

PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

November 23, 2005

prnewsonline.com

Issue 45 Vol. 61

Contents

Small Nonprofits Hitch Their PR Wagons To Major Hollywood Movies

▶ Tip Sheet 20 Years of Media Training	2
▶ PR Sherpa PR Gets Some Respect	3
▶ Case Study A Winning Hand	4
▶ Phil & Courtney Brave New Blog World	8

For most people, the release of the new movies “Rent” and “King Kong” offers the chance for a few hours’ worth of fun and entertainment. But for a pair of small nonprofits, these major Hollywood releases provide an extraordinary PR opportunity to get their respective messages out to wider audiences.

((PR PULSE))

A Tater With Triceps

The trend of using retro celebrities for branding and promotion continues, this time to promote good health and nutrition. **The U.S. Potato Board** (USPB) recently named its new celebrity spokesperson. Actually, make that celebrity spokespotato: Mr. Potato Head. Yes, the beloved staple of childhood playtime was tapped to realign the popular image of the spud in today’s health-challenged society (where “couch potato” is the ultimate slacker epithet and super-sized fries have become a prime artery antagonist). But don’t expect to see your father’s Mr. Potato Head in the spotlight. Instead, the branding on this promotion will emphasize a streamlined Healthy Mr. Potato Head, a gym denizen who makes the scene wearing a jaunty baseball cap, funky-stylish running shoes, a water bottle, and a portable MP3 player strapped to his visibly muscular arms. He even has his own can-do slogan: “Potato Power!” The USPB believes the presence of this hottie potato on their team will help emphasize the nutritional value of potatoes in today’s diet.

PAYING BACK “RENT”

On the surface, it would seem the **National Marfan Foundation** (NMF) has the ultimate uphill PR struggle: Most people never heard of Marfan syndrome, which is a potentially fatal genetic connective tissue disorder affecting the skeleton, eyes, heart and blood vessels: it affects at least 200,000 Americans. Furthermore, the NMF is a fairly small non-profit: Their annual budget is less than \$3 million and the total staff numbers 20.

Yet since its founding in 1981, the NMF has been indefatigable in using PR to spread its message. While the focus has pri-

marily been towards the medical trade media, the organization scored several considerable consumer media hits: a 1998 segment on the Saturday edition of NBC’s “Today” flooded the NMF phone banks with 7,000 calls, the successful insertion of a Marfan syndrome plotline into a 2001 “ER” episode lead to 25 different TV news segments and a Jane Brody column in the *New York Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal* included Marfan syndrome in its 2004 Pulitzer Prize-winning coverage of health care issues.

If Marfan syndrome has not resonated with the general public, it could easily be due to the NMF’s lack of a well-recognized

spokesperson. “We don’t have a celebrity,” acknowledges Eileen Masciale, NMF’s director of communications.

But what NMF does have, however, is a tragic story that evolved into a cogent PR lesson on identifying Marfan syndrome before it is too late. Jonathan Larson, the playwright and composer who created the musical “Rent,” died of an aortic dissection before the show’s Broadway premiere in 1996. Larson was never aware he had this condition – it was only diagnosed after he died. Following Larson’s death, Masciale worked with the

Page 6 ▶

Soup To Nuts, Solid CSR Strategies Enhance PR’s Profile — And Then Some

It’s been said until PR practitioners are blue in the face: Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has graduated from a “nice-to-do” addendum to the portfolio to an integral “must-do” part of every PR department, from behemoth corporate operations to three-man shows. But like psychologist Abraham Maslow’s steps to self-actualization, incorporating CSR into the overall business strategy must be done in stages to be effective and fully integrated. The first stage is admitting your PR department has a problem – that is, the lack of a CSR plan. The

second – which was addressed in *PR News*’ November 16 “ROI on CSR” webinar with Peggy Connolly (communications director for the **Center for Corporate Citizenship** at **Boston College**), Guy Smith (EVP of **Diageo**) and Mary Wong (director of community relations, **Office Depot**) - is beginning to develop an effective program from the ground up.

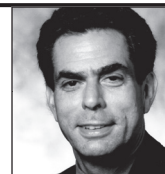
“Embed CSR messaging into all brands,” Smith advises. “And match CSR activities to corporate values.”

In the case of Diageo, a premium alcoholic beverage distributor, CSR must permeate

all messaging because alcohol is such a controversial substance. As Smith points out, it’s the only entity with two amendments to its name; even religion and free speech can’t compete with that. To contend with alcohol’s inherent connection to underage drinking and drunk driving, Smith ensures that at least 20% of all public messages – from print ads to television commercials – focus entirely on social responsibility. It’s the best way to placate enemies (and in Diageo’s case, there are many) and, Smith says, to convey the company’s

Page 7 ▶





Media Training: 20 Years Later and the Evolution Continues

Editor, Phil Hall
212.621.4875, phall@accessintel.com
Associate Editor, Courtney M. Barnes
212.621.4986; cbarnes@accessintel.com
Contributing Editor, Adam Stone
410.268.3427, inkbiz@yahoo.com
Sr. Marcom Manager, Amy Urban
301.354.1699, aurban@accessintel.com
Sr. Marketing Manager, Teri Fisher
610.696.2484, tfisher@accessintel.com
Art Director, George E. Bourous
Production Manager, Tracey Lilly
VP/Group Publisher, Diane Schwartz
301.354.1761, dschwartz@accessintel.com
Division President, Heather Farley
President & CEO, Don Pazour

PR News ADVISORY BOARD
Ned Barnett - Barnett Marketing Communications
Carol Cone - Cone Inc
Peter Debreceeny - Allstate
Mike Herman - Epley Associates
Anne Isenhower - American Cancer Society
Jim Lukaszewski - Lukaszewski Group
Tom Martin - ITT
Mike Paul - MGP & Associates PR
Deborah Radman - Stanton Communications
Gerald S. Schwartz - G.S. Schwartz & Co.
Helene Solomon - Solomon McCown & Co.
Mark Weiner - Delahaye

PR News BOARD OF CONTRIBUTORS
Andy Gilman - CommCore Consulting
Bruce Jeffries-Fox - Jeffries-Fox Associates
Richard Laerner - RLM Public Relations
Richard Levick - Levick Strategic Comms
Ian Lipner - Lewis PR/YoungPRpro
Katie Paine - KDPaine & Partners
Rodger Roeser - Justice & Young
Lou Thompson - National Investor Relations Institute
Reid Walker - Honeywell
Article Reprints, Darla Curtis,
800.211.6356, dcurtis@accessintel.com
For photocopy or reuse requests: 800.772.3350
or info@copyright.com

Access Intelligence

Published weekly by Access Intelligence, LLC
4 Choke Cherry Road, Second Floor,
Rockville, MD 20850 USA 888.707.5814
FAX: 301.309.3847 Telex: 358149;
e-mail: clientservices@accessintel.com
New York Editorial Office:
110 William St., 11th Floor, New York, NY 10038
Phone: 212.621.4875 Fax: 212.621.4879

Subscription/Renewal Coupon

I want to subscribe to PR News for \$697 a year and receive 48 issues plus full access to the online Article Archives.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

ZIP: _____ Country: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

I want to renew my \$697 subscription to PR News. My account number is: _____

Charge my: _____

Card No. _____

Exp. _____

Signature: _____

Check enclosed (Payable to Access Intelligence, LLC)
In MD add 5% tax—outside US. add \$66 postage/proc.
Fax to 301.309.3847.

For subscribers only: full access to PR News article archives at www.prnewsonline.com

This month, **CommCore** and *PR News* are inaugurating the industry's first Spokesperson of the Year Awards. The Awards coincide with the 20th Anniversary of CommCore. As we recognize spokespersons for their outstanding media communication skills, I thought it would be a good time to reflect on what's changed – and stayed the same – over the past 20 years of media training.

► **Media Training Circa 1985.** Two decades ago, media training was somewhere between infancy and adolescence. Concurrently, the news media was undergoing rapid change – the rise of the 24/7 news cycle, more technology tools for reporters, and a growth in trade media.

In these early days, the few trained spokespersons were primarily interested in just surviving the interview. In the PR planning process, media training was a novelty and not an integral component of PR programs. Training focused on studio TV interviews and improving comfort levels, not on a “deep dive” into messages and content. Over time, this has also become a major goal for spokespersons.

► **Why the Growth?** Media training increased because PR programs and the media were expanding. Businesses, government agencies and associations came to realize that reaching stakeholders through earned media campaigns was often less costly and had more impact than advertising, direct mail and other communications efforts.

Media training also was fueled by several '80s crises

including the Bhopal tragedy, the **Exxon** Valdez catastrophe, and the **Tylenol** panic. These crises forced senior executives into the forefront and required them to prepare to be aggressively grilled for news media interviews. Among the skills needed: How to communicate care and concern to the public, yet not get trapped into too much speculation as events unfolded. One of my personal highlights was helping **Johnson & Johnson** executives as they battled to save a brand and a company.

► **Are You a “Trained Spokesperson?”** It's interesting how issues come full circle. In the early days, journalists frowned upon interviewing a trained spokesperson. Now, many journalists value well-trained spokespersons – those who are prepared, get to the point, and have substantive messages and sound bites. It makes the journalist's job easier. One caveat – “spin doctors” who are all hype, lack credible and substantive messages, and all together avoid questions are not valued by the media. In fact, this type of spokesperson can backfire and ultimately damage a PR program.

► **Changing Objectives.** Over time, news outlets have expanded and companies have become more media-sophisticated. As a result, the objectives for media interviews have evolved from survival to strategic communication. To that end, media interviews now involve extensive preparation to increase the odds that messages appear in a story.

So what's next? The basics are still the same. Regardless of what changes, five fundamental principles rules of

credible media communications hold true:

1. Be honest and responsive
2. The message matters
3. The messenger matters
4. Message consistency among media, internal, shareholder and regulatory audiences is critical
5. Develop a reputation as a credible information provider and source

Finally, keep an eye on new media. Internet sites, Webcasts and blogs all are impacting media training. Now, PR professionals must monitor more and more outlets – and there is an increase in news within these outlets that is often incomplete or not accurate. One tactic worth teaching: Be ready to proactively correct an erroneous report. This is one of the few defenses to a Web search that turns up an inaccurate report that is used by a poorly trained reporter who fails to fact check the damaging information. **PR*N***

CONTACT:

Andrew Gilman, 202.659.4177, agilman@commcoreconsulting.com

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

PR News wishes its readers the very best for the Thanksgiving holiday.

And heads up: We will not be published next week, but we will be back on December 7.

PR GETS SOME RESPECT; NONPROFITS SHARE SECRETS

(The PR Sherpa, the wise man of the mar-com mountain, has returned to lead you up the rocky ridges of the profession to reach new heights of communications efficiency. This week, the PR Sherpa contemplates how the world looks at PR and marketing practices.)

QUESTION: Sometimes I get the feeling that people equate public relations practices in the same ethical league as pyramid schemes and three card monty con games. Am I being paranoid?

ANSWER: Yes and no. Attitudes towards PR professionals are, on the whole, quite positive. But there is some genuine skepticism out there about certain shaky practices. The **Public Relations Society of America**, working with **Harris Interactive**, conducted a recent survey to determine how the PR world is perceived. The survey, titled "Executive, Congressional and Consumer Attitudes Toward Media, Marketing and the Public Relations Profession," took a three-headed approach by poll-

ing 150 business leaders, 150 Capitol Hill staffers and 1,105 everyday citizens to determine their respective attitudes to standard and new-media practices.

The good news for PR professionals is that all three groups feel traditional marketing practices (corporate sponsorships, paid spokesmen, old-fashioned PR pitching, financing grassroots support) are an acceptable way to conduct the communications business. However, high-tech promotional strategies including text messaging and Internet pop-up ads are viewed with limited enthusiasm across the board.

"That surprised me, too, since we hear so much about that," says Judith H. Phair, president and CEO of PRSA. "Many people see them as being

the same as getting a marketing call to their cell phones."

Some dubious practices, however, do not meet with approval from the corporate, congressional or consumer audiences. The majority of all three groups strongly believe TV news shows should clearly identify the source of stories produced by entities other than the news organization. But the majority of respondents in all three groups are equally strong in opposing additional government regulation of marketing practices, and Phair believes the industry itself can do a compelling job in self-policing.

"Media is changing," she says. "We really need to look at these new challenges as ethics apply to them, and to reinforce the practice of ethical PR day-in



Photo courtesy/ PRSA

"We really need to look at these new challenges as ethics apply to them, and to reinforce the practice of ethical PR day-in and day-out," says Judith H. Phair, president and CEO of PRSA.

and day-out."

The full report can be accessed directly from the PRSA's Web site, www.prsa.org.

CONTACT:

Judith H. Phair, PRSA, 212.460.1400.

NONPROFIT PR ON A SHOESTRING

QUESTION: How does the average PR professional conceive, execute and measure a PR campaign?

ANSWER: Whether an "average PR professional" exists can be debated, but a new survey on the nonprofit side of the PR world provides insight on which tools are being used. The survey, conducted by *PR News* and **Vocus**, polled nonprofit PR professionals about how they go about their work—often on a shoestring.

When asked what percent-

age of PR employee time is devoted to manual and/or administrative PR tasks (ranging from researching media lists to distributing press releases to tracking hits), the majority of those surveyed (41%) devoted 11 to 20 hours per week. The remaining professionals devoted either 21 to 30 hours per week (28%) or 10 hours or less per week (23%).

The nonprofit PR professionals preferred, on the whole, to release and follow-up their press materials without outside assistance. A two-to-one majority did not use a wire

service to distribute news releases (68% to 32%) and nearly two-thirds did not use a news monitoring/clipping service. The hands-on attitude extends to the Net: 95% of the respondents were responsible for managing the content of the press room on their organization's web site; the remaining 5% gave that duty to their in-house IT staff.

Gary McNeil, vice president of marketing at Vonus, credited the use of PR management software for this degree of self-sufficiency. "Companies that use PR

management software get their news brought directly to them," he says. "There have no need to go to external news monitoring services when you have PR management suites." **PRN**

CONTACT:

Gary McNeil, 301.683.6918, gmcneil@vocus.com

IN ERROR: An article in the November 16 edition incorrectly referred to United Technologies Corp. as United Technology.



ALLEN H. CENTER

Allen H. Center, APR, a founding member of the **Public Relations Society of America**, passed away on Nov. 13 at his home in San Diego; he was 93. Center began his media career during World War II when he edited the daily newspaper for the 13th Air Force Fighter Command Headquarters. After the war, he became the publications editor for the **Parker Pen Company**, and was later promoted to PR director. Center left Parker Pen to become the PR director for **Motorola's** Consumer Products Division, where he helped launch the company's color television product line. He later became vice president of public relations for the **Leo Burnett** advertising agency in Chicago, but returned to Motorola after two years to become their corporate vice president of public relations. After retiring from the corporate world, he accepted a position as part-time professor at **San Diego State University**. Throughout his life, Center was an active PRSA member and received the society's Gold Anvil Award in 1981. In addition, he was the author of the textbook *Public Relations Practices* and co-author (with Scott M. Cutlip) of *Effective Public Relations*.

Speed Poker: Using The Cards It's Dealt, Campaign Rescues Game In Record Time

Company: Harrah's Entertainment
Agency: Trahan, Burden & Charles
Timeframe: Early 2004 – May 2004
Budget: \$146,000

When **Binions** of Las Vegas closed its Horseshoe Casino in 2004 due to bankruptcy, it brought into question the future of one of gambling's most prestigious tournaments, the World Series of Poker (WSOP).

only half the battle. Harrah's decided to stage the WSOP on its original date, which gave it only a three-month lead-time. It would take a major PR push to let the world know that the game was still afoot.

"We had very limited time to put this entire campaign together," says Dave Curley, who as an account supervisor at PR firm

Trahan, Burden & Charles led the effort to keep the three-decades-old series on track.

The PR organization would have to hustle, spreading word of the tournament's fate on at least three fronts. Former Horseshoe employees who were kept out of the loop on the fate of the WSOP and the casino would have to be told that their jobs were ready and waiting should they choose to return. The poker community, who was also not updated on the developments surrounding the new

ownership, needed to know that players should be ready to play. And the media needed to know that the original schedule was in place. But on top of that was a new message that needed to be made clear: The WSOP was coming back in a bigger and better format.

In research mode, the PR team sought out all reporters

who had given coverage to the event in the past – or as many as they could, considering there had never been a formal media registration process in the past. They also identified more than 50 Web sites related to poker.

Perhaps the easiest communications effort involved outreach to former employees. Nearly all were unionized, and it took only a couple of calls to alert union officials to the changed situation. Those officials then spread the word to workers, freeing the PR team to communicate elsewhere. Harrah's CEO also held a press conference to announce the re-hirings.

In approaching the media, the PR team dipped deep into its \$146,000 budget. Expenses included \$60,000 for the production and distribution of three video news packages and \$7,500 for the distribution via news wire of media advisories and press releases. Other expenses included a \$4,000 personal appearance fee for the tournament's 2003 champion Chris MoneyMaker, and \$19,000 in travel expenses. There was even outreach to City Hall, and the team hit pay dirt when word came that Las Vegas Mayor Oscar B. Goodman would be available for a press conference at the start of the WSOP.

Furthermore, new working relationships were quickly established to help spread the word on the approaching event. Calls (not e-mails) were sent to the operators of poker Web sites to notify them of WSOP's continuation, while a jazzed-up

WSOP Web site was launched. A fully equipped pressroom was created on-site at the Horseshoe to accommodate the journalists and camera crews arriving for the event. Partnerships were created with *All In* poker magazine and ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live," and exemptions from ESPN-imposed broadcasts for foreign media were negotiated (ESPN remained on board as the U.S. broadcaster for the WSOP).

In addition to identifying and securing appropriate media, the PR team also needed to put into place a credentialing and registration process for reporters looking to cover the game. Actually, the PR team would be inventing one from scratch.

"In previous years there really was no formal media registration process – people would just sort of randomly show up," says Curley. "That's a problem in a game played around a small table. You have more and more media that want to come, but poker is a very unique sport, in that it is the only one the media cover where the playing field actually shrinks as time goes in."

To minimize media overcrowding, Curley points out there was an essential need to know "who is going to be there, when they are going to be there and how many people are going to be on hand at any given time."

The team opted for online credentialing in order to control the process and to accommodate a significant international media contingent. Harrah's IT department provided the technical know-how and wire service notices alerted the media to the

Photo courtesy Trahan, Burden & Charles



The 2004 World Series of Poker Main Event Champion Greg Raymer cheers at the sight of his \$5 million top prize.

This tournament was wholly owned and operated by Binions since 1970, but it seemed to be heading towards extinction: Federal marshals shut down the Horseshoe three months before the first cards of the 2004 series were to be dealt.

Harrah's Entertainment bought the Horseshoe and the WSOP right away, but that was

'That's a problem in a game played around a small table. You have more and more media that want to come, but poker is a very unique sport, in that it is the only one the media cover where the playing field actually shrinks as time goes in,' says Dave Curley.

new procedure.

To contact the players, Curley relied "in large measure" on the media. "Prior to Harrah's taking over this event, there was very little infrastructure," he says. "There were some obvious high-profile poker players

we could get in touch with, but for the hundreds and hundreds of amateurs that come to this event it was much more difficult. We didn't have registration lists available from past events, so we had to rely on the media to get the word out."

BETTING ON SUCCESS

PR has never been easy for the gaming industry. Long plagued by charges of corruption and the perception of sleaze that some associate with gambling, the casino world still struggles to gain positive PR.

In a recent article, the trade pub *Casino City Times* outlined some of the challenges:

- ▶ High casino taxes in certain states demand a PR response. "We failed miserably with politicians with regard to the tax question," one official told the paper.
- ▶ The editorial pages don't look good either. "The media in this country is vehemently anti-gaming," the same official said.
- ▶ Gambling addiction is perhaps the industry's largest single PR challenge, with many consumers expressing concern over the industry's role in the issue.

But there are positive trends, including a fairly high level of TV coverage of gambling events, including celebrity poker programs. Aggressive and imaginative marketing by the Las Vegas tourism industry and other gaming centers across the country have been largely successful – the use of A-list celebrity entertainment, high-profile sporting events and even business-to-business conferences at casino hotels keeps these venues in the public eye.

Some things just could not happen in the 90-day window. "In an ideal world, we would have had more time to make direct contact with far more players," Curley says. But with the clock ticking, Curley adds he was "forced to look at what the ultimate objectives are and work backwards. You have to constantly ask the question: How? We know we want to achieve certain goals at the end of the day. How are we going to achieve them, given the very tight time constraints under which we have to work? It forces you to remain focused every minute of every day."

The net results were impressive. Horseshoe staffing was 3% higher than it had been prior to the closure. The number of entries to the game rose 85.6% over the prior year (14,054 for 2004 versus 7,572 for 2003). The revamped WSOP Web site drew more than 1.2 million hits, while 94% of all media pre-registered online. Through clipping and monitoring services, Curley tracked 2,041 print placements



Photo courtesy Trahan, Burden & Charles

A player at the 2004 World Series of Poker seeks to find gold in the "Anyone Can Win" message on his hat.

and 445 TV placements, generating nearly 445 million impressions and more than \$20 million in publicity value based on the client's measurement system.

A winning hand, by any measure. **PRN**

CONTACT:

Dave Curley, 410.986.1305, dcurley@tbc.us

APRs earn more.



Studies show that Accredited public relations professionals earn more than others in the profession.

Why? Because Accredited professionals are proven – in their knowledge, strategic perspective, ethics and professional judgment.

Smart employers recognize excellence.

Join your peers in leading public relations organizations and earn your APR – the mark of distinction for public relations professionals.

Learn more at www.praccreditation.org

ADVANCING THE PROFESSION AND THE PROFESSIONAL.

PRSA Public Relations Society of America

Nonprofits And Hollywood

► Page 1

Photo courtesy Sony Pictures



ANTHONY RAPP, star of the film "Rent," is also starring in a PSA for the National Marfan Foundation.

playwright's parents to ensure everyone who saw "Rent" on Broadway or in its touring companies were educated on Marfan syndrome. Even the cast members were included in the PR mission.

"A group of us comes to conduct a meet-and-greet with the casts," explains Masciale. "Our Massachusetts chapter organized a benefit in Boston a year-and-a-half ago when the touring company was in that city, and they raised \$30,000."

With the film version of "Rent," which opens nationally on November 23, Masciale sees the greatest opportunity to spread the NMF PR message and make it stick. Masciale and the NMF saw the need to establish important new partner-

ships to ensure the message got across. "We knew we couldn't go out on our own, doing what we do," she says.

NMF Chairman Joe Gagliano helped connect Masciale with the executives at **Sony Pictures** and **Revolution Studios**, the producers of the film. "Joe is an entertainment lawyer and he knows the ropes in the business," says Masciale.

The result of this connection includes NMF receiving proceeds from "Rent"-related product merchandising. A PSA with Anthony Rapp, star of the Broadway and film versions of "Rent," was also produced and has been guaranteed a place in the Special Features section of the "Rent" DVD, due in stores next spring.

Gagliano also connected NMF with **Loews Cineplex**, which enabled NMF to distribute handouts in its theaters, include a PSA slide in the pre-show program and run its PSA with Anthony Rapp before the screenings (the latter, Masciale notes, was a paid placement). The PSA is also being distributed to television stations in conjunction with the film's release.

GOING APE FOR "KONG"

The December 14 opening of "King Kong" is fueling the PR machinery for another nonprofit group. But unlike the NMF example, the **Chimpanzee**

Collaboratory is happily jumping on the "King Kong" bandwagon without actually having direct involvement with the production.

The **Chimpanzee Collaboratory** is an alliance of animal rights and legal activists dedicated to eliminating the abuse of simians in motion pictures and television. In the past, its PR target was primarily to the entertainment industry and its trade media. Yet the high level of enthusiasm surrounding the new "King Kong" (which uses CGI effects to bring its oversized ape to life) emboldened the group to broaden its PR mission.

"The **Chimpanzee Collaboratory** came to us looking for PR help," says Mike Smith, account director with **Fenton Communications**, the San Francisco agency which previously scored major PR points through its campaign on behalf of **MoveOn.org** and the **Energy Future Coalition** tied to last year's epic "The Day After Tomorrow." "King Kong" is a great example of not using real apes to make films."

The Fenton campaign, which is still being formulated as this article goes to press, will include a public letter to Dan Glickman, president of the **Motion Picture Association of America** (MPAA), urging that films adapt a "no real apes" strategy to avoid the abuse of these animals dur-

ing movie production. The letter, which will be signed by scientists and celebrities, will be complemented with a viral e-mail campaign featuring an animated "King Kong"-inspired role-reversal sequence with a Hollywood executive as the gigantic gorilla and a baby chimp in the Fay Wray part.

Unlike NMF, the **Chimpanzee Collaboratory** has a celebrity to serve as spokesperson: the world-famous anthropologist Jane Goodall. Even though Goodall's schedule puts her in Asia when "King Kong" opens, Smith will still leverage her star power. "We are planning a telephone news conference from Asia in December," he says. "We're also planning to put together a B-Roll of quotes and make that available to the media for use via satellite uplink."

Neither **Universal Pictures** nor anyone connected to "King Kong" itself is involved with this effort, yet Smith has not fielded any complaints. "They know we're doing this campaign," he says. "My guess is that they know any promotion is a good promotion. And after all, we're praising 'King Kong.'" **PRN**

CONTACTS:

Eileen Masciale, 631.665.2163, publicity@marfan.org;
Mike Smith, 415.901.0111, msmith@fenton.com

PRNews Webinar

How to Measure the Value of Your PR/Communication Department

Register Today...and have access to the entire program for one full year!

Attend right from your PC desktop or a conference room.

Registration fee: \$279 per site (one location).

A 90-minute Webinar presented by PR News

Tuesday, December 13, 2005
1:30-3:00 p.m. ET

**To register, visit
www.prnewsonline.com.**

Industry Partner: Institute for PR

8713

CSR Strategies

► Page 1

commitment to a completely integrated CSR strategy.

Beyond connecting CSR to the business plan, Wong emphasizes the importance of partnerships with nonprofits at the community level. After forging a partnership, make sure the nonprofit is involved in conveying the message. For a big corporation like Office Depot, it's tempting to take over a campaign; rather, let the nonprofit take the reins, even if it means letting their PR team write the press release. This also ensures that your commitment to CSR is sincere, not self-serving.

"It's important to be thoughtful and strategic in how your company carries out its

philanthropic message," Wong says. "It all comes down to integration and alignment throughout that business structure."

Connolly offers examples of those who've successfully integrated and aligned CSR with their business and communications plans: **Green Mountain Coffee Roasters** with its fair trade coffee soon to be sold at **McDonald's** throughout the Northeast; **General Electric** with its Ecomagination program; and **BP**, which has changed its brand from British Petroleum to Beyond Petroleum.

"When you don't have integration and alignment," she says, "you are running a shell game." Case in point:

Enron highlighted its social responsibility endeavors to the public while its core silently rotted away (that is, until it not-so-silently erupted into a monumental crisis). Thus, it's essential to make sure the outer appearance and the internal application of CSR match up. An aggressively transparent operation would have prevented Enron's fame from turning to infamy – and a PR nightmare – almost over night.

"The key threat right now is being AWOL on CSR," Connolly says. "Visibility makes you vulnerable. The remedy is to be more proactive."

But being proactive also comes with a caveat. It does

not translate into what Smith calls chest-beating. Don't publicize a CSR effort to pat yourself, your client or your CEO on the back, because the consumer can tell what's genuine from what's not. And a genuine social responsibility program always goes further than the alternative.

"[PR executives] get more credit with reflective sunshine than by going out and beating their chests," Smith says. **PRN**

CONTACTS:

Peggy Connolly, 617.552.0722, peggy.connolly.1@bc.edu; Guy Smith, guy.smith@diageo.com; Mary Wong, 561.438.7626, mwong@officedepot.com

► MEASUREMENT Metrics

It's not news that the Internet provides PR practitioners with a previously unavailable array of measurement tools. The news is what those tools are and how to most effectively use them. In the "Research and Measurement Conference" hosted by **IABC** and **Delahaye** in New York City a few weeks ago, Angela Sinickas, president of **Sinickas Communications**, divulged tricks for Web site management. The first and most important thing to know before getting started, according to Sinickas: DON'T measure hits.

"Hits are just the number of files opened," Sinickas says. "Instead, look at specific page views. If there is something you want people to see, you have to look at what page will put them on the road to finding it."

There are a number of Web usage software programs that will measure pages views for you, but also think outside the box: Another way to measure this information is to direct

people to a Web site via print marketing or public service announcements. In the days immediately following the promotion, note any increase in Web traffic or, for the most accurate measurement, market the Web site as a slightly different URL than the one that would be found through an online search. This altered address can redirect visitors to the original site while measuring the exact number of people who found it based solely on an offline marketing strategy.

PR execs can also attract clients/customers online while measuring how much revenue is generated from the Web site alone. Case in point: Sinickas was able to measure the ROI on her own site by identifying three clients in one year who found her firm through an Internet search and subsequently did business with her; thus, 100% of revenue generated by those clients was due to the Web site. After deducting

Possible key measures to track

What to measure	What to do about findings
Where people come from ("referral sites")	Keep best referrers updated on other pages to link to
Where they enter the site (book-marked pages vs. home page)	Make sure it's as functional as a home page for important links
Paths they take and don't	Tease them to go to a deeper page or keep them from exiting
"Failures"	Fix broken or outdated links
Audience interest in various "products"	Use to direct marketing effort
Less-visited pages that feature what you want them to see	Change structure or add links from popular pages

© 2005, Sinickas Communications, Inc.

the cost of Web maintenance from the revenue, she was able to identify her ROI, which in this case measured in the tens of thousands of dollars.

This is an equation that can be followed easily by any PR professional who wants to prove the worth of a site to his or her CEO. The key is ensuring that the site is organized and very user-friendly. And

don't despair, as this too can be measured, this time by repeat visitors and the number of pages they view. **PRN**

Note: To purchase the "ROI on CSR Webinar," go to prnewsonline.com (virtual seminars).

CONTACT:

Angela Sinickas, 714.241.8665, angela@sinicom.com

The Brave New Blogosphere World

(This week, PR News editors Phil Hall and Courtney M. Barnes discuss how certain PR-fueled blogs are attempting new practices and creating new territories for corporate marketing.)

PHIL: Kids do it. Celebrities do it. Even American soldiers occupying Iraq do it. It's blogging, and it seems PR people are also doing it. Or at least enough PR people are doing it to create a commotion. Paul Conley, noted B2B publishing industry commentator, expressed alarm that the PR folks are doing an end-run around the journalists to reach the public (you can see his comments here: <http://paulconley.blogspot.com/2005/11/public-relations-departments-dont-need.html>). Conley cited some PR-fueled blogs, including the **General Motors** FastLane Blog (<http://fastlane.gmblogs.com/>) and a quartet of blogs published by the organic dairy producer **Stonyfield Farm** (<http://www.stonyfield.com/weblog/>). Conley declares: "Now PR pros are learning new, more sophisticated ways to get their message across, build brand trust and keep us out of the equation" – the "us" meaning journalists and editors.

Is Conley on target here?

COURTNEY: There is certainly some wisdom behind Conley's words – PR pros are, finally, learning new, more sophisticated ways to get their message across (some better than others) – but it's not a means of bypassing journalists and editors. It's a means of staying afloat in this changing media landscape. Conley's comment that "One role we journalists play in the marketplace is as a filter for public relations" is degrading – not only to PR practitioners who see the media as a conduit, not a filter, but to journalists who surely would prefer not to be seen solely as a filtering function. Part of the intrigue behind the new blog culture is its accessibility to everyone; because of that, it appears (albeit falsely) to pit citizen journalists, PR execs and professional journalists against one another as they vie for a space to comment. Is there some level of contradiction here?

PHIL: Only if you view the blogosphere as a gladiator pit, which too many people are doing. The savvy PR professionals, however, are using

blogs to go in very different directions. The Stonyfield Farm blog site is a case in point: It consists of four blogs relating to distinctive subjects (infant care, women's health, nutrition for school children and organic farming). Each blog is set up to be its own little community, where like-minded people are invited to share commentary and observations on the respective issues. As of today, Stonyfield is seeking a volunteer to serve as host blogger for the nutrition section – they've moved away from old-fashioned PR pitching and created a genuine sense of consumer participation in their PR message. In the blogosphere, there is the chance for dialogue between people from all over the world. In traditional media, there is only a monologue: The journalist telling a story.

COURTNEY: Then Stonyfield has the right idea, as does GM, which features commentary from executives throughout the operation, and **Boeing**, with its "Flight Test Journal." Conley does acknowledge the strides made by PR managers when it comes to the burgeoning



art of the cyber conversation, but the challenge remains making blogs genuine, engaging and aptly targeted. This seems to be where Conley's struggle with the journalist-PR-blogosphere love triangle kicks in. But communications and media don't have to operate under the separation of Church and State dogma when it comes to blogging; the progression of PR's adeptness with blogs isn't a means of usurping journalists, but a means of furthering interactions with them. Don't you agree that both journalist blogs and PR blogs can exist without being mutually exclusive?

PHIL: Indeed. And I love the fact the GM blog prints the negative feedback from its readers without censoring their input. These corporate bloggers are taking PR into new territory, and it appears the feedback is very, very promising. **PRN**

► PR Personality Profile



Alissa Blate, executive VP/director of consumer lifestyle marketing with the MWW Group, is the winner of PR News' Brand Marketer of the Year Award.

Is it any coincidence that Alissa Blate majored in psychology but ended up in PR? You may be envisioning your resident PR manager lying on a couch and reliving his professional obstacles, but for Blate, there was some method to her madness.

"You're dealing with people, and everything is about communication," she says of her work at

MWW Group with clients like **McDonald's** and **Nikon**. "You really have to put yourself in their shoes and understand how they think to be able to market to them. There's a lot of psychology to that."

Beyond the task of getting into her clients' heads to develop a killer

marketing strategy, Blate confronts the challenges set forth by the PR profession as a whole: "Getting a client to understand the value of public relations and to understand that they need to market to today's consumer."

Her means of overcoming these barriers? Reconciling the new media beast, for starters. Being an Internet junkie herself, that's all in a good day's work for Blate.

"Technology has really infiltrated the industry, and we really have to embrace it as professionals," she says. "Some accept it and some don't, and the ones who don't aren't going to be able to deliver."

In between delivering winning campaigns and managing the schedules of her four children, Blate hopes to do some volunteer work in a third-world country. But until her schedule opens up, it's onward and upward for her contributions to the PR industry.

"You just continue on a path," she says, "and don't look back."

CONTACT: Alissa Blate, 201.507.9500, ablata@mww.com