson Road, Box 18374, Austin, Texas 78744
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Email: info@pressrelations.com
Key Contact: Eric Ziller, Chief Operating Officer North America
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Contact Information:
Name: Quinnipiac University
Address: 275 Mount Carmel Ave., Hamden, CT 06518
Phone Number: (877) 403-4277
Email: quonlineadmissions@quinnipiac.edu
Key Contact: Rachel Donovan, Assistant Director of Graduate Admissions, Rachel.Donovan@quinnipiac.edu
Website Address: qu.edu/communications

The School of Communication, Media & the Arts at Sacred Heart University is dedicated to developing lifelong learners who are creative and ethical communicators, artists and media professionals. Our graduate degree programs give students the tools and professional experiences to tell meaningful stories that resonate with audiences.

Contact Information:
Name: The School of Communication, Media & the Arts at Sacred Heart University
Address: 5151 Park Avenue, Fairfield, CT 06825
Phone Number: (203) 365-7619
Email: graduatestudies@sacredheart.edu
Key Contacts:
Ed Nassr, Associate Director of Graduate Admissions, nassre@sacredheart.edu
Andrea Baggetta, Director of Graduate Admissions, baggettaa@sacredheart.edu
Website Address: www.sacredheart.edu/scma

The University of Delaware's Master of Arts in Strategic Communication is available online. Learn the tactics necessary to craft persuasive messaging by evaluating past media campaigns and their results, conducting competitive research, and designing new campaigns based on insights from your analysis. Graduate ready to advance your current career or take on a new role in strategic communication, public relations, digital media or social media management.

Contact Information:
Name: University of Delaware – M.A. in Strategic Communication
Address: 250 Pearson Hall, Newark, DE 19716
Phone Number: (302) 831-8041
Email: comm-staff@udel.edu
Key Contact: Tara L. Smith, Program Director
Website Address: https://stratcomm.online.udel.edu
Today’s PR practitioners need to know how to employ more than traditional PR/PA methods in the digital world. Online communication, a 24-hour news cycle, and new technologies have forever changed how information is shared and public opinion is formed.

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Many of our students go on to work at major PR firms or in communications roles with associations, nonprofits, and global corporations. Others find work on Capitol Hill, in the executive branch or on political campaigns.

Our classes, taught by leading PR/PA professionals, meet in the evenings, allowing students to engage in and find work in the vibrant communications marketplace of our nation’s capital. Our program is also offered fully online and will soon be available in a hybrid (online and on-campus) format. In addition to the master’s degree, we offer three Graduate Certificates (Digital Communications, Global PR and Strategic PR) that can be applied to the master’s degree.

We look forward to discussing your academic and career goals with you.
The Social Trading Explosion – Lessons for Communicators

Online communities of retail investors are rapidly replacing the more traditional financial advisors we are all used to. Today already, retail investors account, on average, for roughly 20% of stock market activity. The ability to freely exchange information substantially improves the investment performance of this new type of trader. Since they are not playing against the market, this situation equals a “non-zero-sum game” – a situation where one trader’s gain doesn’t automatically translate into another trader’s loss. In other words, traders have a strong motivation to exchange as much information as possible, opening new and vast opportunities.

This trend has serious implications for investors and publicly traded companies, but also for financial institutions, legislators, and regulators. Take the example of the GameStop Corp. The stock price fiasco event was triggered by a new generation of traders enabled by neo-broker Robinhood, a commission-free investing and trading platform and mobile phone app.

What Is Social Trading?

The main objective of Social Trading is to copy the investment strategies of peers and, therefore, a transparent exchange of information about stocks, visible to all, is key. That’s why social traders use social networks and other platforms actively for information exchange and coordination. It is mainly Gen Z – the demographic cohort succeeding Millennials – that is interested in Social Trading since they grew up with smartphones.

Stocks such as AMC and Nokia have also become the targets of coordinated actions by social traders. But tradeable commodities and certain financial products are also susceptible to similar short squeeze attacks which is why companies need to start actively managing this risk.
Media Intelligence as a Tool to Manage the Risk From Social Trading

Utilizing media intelligence can be effective to determine which companies may become targets of social traders. Forums like Reddit’s WallstreetBets serve as staging points for the coordination of social trading activity. By monitoring and analyzing these, potential targets can be identified early on, providing companies with vital data leaving them with more time to implement mitigation strategies:

• **Public Relations:** By monitoring and analysing channels such as Reddit, Telegram and others, communicators and agencies alike can establish an early warning system to inform brand protection strategies and optimize crisis management.

• **Investor Relations:** Detect early if your own organization or client is becoming a target. As opposed to being surprised by attacks, investor relations professionals will have more time to assess the developing risk and start managing issues cross-functionally in-house and develop appropriate communication strategies with all stakeholder groups.

• **Financial Institutions:** Investment funds and similar organizations can use the insights from Media Intelligence to plan ahead and, for example, determine suitable exit options should a short squeeze situation loom.

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CONTACTS
Jeneen Garcia
(212) 460-1466
jeneen.garcia@prsa.org

Jessica Espinal
(212) 460-1476
jessica.espinal@prsa.org

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