

PR SENSE

Communicate the communication

India's First Corporate ezine

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Michael G Cherenson
2009 Chair & CEO
Public Relations Society of America

Theme of this Issue

**Public Relations
Society of America**

Guest Editor

Michael G. Cherenson

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PR-e-FACE: From the desk of Editor in Chief

Fight the Financial Crisis and Terrorism together



Presently, the whole world is facing the challenges of financial crisis. At the time of releasing this ezine, India has faced the challenge of attack by terrorists in Mumbai, the financial capital of the country. Presently, as global citizens, we are required to tackle the terrorism and financial crisis together. This has put the entire world under strain.

The Communication professionals across the world have greater role to play. More than tackling the situation, we need to create confidence amongst all the people to overcome these challenges boldly.

Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the largest PR body of the world has done a tremendous work by

addressing the important issues, in the 'communicators' perspective. PR-e-Sense is highly privileged to feature PRSA in this edition.

PR-e-Sense was the Media Partner during their International Conference held at Detroit during October 2008.

Mr. Michael G. Cherenson, APR, PRSA's 2009 Chair & CEO has guest edited this issue. We are bringing some exclusive information from PRSA. The Editorial team places on record Mr. Arthur Yann, Vice President (Public Relations) of PRSA for coordinating with us and providing us all the materials.

K. Srinivasan

Michael G. Cherenson, APR – Guest Editor



Michael G. Cherenson, APR, PRSA's 2009 Chair and CEO, is executive vice president, public relations, for the Success Communications Group. As the company's chief public relations counselor and strategist, he oversees all public relations activities for his firm's diverse clientele. Mr. Cherenson's expertise extends to all disciplines of public relations including corporate, marketing, internal and crisis communication, government relations, event management and interactive public relations.

Please listen to his views on the future of the public relations profession and the importance of advocacy.

<http://www.veoh.com/videos/v16466308WYNHskR2>



PR-e-FACE: From the desk of Guest Editor

A Partner in the Global PR Community

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), though its name may imply otherwise, is truly a global advocate for the public relations profession. Our mission, “to advance the profession and advance the professional,” is a commitment that resonates the world over.

In October, PRSA held its 61st annual International Conference, *The Point of Connection*. The three-day conference attracted professionals from 25 countries across the world.

Despite their geographic diversity and varied global perspectives, these professionals all shared a common trait: an eagerness to network with their American counterparts and to become better, more capable professionals. On that score, our International Conference delivered more than 100 learning opportunities on the latest trends and techniques in social media, new media, emerging technologies, green marketing, crisis communications, sustainability, reputation management, branding, and integrated communications.

One of the many memorable moments from this year’s conference was the presentation of PRSA’s prestigious Atlas Award. Bestowed annually, the Atlas Award recognizes an individual who has made extraordinary contributions to the practice and profession of public relations on a global scale over the span of his or her career. This year’s winner, Ceyda Aydede of Istanbul, is a remarkable woman who has made immeasurable contributions to advancing public relations ethics and corporate social responsibility

in her native Turkey, during a distinguished, 30-year career

PRSA capped the Conference with a closing keynote presentation on “Repairing America’s Connections with the Rest of the World,” a subject of great interest to the American public. Internationally renowned expert Louis Capozzi, chairman emeritus of Publicis PRCC and president of The International Communications Consultancy Organisation (ICCO), spoke eloquently on the topic, pointing out – and rightly so – that the skills and abilities of the public relations profession can make a big difference in restoring these all important connections.

PRSA maintains its ties to the international community in other ways, as well. We partner with the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management, with whom we work jointly to tackle common problems from a global perspective. There are countless subtler examples, too, such as hosting public relations professionals from a Kazakhstan oil and gas exploration company, who were eager to learn more about the practice of public relations outside of their homeland.

All of which is to say that being featured in *PR-e-Sense* is an honor that reflects the increasing globalization of our organization and the industry it serves. On behalf of our 32,000 professional and student members, thank you for providing us with this special opportunity to give the international community a closer look at who PRSA is, and what we do to advance the profession and the professional throughout our borderless world community.



PRSA: Advancing the Profession, Advancing the Professional

Chartered in 1947, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is the world's largest and foremost organization of public relations professionals. PRSA is responsible for representing, educating, and setting standards of excellence and ethical conduct for its members and, more broadly, the \$4 billion U.S. public relations profession.

With a vision to unify, strengthen and advance the public relations profession, PRSA works to build demand for the practice of public relations by explaining its roles, outcomes and value, and by enhancing its image among important constituencies. PRSA also advocates for ethical industry conduct by maintaining a Member Code of Ethics, which recognizes that the level of public trust sought by public relations professionals requires a special obligation to operate ethically.

PRSA works to advance the public relations professional, too. It offers hundreds of professional development seminars, webinars and teleseminars each year, many of which are free. PRSA also

recognizes excellence in public relations through a variety of awards programs – most notably the PRSA Silver Anvil Award, which is the pinnacle of achievement in the public relations profession.

In addition, PRSA publishes relevant and timely sources of what's new and what's news in public relations. Its publications include: *Public Relations Tactics*, a monthly tabloid-style newspaper featuring news, trends and how-to information; *The Strategist*, a quarterly magazine for executive-level practitioners on demanding public relations issues; and *Public Relations Journal*, a quarterly, open-access, peer-reviewed electronic research journal.

Currently, there are more than 22,000 PRSA members, including professionals from public relations agencies, corporations, government, health care institutions, military, associations, and nonprofit organizations; and academics. In addition, more than 10,000 students are members of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA). For more information, please visit www.prsa.org.



The First edition of PRCamp – UnConference at Chennai

For more details and free registration

<http://wiki.prpoint.com>



PR-exclusive

“Communications is About Making a Connection”



Bob Lutz, vice chairman of global product development for General Motors, addressing the General Session at the 2008 PRSA International Conference. Excerpts from Mr. Lutz's address appear below.

“Detroit and the U.S. domestic automobile industry need to change a lot of perceptions — often misguided and wrong perceptions — that the rest of the country has about us if we’re going to turn things around,” Lutz, vice chairman of global product development for GM, said yesterday morning during the General Session at the 2008 PRSA International Conference.

And given the recessive global economy, Lutz acknowledged that it’s even more challenging to get your message across and make yourself heard.

Lutz, a veteran of more than 40 years in the automobile industry and chief blogger for GM’s Fastlane blog, shared his thoughts on the art of communications with the 3,000 students and professionals in attendance. His five key points echoed the theme of this year’s Conference — the Point of Connection.

1) Communications is about making a connection.

That connection — message sent and received — is the essence of communications. “Your message must be received, heard and understood,” he said. “Otherwise, no connection is made.”

Lutz compared making a connection to the concept of automobile design. “An automobile’s design must make an immediate, emotional connection to a potential buyer,” he said. “If there is no connection — if that automobile visually doesn’t fascinate — then the potential customer has no desire to learn more about it...there will be no sale.”

So how do you make a message connect? He discussed that in his second point.

2) Communications must say something.

Lutz said that he dislikes canned, sanitized corporate messaging that doesn’t say anything.

“All large corporations are good at it. General Motors is no exception. Instead of being a weapon for putting out the truth, [a press release] becomes a method of risk avoidance,” he said. “It focuses on making sure no one says the wrong thing. By focusing on not saying the wrong thing, you’re essentially saying nothing.”

What’s a better approach? Good, effective communications messaging is expressed skillfully, directly, accurately, precisely and honestly, he said.



"I don't think any serious company lies in its communications," Lutz said. "But you can create the wrong impression by only imparting half the truth. Of course, that is the art of propaganda. It is not honest."

3) Communications has value that paid advertising does not.

Lutz made it clear that he's not down on marketing or advertising. Still, nothing compares to public relations in his estimation.

"Public relations offers us the chance to put our messages out there...and have others spread the message for us usually at the best possible price, which is called 'free,' " Lutz said. "This can often have a multiplier effect as the message repeats, grows and travels from source to source."

However, the tone of the message is key. "We have to keep ridiculous hyperbole and blatant self-praise out of communications. Hyperbole and self-praise can really do a lot of damage — even when it is accurate."

4) Communications should view the media as an opportunity and not an obstacle.

Building relationships with key media members is important, Lutz said.

"I believe that listening carefully, avoiding being condescending and just being straight with [the media] is the right formula," he said. "Journalists like

subjects who have a human touch, have a sense of humor and don't take themselves too seriously.

"That's how I would tell you to approach journalists; how to counsel your executives to approach them."

He put himself in the shoes of a reporter.

"If I were a journalist, I would really hate the pompous, self-congratulatory big shot stuffed shirts who they often have to interview, especially when all they can get from the interview is little tidbits of the predigested corporate line doled out with heaping side helpings of corporate arrogance."

5) Communicators must evolve with the communications environment.

It's very simple, he said: "To be effective, we all have to adopt and try new things."

As proof of his adoption of the new media environment, he mentioned GM's Fastlane blog and discussed the rewards of corporate blogging.

"It's an opportunity to have a real dialogue with our customers and potential customers and an opportunity to put our message out there that's totally unfiltered," Lutz said. "It's also immediate. I don't have to tell you how important that timing of getting your message out there is. If it's too late, it's too late. And you're sunk."

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PR-exclusive

Wall Street Woes: As the Financial Crisis Unfolds, Role of Communications as Important as Ever

By Timothy S. Brown, APR, chair of the Public Relations Society of America's Financial Communications Professional Interest Section of the PRSA. Reprinted from the fall issue of *The Strategist*. Copyright © 2008 PRSA. All rights reserved.

Much of the major financial news that has occurred in recent months culminated during a weekend. In many cases, the news became public on a Sunday, where workers could hear about a merger or bankruptcy file via the media. What challenges does this present for financial communicators?

The constant flow of information presents challenges from both an internal and external communications standpoint. Internally, you have to keep employees informed of breaking developments without getting overly focused on responding to the rumor of the minute. Externally, you need to balance the need to be responsive to the media's deadlines with the reality that complicated business decisions take time to research, think through, properly disclose and effectuate. In both cases, PR professionals must continuously remind our leaders (and ourselves) of the importance of simple, candid, fact-based information.

Long, tense ordeals can also contribute to a less formal tone and feel — a style very common in crisis communications. This phenomenon gives PR professionals bigger opportunity and challenge to use genuine, authentic communications to convey their organizations' messages in a straightforward tone that emphasizes what you know to be true and admits what you can't yet say for sure.

Then, does this mean six-or-seven day workweeks for financial communicators?

Crisis communications is almost always a non-stop job, requiring stamina, coordination and sufficient resources to tell the organizations' story. Now, more than ever, financial communicators can distinguish themselves by being available, professional and focused on key tasks. Technology can help, given the ability to plug into conference calls and company computers from home, work or anywhere the team managing the situation is located.

In recent years, what challenges have the transformation of the media — instant mobile news, etc. — presented to financial communicators?

The major challenge is responding in both a timely and accurate manner within the rules of what can and can't

be disclosed and the strategic dictates of what should and shouldn't be said. It helps to have a seat at the table with management so you can anticipate likely media inquiries and prepare a proactive strategy for communicating with key stakeholders. You can also be a source of new information to the management team, as media coverage and inquiries can provide new information that management needs to decide what to say and do. Fortunately, technology can keep us more in touch with decision makers

**prepare a proactive
strategy for
communicating with
key stakeholders**



and subject matter experts than ever before. The key is to step back and take the time needed to communicate accurately.

How much pressure is on financial communicators in an environment where some firms are quickly losing the confidence of their stakeholders?

Financial communicators face tremendous pressure to reassure a wide range of stakeholders in an emotional and uncertain environment. Although the order of magnitude is obviously greater in the current circumstances, financial communicators do have some standard messages and communications techniques that they can use to meet this challenge.

Three steps can help. First, consider grounding communications in traditional messages that track with actual performance. This can help give stakeholders confidence. In other words, remind them of what you've said you'd do in the past and how you've done it. Second, pay careful attention to the tone of written and spoken communications. People are more likely to trust organizations conveying competence, concern and candor. Third, acknowledge the unsettling emotional anxiety that such times produce. Doing so, allows you to contrast that understandable emotion with the logic that tells stakeholders not to over react until they have all the facts.

How important is it now to communicate long-term stability?

I see many companies and segments within the financial industry working hard to accomplish that objective, with some (i.e., community banks) making a fair amount of headway. Likewise, it can be important to put the portion of underperforming financial assets in context of the company's overall financial performance. It is said, you can't communicate long-term stability if you can't provide compelling evidence to

support the claim....especially in such fluid, uncharted territory.

What are the best ways to combat rumors or misinformation?

That is situation specific. Sometimes (as is often the case with rumors of mergers) it is better not to comment on rumors. Other times you want to avoid commenting directly but still use a question about a rumor to make some fundamental point about your financial stability.

It is also important to consider other direct channels of communications beyond the media — employee communications and talking points for those responsible for maintaining relationships with external stakeholders.

In terms of financial communications, what have we learned so far during the ongoing financial crisis in the United States?

Trust is at the bottom of all financial transactions, and for many investors and trading partners, that trust has been undermined. As in any crisis, they must explain what happened, what they are doing to fix it, and why such steps will help make things more in balance.

We have also learned the importance of being transparent about the amount of risk that any individual investor is bearing in any given transaction. Going forward, there will be a need to reassess the risk associated with various investments and communicate that risk in a straightforward and believable fashion.

There is, of course, much still to be learned and still to be determined. Nonetheless, as the next phase of this financial crisis unfolds, financial communicators will continue to play a pivotal role in recontextualizing risk and rebuilding the trust of their organizations' stakeholders.



PRince

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Glimpses at the PRSA International Conference

The Public Relations Society of America's 2008 International Conference was held Oct. 25–28, 2008, in Detroit. The conference theme, "The Point of Connection," reflected both the growing number of ways in which public relations professionals can connect with their constituencies, as well as the considerable importance of connecting with each other to share, discover, learn and, ultimately, succeed.

The PRSA International Conference is widely considered to be the world's foremost event for public relations professionals. This year's event, which drew approximately 3,000 of the best and brightest professional communicators from 25 countries, offered in excess of 100 Professional Development sessions led by more than 200 experts in a variety of public relations disciplines.



The opening night party highlighted talent from the Detroit area. Attending this year were members of the Public Relations Student Society of America, who also held their annual conference in Detroit.

Turkish Entrepreneur Ceyda Aydede Received the Atlas Award, PRSA's Highest International Honor.



Blog Central, allowed attendees to blog live from the Conference.



Glimpses at the PRSA International Conference



(left to right): PRSA 2008 Chair and CEO Jeffrey Julin; GM Vice Chairman of Global Product Development Bob Lutz; PRSA 2009 Chair-Elect Michael Cherenson; and PRSA President and COO Bill Murray.

Craig Newmark, the “Craig” of Craigslist.org, and Paula Tutman, WDIV reporter in Detroit, kicked off the Sunday General Session.



Young public relations professionals lead a workshop on sharing social media secrets.

Mitch Albom, author of “Tuesdays with Morrie” and “Five People You Meet in Heaven,” gave an inspirational speech.



Becoming Accredited in Public Relations (APR)

What is APR?

APR is a mark of distinction for public relations professionals who demonstrate their commitment to the profession and to its ethical practice, and who are selected based on broad knowledge, strategic perspective, and sound professional judgment.

Who administers the Accreditation program?

The Accreditation program is administered by the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB), a consortium of 9 leading public relations and communications organizations, including PRSA.

Who can pursue the APR?

Any PRSA member in good standing can take on the challenge of earning Accreditation. However, it is recommended that candidates have at least five years' experience in the full-time practice or teaching of public relations and who have earned either a bachelor's degree in a communication-specific field (e.g., public relations, journalism, mass communication) or have equivalent work experience, which includes public relations principles, public relations writing, public relations campaigns, research, ethics and law and internship (practical experience under supervision).

What steps are involved?

1. You must complete an application -- that lets the UAB gauge your full-time public relations experience.
2. Once your application is approved, you must schedule a Readiness Review presentation, which is a face-to-face review by three APRs to determine whether you have a grasp of the knowledge, skills and abilities required to pass the comprehensive examination.
3. Prior to the Readiness Review presentation, you must complete a Readiness Review Questionnaire -- that addresses: your organization and position in public relations; overall experience; and assessment of readiness to pass the computer-based written examination.
4. Successfully pass a comprehensive examination that is administered at numerous Prometric Testing Centers around the nation.

For more details:

http://www.prsa.org/PD/apr/index.html?WT.ac=PD_APRTopNav



Terrorist attacks

USA Sep 11 **India Nov 26**



***Message from Arthur Yann, Vice President, Public Relations,
Public Relations Society of America, 33 Maiden Lane, 11th Fl.,
New York, NY 10038***

“Let me say, on behalf of PRSA, that our hearts go out to the people of India and especially to the friends and families of those impacted directly by the Mumbai terror attack. As New Yorkers, we can empathize with the feelings of pain, anger and insecurity that you must be experiencing. All good wishes to you and your staff as you come together to heal and move past this most serious tragedy.”

Together let us all fight against terrorism globally. As communicators, we have great role in spreading the message of peace and confidence – Editorial Team



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