

The Anthony J. Fulginiti  
PRSSA chapter presents

# PRomo

Winter 2022/2023: Issue 3



## Chapter Members Attend National Conference

In November PRSSA chapter members embarked on a trip to Dallas to attend a conference known as “ICON.” At ICON, our PRSSA students were able to meet with other college students from across the country for a weekend of networking and learning from experienced speakers. The

information they gained from each of the speakers was invaluable. For those who did not attend, read about their experiences here. This PRomo will feature those very same stories in the hopes that other students will have the opportunity to learn something as well.

Looking for a way to get involved in PRSSA? Reach out to the editor Madison Laganella ([Lagane46@students.rowan.edu](mailto:Lagane46@students.rowan.edu)) to write for an upcoming PRomo.

# President's Piece



By Erica Gerold,  
AJF-PRSSA President

Happy winter! In November, eight of our members attended ICON 2022, celebrating PRSA's 75th anniversary in Grapevine, TX. ICON is an event bringing public relations/communications students and professionals from around the world together for professional development and networking. For the first time in person since COVID, we heard from many industry professionals about their experiences and best practices through sessions and networking events.

Keep on reading to hear about our experiences at ICON, and don't forget to attend our next PRSSA meeting on February 8th.

---

Follow Us!



**Instagram**

@rowanprssa  
@rowanpraction

**Twitter**

@rowanprssa  
@rowanpraction



**Facebook**

RowanPRSSA  
RowanUniversityPraction

**LinkedIn**

AJF PRSSA Rowan



---

“Many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising.” – Mark Twain

# Kent Landers of Hilton Gives Keynote Address

By: Erica Gerold

Kent Landers, APR, is Vice President – Corporate Communications for Hilton. He is based at the company’s global headquarters in McLean, VA and leads efforts to strengthen and protect Hilton’s global reputation, including overseeing financial, development and enterprise communications, issues and crisis management, and global media relations.

ICON 2022 opened with Kent Landers’ keynote address. He told us this industry is not the same as it was five years ago, or 25 years ago. We live in a very volatile world, and Landers’ brought emphasis to this by comparing strategic communications to the military acronym VUCA, standing for volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous.

- **Volatile:** Prove your worth in really complex times. COVID-19, Sept. 11, and the Challenger explosion are all examples of this.
- **Uncertain:** No matter the decision made, you cannot see what is going to happen. When navigating uncertainty, use the power of your company/brand to help make a difference.
- **Complex:** We serve so many different stakeholders with differing perspectives. Knowing when to engage or disengage as expected to is an example of complex PR.
- **Ambiguous:** Step back, remove your bias, and see the situation objectively from other audiences’ points of view. Value connecting the dots.

In these volatile, uncertain, and ambiguous moments, Landers’ bring up a valid point: how do you find your purpose? He noted purpose will change as you grow throughout your career. Your purpose reading this article as a college student may simply be to get a job, and this is okay!

Landers closed his address with ten tips for

entering the strategic communications field:

- Have your purpose. His is having both a family and a fulfilling career.
- Master the skills of entry. Two skills mentioned were writing and the willingness to learn and grow.
- Hire your boss. Ask yourself, “Will this leader be my mentor? Will they want me to succeed?”
- Be a student of the world.
- Show up, and sit up front and in person. Landers shared, “Being together is where it is at. It will further your career.”
- Use youth to your advantage. The workplace is objectively older and not as proficient in fields such as technology.
- Be comfortable with the uncomfortable. Lots of new professionals feel this way.
- Own your mistakes. Try, and admit failure.
- Be empathetic. Be humble.
- Have fun. Find an industry you love that makes you want to come to work. Your job is easier if you love your brand.

Landers advice for undergraduates left students knowing how to stay encouraged in the workplace and remember everything is a journey. As long as you are purposeful about going into an environment you value, you will thrive as professionals in this industry.



Erica presenting annual National Organ Donor Awareness Competitions awards

# From the Inside Out: Building Your Online Brand Presence

By: Erica Gerold

What does it take for a brand to be authentic? It is a constant cycle of self-awareness, authenticity, and creativity. It all starts with you.

Being self-aware takes uncovering your consciousness. Acknowledging your belief system is challenging but urgent. Identifying your own top values will align with your career trajectory. All of the decisions you make root in the desire to align and knowing this allows you to live your most authentic life. You then become coordinated to eagerly support others' values and unlock creativity, getting closer to success.

In owning authenticity, you come to the understanding that self-esteem does not depend on being liked. Look at what you share online and ask yourself, "Is this the real me?". You will feel it, and this is a growth mindset. The courage to be curious and stop and see the bigger picture will result in uncompromising integrity and responsibility.

Creativity is achieved through two simple actions: reading and writing. Leaders are readers, and doing so opens the flow of your consciousness. Reading others' work will inspire you to write something new and open your mind to be a better problem solver and divergent thinker.

What do you do once you complete this cycle?

Continue to be yourself, connect, and create and share. This will deepen your relationship with your presence. After all, you are an extension of your own brand.

---

## Upcoming Events

- Feb 15th - ProfAgency meeting
  - Feb 22nd - PRSSA meeting: Hillary Blum, Wyndham Hotels and Resorts
  - March 1st - Spring dues deadline
  - March 1st - ProfAgency meeting
  - March 8th - PRSSA meeting: President's Panel
  - March 15th - ProfAgency meeting
  - March 22nd - PRSSA meeting: Christopher Tygar, Turner PR
  - March 29th - ProfAgency meeting: Speed Networking
  - April 5th - PRSSA meeting: David Halbert, AMC Networks
  - April 12th - ProfAgency meeting
-



# Creating a Classic: PepsiCo's Communication Strategy



By: Bari Evans

After attending a Q & A session with (PepsiCo Director of External Communications) Ashley Capps it became clear that the key factor to thriving is CREATIVITY !!! For starters, since PepsiCo is owned and operated by Frito Lay, they have 100+ brands to partner with. Megan Thee Stallion fronted the 2022 Super Bowl spot for Flamin' Hot Cheetos and Doritos. Ashley mentioned the driving force behind signing Megan was her love for the Flamin' Hot Cheetos since her teenage days. The creative team ran with it.

Capps describes her team's model when operating with A-list celebrities as Thoughts 2 Action. Having meaningful conversations about both parties' agendas, then following up with action is what has led to PepsiCo's constant success. The most important concept Capps talked about was the reality of potential failure. She ended her session by stating, " failure is not possible when confidence and creativity are the roots of celebrity collaboration



Above: Angie takes a selfie with Rachel and Cassandra  
Below: Angie and Erica with EVP of Corporate Brand and Reputation, Brooke Taylor



# Key Takeaways from Fireside Chat: Branding and Corporate Reputation



By: Rachel Rumsby

The “Fireside Chat: Branding and Corporate Reputation” session was a chat between Brooke Taylor, Executive Vice President of Corporate Brand & Reputation at Edelman, and Michelle Olson, Chief Executive Officer at Lambert. Here are some key takeaways from that session.

As professional communicators, it is our responsibility to stand up to CEOs when it comes to communicating with their publics.

## How to Stand Up to CEOs

- Be brave. Most leaders do not want “yes people” as their advisors.
- Have the data and research to back up your recommendations.
- Use if/then statements. Cause and effect comparisons go a long way.
- Look at all the risks and angles of a situation.

## What to Say to a CEO

- Younger generations buy with their beliefs. Keeping this in mind, companies should work within what their stakeholders want and believe. Companies

should only comment on issues that matter to their brand, not on every single issue. Stakeholders expect you to be consistent, but take risks and take a stand on issues that matter to them.

- Companies should not just make a statement. It is important to stay true to the company’s brand. Ask yourself what the brand stands for, then decide quickly what to say.
- Above all else, be what your stakeholders want you to be.

## Some Companies Doing It Right

- Patagonia-when the company shut down its stores for the election-the company showed its stakeholders that voting is important to Patagonia.
- REI and its “#OptOutside” campaign- The company shut down all REI stores on Black Friday while encouraging all customers and stakeholders to get outside on the holiday weekend. The company has conducted this campaign since 2015.

---

## Contributors:

Erica Gerold

Bari Evans

Rachel Rumsby

Romelo Handy

Dawn Fogelin

Kassandra Boyce

Max Mendez

---

# Key Takeaways From "A Behind-the-Scenes Look into Agency Life"

By: Rachel Rumsby

The "A Behind-the-Scenes Look into Agency Life" panel was one of the first sessions I attended at ICON 2023. Amiso George, a professor at Texas Christian University, moderated the panel, which was made up of Jennifer Little, Executive Vice President of BCW Dallas, Scott Pansky, Co-founder and Senior Partner of Allison+Partners, and Valerie Beesley, Vice President of Finn Partners. Here are my key takeaways from the session.

## Entry-Level and Internship Interviews

Panelists advised they are looking for candidates with passion and motivation for public relations. When you interview for a role, they want you to show them how passionate you are. They want to see how creative, committed and results-oriented you are. Do your homework about the agency you are interviewing with. Show you are knowledgeable about the clients and the agency. On that same point, interviews are as much about you finding out about your potential employer, as much as it is about them finding out about you. Make sure you are asking questions to ensure a proper match between you, potential mentors and the people you will work with within the role.

## Resumes

Scott Pansky shared some insight into what employers look for in a resume. He says hirers care about the internships you have had, but they care most about what you did at the internships. They want to know what clients you worked with and what results you delivered for those clients.

## Informational Interviews

Scott also highlighted informational interviews as a great way to learn about life in the agency world.

These meetings allow you to build relationships, learn about the person you are interested in a job with down the line and ask questions. However, it is important to have a learning mindset, and not expect a job to come out of the interview.

## Networking

Jennifer Little underscored the importance of networking. She shared that many of her jobs have come out of personal connections, and she has hired many personal connections she has made. Jennifer also stressed the importance of maintaining the contacts you make while networking and checking in once in a while, not just when you are looking for a job.

## The Future of Public Relations

To summarize, the panelists are preparing for a future of more integrated campaigns and changing social media. Public relations is morphing more into strategic communication, rather than sticking to traditional public relations.

## Advice

The panelists left the audience with a few pieces of advice. First, be curious, and care. Second, don't be shy, and participate early. Third, find mentorship. The panel recommended [netnetsynergy.com](https://www.netnetsynergy.com) as a place to find mentorship and internship opportunities. Finally, give yourself grace, and be okay with mistakes.





# Leading with the Heart First, All About Being A Leader with Authenticity



By: Romelo Handy

During this year's ICON conference, one particular session which stood out from the others was about authenticity (being who you are truly and not choosing to hide your character).

From a leadership perspective, it provided valuable insight into how a leader should act vs presumptions as to how a leader acts in person. Leadership is something people learn through experience instead of it being taught. Insight can be passed down from one to another, but in terms of choosing to lead you to develop the skill.

Being authentic is not something people can learn overnight, it does not just happen. It's a mindset you shape, mold and develop over time. A strong leader is someone who is empathetic with those they work with. This was insight provided during the session, something incredibly important to remember as well. Leading meetings every week is easy, but it's connecting to the student body which can be difficult. This session helped to convey knowledge on how to better connect with others.

Managers appreciate employees who they consider to be authentic. It reinforces the idea that people want to relate to those they see as leaders.



Dawn and Erica with Heide Harrell, a champion for PRSSA

---

## Editors:

Madison Laganella  
Dr. Suzanne FitzGerald  
Professor  
Nancy Reign-Garron

---



# When Words Take Flight: Communications at Delta



**By: Dawn Fogelin**

The Delta's Gina Laughlin and Savannah Huddleston focused on how Delta survived and came back from COVID. This was the key takeaway and the lesson professionals learned during the pandemic.

Delta timeline

2019: Delta is at its highest point

2020: Delta is at its lowest point

2021: Back with record demand

Lessons Learned from the Pandemic:

Communication is most important in a crisis.

- Know your audience, create and maintain channels measure your communication, use good stories, say thank you

The importance of DEI during a crisis.

- Find your audiences, meet them, let them see themselves in communication, have understanding and compassion for their perspectives

Lean on trusted leaders.

- Establish trusted relations early, know who, when, and where leaders are during the crisis.
- Leaders should over communicate.

Big Takeaways:

- Willingness to make sacrifices with finances
- Connecting the dots of influential people is the best way to attack a crisis quickly
- Pivoting quickly when needed



Dawn, Rachel and Erica taking a funny photo

**“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently.” – Warren Buffet**

# Crisis Communication: Beyond the Classroom

**By: Dawn Fogelin**

During this chat, we heard from Teresa Henderson and Claire Gilpin from BCW Global. This session was a little more informal than the rest and it felt a lot more like a conversation than anything else. While there are pages and pages of notes from the chat, below are some of the major takeaways.

- During a crisis, someone still needs to run the business.
- Keep internal audiences informed, but not too informed that there is the risk of a leak occurring.
- Track the News!
- Have an up-to-date crisis playbook.
- Crisis and Balance
  - Work in balance, but stay true to needing time off.
  - Push back and set your own personal boundaries.
  - Crisis is harder, but if you can't go call your team and let them handle it, then it will be 10 times harder.
- When stakeholders call, acknowledge that you are aware of the crisis at hand. Watch yourself and don't give out too many details.



From left to right: Max Mendez, Rachel Rumsby, Dawn Fogelin, Erica Gerold, Bari Evans, Kassandra Boyce, Angie Murillo, and Romelo Handy all pose for a group photo



# Class on Building Brand Awareness for Profit and Purpose



**By: Kasandra Boyce**

Aaron Kwittken, founder and CEO of PRophet- the first A.I. driven “data-as-a-service” media prediction platform in the industry- spoke at PRSA’s 2022 Icon, and shared valuable insight that will prove critical to new and aspiring industry professionals. I, along with other students who are part of the PRSSA at Rowan had the honor of attending Aaron Kwittken’s workshop, “Class on Building Brand Awareness for Profit and Purpose” on November 12th, 2022. He began his seminar with a list of tips he had discovered in his time in the field of public relations that he believed to be important to share.

The first of his advice was to always be in person as opposed to virtual. While being virtual may be more convenient and comfortable, it eradicates the possibility of building relationships with coworkers and employers and destroys a sense of community. Furthermore, it will diminish in-person networking abilities, and will discourage a strong work ethic.

The next point he highlighted was that as people with free will, we have full authority in choosing whom to work for. Aaron Kwittken was adamant that if a company’s purpose does not align with your own morals and beliefs, it is your responsibility to find a company that does, as working for a company with a purpose that fundamentally differs from your own does not make sense.

He also touched on topics of being open-minded, ready to learn, and prepared for change. This segment had been both advice for being a professional in public relations, but also advice for life in general. As time goes on, change will never cease, so to grow stagnant is to fall behind.

One of the final pieces of advice shared with us before he moved on in his seminar is to always prioritize mental and physical health above all else. He shared his experiences of being a young, inexperienced professional in the industry, and if you do not take the steps to ensure your well-being, the work-life balance may become skewed. He was adamant that as an employee of a company, it should serve your best interest as well as the company's.

The latter portion of this workshop was focused around creating a purpose statement, adhering to the purpose, and functioning within society whilst upholding said purpose. A company that has a purpose it does not properly execute is not authentic to the brand. As the commonly known saying goes, “actions speak louder than words.” A company consistently failing to execute its purpose is regarded more poorly than a company that is acting without any purpose. That is why the purpose must not be only purposeful, but realistic as well.



# Mastermind Methodologies: Accelerate Your Success

By: Kasandra Boyce

Mastermind Methodology: Accelerate Your Success, held by Jon Kovach, discussed the importance of acting headfirst, and without hesitation. Hosted on November 13th, 2022, Kovach shared with the group his experience in the public relations profession, but more importantly, his experiences in life. Since he was young, he took steps to get what he wanted. At age 14, he mowed lawns for money. By 16, he started a DJ company because he had seen a need and provided. Any by 2016, he found himself working a job that was conventionally perfect in every way- but it did not feel right to him, so he left to pursue something else. All of this was not said without purpose, however, as the reason he shared this was to convey the message that in order to get what you want, you must chase it.

He made four key points during his seminar that he had learned through experience. The first was to have a personal accountability system to uphold integrity. The second was to hold your accountability partners accountable. The third was to create professional systems- or ways to improve oneself. The fourth was to be a mastermind, or to tap into your brain with someone else to pool knowledge, information, resources, and ideas. Doing things completely on your own will prove to be ineffective when compared to working with someone else that has a common goal.

Outside of these points, he repeated the phrase, “You can have everything you want in life if you help others get what they want first,”

(Zig Ziegler). The wording is unclear, so he explained this meant that in helping others, you will find your path. Helping others can open new doorways, create new connections, or even lead to realizations that had not existed prior.

Another point he was adamant on instilling was to have fun. As simple as this may seem, it is important to do. Having fun can lead to the best creations and ideas. Kovach also mentioned that it is important to be true to yourself, regardless of what everyone else is thinking or doing. This pairs with his message of having fun, because if you’re truly having fun, you are not caring about what others may think. That is how you become outside of the box.

Overall, his seminar was highly engaging, exciting, and motivational. While not much new or unique information was shared, hearing his story of how he came to be where he is, and what he did to achieve it is inspiring. His seminar shed light on what most people already know but fail to see. It is what most people are taught since they are young but lose when they try too hard to conform and follow the rules. His main message was to have fun, chase what you want, and to be the best you that you can be.



2022 ICON logo

Our Upcoming PRomo:  
Sports and Entertainment

# “Building Online Presence” by Heather Bermudez



**By: Max Mendez**

As young adults we spend most of our time online, but many of us have a subpar online presence. This is what Heather emphasized in her presentation. What if we were able to change that? When setting up your online presence you want to be self-aware: Both consciously and unconsciously, you need to connect to your audience. All of this falls under defining who you are and what niche you want to fit into. When having that niche established you have to think about what you can contribute. After having that you need to make connections with other creators with whom you have the same interest and strengthen that bond between you.

After having your presence established you need to be able to show off what you can offer. That is when you create a portfolio. Making your own brand and sharing the content you make will only separate you and raise your value higher. Alongside all those tips you can not forget the simple thing which is to learn from the events you go through. Be yourself, not focus on what others do. Lastly,

be curious and ask questions! “There’s no such thing as a stupid question” states that the quest for knowledge includes failure. Because one person knows less than others, he/she should not be afraid to ask rather than pretend to know.



Erica, Rachel and Dawn take a photo showing off their PR/Ad shirts

**"Publicity is a great purifier because it sets in action the forces of public opinion, and in this country public opinion controls the courses of the nation." – Charles Evans Hughes**