
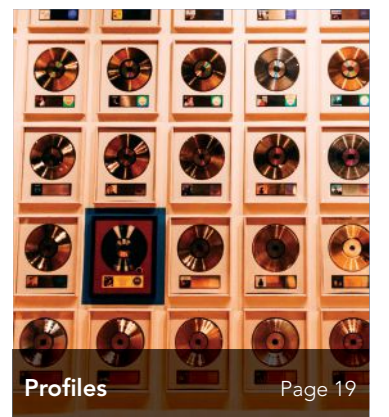
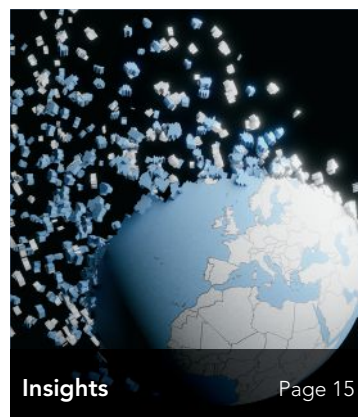
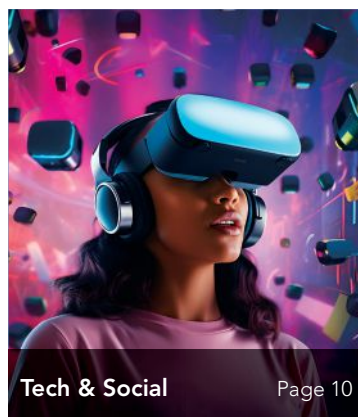


PRSA  
**STRATEGIES  
& TACTICS**



# Immerse Yourself

A Year-End Look at Tech



# GLOBAL ISSUES. GLOBAL CITIZENS. GLOBAL CAREERS.

*Ranked in the Top 5 "Best Online Master's" Public Relations and Communication programs by BestColleges.com, 2022*

Now more than ever, there is a growing need for strategic, effective and empathetic communicators - - communicators who are ready to listen and respond to crises and issues impacting our world. Gain a global perspective in strategic communications and become a socially responsible leader and innovator at the highest levels of corporate, government and non-profit organizations -- **all within 12 months, from anywhere in the world.**

## **PRSA Member Exclusive:**

To ease some of the challenges that these last few years have generated and help you take the next step in earning your master's degree, we're waiving all application fees.

To take advantage of this option, email [gsc@fiu.edu](mailto:gsc@fiu.edu) or scan below.



# FIU

## Communication

**Master's in Global Strategic Communications**

@FIUGSC | [carta.fiu.edu/GSC](http://carta.fiu.edu/GSC) | [gsc@fiu.edu](mailto:gsc@fiu.edu)

## Editor's Corner

As of this writing, we are just a few weeks past the conclusion of ICON 2023, which took place at the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center in Nashville, Tenn.

I enjoyed this year's conference and appreciated the opportunity to catch up with many attendees. We're continuing to share insights from Nashville, including a quick recap of highlights on Pages 8-9 in this issue.

In addition, we're posting Q&As with several thought leaders who spoke at PRSA's ICON on Oct. 13-15. Visit PRsay for interviews with Amanda Brooks, director of communications, ESPN; Alex Ebanks, vice president of communications, Essence Ventures; Gina Pesko Laughlin, vice president of global employee communications, Delta Air Lines; and Barbara M. Agrait, senior PR manager of global media relations, Amazon.

While at the Opryland, we also hosted two episodes of *Strategies & Tactics Live*. The first, on Oct. 16, featured Ray Day, APR, vice chair at Stagwell, and PRSA's chair-elect for 2024. The second episode, which took place on Oct. 17, welcomed Jen Hartmann, global director of strategic public relations and enterprise social media at John Deere. For those who missed these insightful discussions, you can watch them on the PRSA LinkedIn page under the "Events" section.

### Planning for 2024

I'll close out my last editor's note for 2023 with a look ahead to next year. I'm sharing our 2024 content calendar here.

We welcome articles that cover a range of topics, including but not limited to:

- ➔ In-depth exploration of current issues
- ➔ Insights into emerging technologies that may impact or are changing the comms/PR profession
- ➔ Timely analysis of news affecting the realm of communications and communicators
- ➔ Thoughtful reflections on professional growth and development

Some popular topics our members find engaging are crisis management, employee communications, DEI, measurement, storytelling and the evolving landscape of hybrid-remote work.

Please note that all submitted articles require approval from our editorial team before publication. We encourage a writing style that is engaging and free of jargon, ensuring accessibility to a wide audience. The length of articles can range from 600 to 1,000 words, though the final word count will be determined by the editorial team. Keep in mind that deadlines are roughly two months in advance of the publication date.

Please let us know if you'd like to write for the paper or for PRsay in the New Year. You may send your story ideas to us at john.elsasser@prsa.org and amy.jacques@prsa.org.

Thank you for considering our editorial vehicles as a platform for your valuable

insights and perspectives.

As the holiday season rapidly approaches, we send our best wishes to you and your families. Your membership in PRSA and your dedication to enhancing the communications profession are greatly appreciated! ❖



@JohnElsasser



#### Editor-in-Chief

JOHN ELSASSER  
212.460.1419  
john.elsasser@prsa.org

#### Website

www.prsa.org/SandT

#### Art Director

ERIKA KENDRA  
ekendra13@gmail.com

#### Managing Editor

AMY JACQUES  
212.460.0308  
amy.jacques@prsa.org

#### Advertising

JAYSON GOLDBERG  
917.733.3355  
j.goldberg@jamesgelliott.com

#### Contributors

Greg Beaubien  
Rob Biesenbach  
Ken Jacobs  
Mark Mohammadpour, APR  
Christina Stokes  
Melissa Vela-Williamson, APR

#### Nonmember Subscriptions

212.460.1400 (prompt 1)

#### Twitter

@PRSA\_tactics

#### Editorial Offices

120 Wall Street, Floor 21  
New York, NY 10005

*Strategies & Tactics* (ISSN 2576-2028) is published 10 times per year by the Public Relations Society of America, 120 Wall Street, Floor 21, New York, NY 10005. November/December 2023. Volume 6, Number 10.

Nonmember domestic subscription rate: \$125 a year. One-year rate for Canada \$175. Subscriptions must be paid in U.S. funds with the check drawn on a U.S. bank. Single copies \$15 each. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to PRSA, *Strategies & Tactics*, 120 Wall Street, Floor 21, New York, NY 10005. Periodical postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing office. Copyright 2023 by Public Relations Society of America.

Cover Art: andriy onufriyenko

## 2024 Editorial Calendar

**January** — Preview 2024

**February** — Writing & Storytelling

**March** — Employee Engagement

**April** — Professional Growth

**May** — Crisis Management

**June/July** — Culture & Well-Being

**August** — Travel & Tourism

**September** — PR's Next Generation

**October** — DEI

**November/December** — Leadership Voices

## Ray Day, APR, to Serve as 2024 Chair-Elect

PRSA announced the individuals elected to its 2024 Board of Directors.

On Oct. 14, the delegates of the 2023 Leadership Assembly elected Ray Day, APR, as chair-elect and eight members to serve in officer and director positions beginning on Jan. 1.

"Ray brings to PRSA an extensive background in communications and business and experience working with multinational organizations," said Michelle Olson, APR, 2023 Nominating Committee chair. "He will be a great influence on the future of PRSA and the profession, and his contributions will benefit all of our members."

#### Officers (one-year term):

➔ Chair-elect: **Ray Day, APR**

➔ Treasurer: **Jessica M. Graham,**

**APR, Fellow PRSA**

➔ Secretary: **Sam Sims, APR,**

**Fellow PRSA**

#### Directors (two-year term):

➔ Midwest District Director:

**Jason J. Sprenger, APR**

➔ Southeast District Director:

**John Gregory Clemons, APR**

➔ Southwest District Director:



**Patricia "Reace" Alvarenga Smith, APR**

➔ Sunshine District Director:

**Christina Morton, APR**

➔ North Pacific District: **Janelle**

**Guthrie, APR, Fellow PRSA**

➔ Director At-Large: **Michael A.**

**Brown Sr.**

In his role as vice chair of Stagwell, which he joined in February 2020, Day leads the integration, innovation and growth of Stagwell's more than 70 global agencies.

He has more than three decades of experience and insights as a chief communications officer. Prior to Stagwell, he served as IBM's CCO, leading the company's global Communications and Corporate Citizenship teams in more than 170 countries. Before IBM, Day was group vice president of communications and served 28 years with Ford.

## Honoring the 2023 PRSA Individual Award Recipients

PRSA presented five individual awards during ICON 2023 in Nashville, Tenn., on Oct. 15-17 honoring members who have served the organization with distinction and made a difference in the PR profession.

➔ Gold Anvil Award: **Gary D. McCormick, APR, Fellow PRSA**

➔ Patrick Jackson Award for Distinguished Service to PRSA: **Tony D'Angelo, APR, Fellow PRSA**

➔ Outstanding Educator Award: **Alisa Agozzino, Ph.D., APR**



➔ Atlas Award for Lifetime Achievement in International Public Relations: **Rachana Chowdhary**

➔ D. Parke Gibson Award: **Chuck Wallington, Ph.D.**

Please visit the PRSA Newsroom for more information on this year's recipients.

## 2024 Anvil Awards Now Open for Entries

PRSA is now accepting entries for the 2024 Anvil Awards. And next year marks the 80th anniversary of the premier industry award competition.

So start thinking about which campaigns and projects to enter and spotlight the impact your work has made. Plus, early entrants enjoy significant savings on their entry fees.

Here are the 2024 deadlines for entry:

- Early: Jan. 18
- Regular: Feb. 1
- Final: Feb. 15

Silver Anvils single out strategic campaigns in a wide variety of categories, while Bronze Anvils honor specific tactics. Remember, to streamline the entry process, you can submit your Silver and Bronze Anvil Entries together on the same entry form.

At least some part of the work must have occurred during the period Feb 1, 2022 – Feb 1, 2024, though the program must have been initiated no earlier than Jan 1, 2022.

You can now download the 2024 Anvils entry kit at the PRSA website.

## What's Trending

What people were talking about on social media at #PRSAICON...



**@chrismnation** Having a blast at the @PRSA national conference in Nashville. Great connections, industry content and insights.

**@meadowbailey** Cheers to @alaskaegan for her leadership of #prsa! "We are a community of ethical communications professionals building for tomorrow, today." I've had the incredible honor to work with her in Alaska and I'm so proud!

**@mrsabrandyjones** #AI is undoubtedly the key topic on PR pros minds. One take on the topic is that AI will complement the work we do and help increase efficiencies for more strategic efforts, rather than a replacement for the profession.

**@JFritzPR** "Curiosity is a skill & a superpower," @michele\_norris. Every time you encounter someone new or diff. you are changed so let's listen & authentically learn to understand one another

**@carriestrehlau** Writer, reporter & running buddy of Malcolm Gladwell, @davidepstein: We have to be more thoughtful of how to cross-pollinate information.



kelsdav1  
Nashville, Tennessee



27 likes

kelsdav1 Had an incredible time in Nashville for the @prsnational's #ICON2023 national conference. Learned many lessons from the amazing speakers, networked, made new friends, ate amazing food, and spent some time being a tourist. Make sure you watch the video to see @mrsgrimes91 rocking out with the best of them. 🎶 Until next time Nashville. 🍷



### What was your top takeaway from ICON?

"The emergence of the communication engineer & how that will restructure our profession & European legislation coming about disclosure & AI."  
— Jessica Graham, APR, Fellow PRSA

"The RACE, 6 words, session was FANTASTIC!"  
— Patrece J. Johnson

"The key to building trust is authenticity. The variety of sessions & presenters was excellent. The 3-day event was packed with relevant, useful subject matter from PR consultant bootcamp to digital storytelling, AI in PR, DEI & social media success. Looking forward to ICON 2024 in Anaheim!"  
— Brendalyn Carpenter Player

## In Brief

### Poll Yields 'Grim Assessment' of Public Trust in News Media

The share of Americans who have zero confidence in the news media has surpassed the percentage who trust the media a great deal or a fair amount, a recent Gallup poll finds.



Just 32% of Americans say they trust the mass media "a great deal" or "a fair amount" to report the news in a fair and accurate way,

the research finds. Another 29% say they have "not very much" trust in the news media, while a record-high 39% say they have "none at all," which Gallup calls its grimmest assessment of the media since it first asked the question in 1972.

In the 1970s, public trust in the news media ranged from 68% to 72%. By 2004, it had fallen to 44% and has not risen above 47% since 2005, Gallup reports. Among Democrats polled, trust in the media fell 12 points over the past year, to 58%, compared to 11% among Republicans and 29% among independents.

### Communication From Leaders Can Benefit Company Culture, Study Finds

Communication from company leaders can establish a workplace culture that values respect and recognition, which in turn increases employee engagement and well-being, a new study says.

Researchers at the University of Missouri surveyed 1,512 full-time working adults, split almost evenly between men and women. Participants were asked



to assess their supervisors' communications, the level of respect in their workplace and whether individual employees receive recognition. Positive communication from leaders was associated with increased employee

perceptions of a respectful workplace culture and of recognition for individual achievements, the study found.

Recognizing individual employees for their work is associated with better employee outcomes such as higher job engagement, well-being and resilience, while also helping to foster a culture in which employees respect one another's contributions, the study's authors wrote.

Such findings support the conclusions of an earlier study by the same research team, which found that workers ages 21-34 value respectful workplace communication more than they value trendy workplace perks.

### Many CEOs Expect Return to In-Office Work, But Employees Differ

A majority of CEOs (64%) predicts a full return to in-office work by the end of 2026, new research from KPMG finds. Only 7% of CEOs surveyed believe full-time remote work will continue long-term. According to KPMG, 87 percent of CEOs say they're likely to reward employees who come into the office with favorable assignments, raises or promotions.



But as the Society for Human Resource Management writes, many office employees don't want to work the pre-pandemic way. Sara Murdock, an executive at architectural firm Steinberg Hart, said the company's 140 employees can work remotely but are requested to "be physically present during times that we are interacting with one another or in interactive-learning mode."

Amanda Webster, chief operating officer of Fund&Grow, a Florida-based lending program with 55 employees, said remote work "had a negative impact on employee morale and their ability to separate work and home." Now she only allows remote work for medical accommodations and when approved in advance.

### Hybrid Workers Stopping by Office for Coffee, Then Leaving

In a new workplace trend dubbed "coffee badging," hybrid-work employees go into the office just long enough to socialize with co-workers or grab coffee, before leaving again.

As CFO.com reports, in a survey by conferencing platform Owl Labs, 58% of hybrid-work respondents say they have engaged in coffee badging. Only 8% said they don't coffee-badge, but would like to in the future.



According to the survey, baby boomers were least likely to coffee-badge at work. Millennials were the generation most likely to coffee-badge, with 63% admitting they show up in the office for the sake of being seen.

Nearly 29% of respondents said that to work in the office regularly they would expect a pay increase to offset their commuting costs. A quarter indicated they would forfeit 15% of their annual salary in exchange for flexible working conditions.

According to Owl Labs, 68% of managers said their remote- and hybrid-work employees are missing out on impromptu or informal opportunities for feedback. — Greg Beaubien

66% of comms pros say that producing measurable results is critical to increasing the value of PR among stakeholders.

— Muck Rack

## Connect With Us Online

- Read the online version of *Strategies & Tactics* and view the digital flipbook: [prsa.org/SandT](https://prsa.org/SandT)
- Read the latest posts on our PRsay blog: [prsay.prsa.org](https://prsay.prsa.org)
- Follow us on X: @PRSAactics
- Sign up for our daily *Issues & Trends* e-newsletter, and the e-version of *Strategies & Tactics*, via your communications preferences: [prsa.org/MyPRSA/Profile](https://prsa.org/MyPRSA/Profile)
- Become a PRSA member: [prsa.org/JoinUs](https://prsa.org/JoinUs)
- Change your address and update your contact information: [prsa.org/MyPRSA/Profile](https://prsa.org/MyPRSA/Profile)
- Learn how to become a corporate or university sponsor: [prsa.org/Network/Partnerships](https://prsa.org/Network/Partnerships)



# The Explainer

## How to Streamline Your Workflow and Maximize Productivity

If you struggle with multitasking and often get distracted, then here are a few tips and tricks to help you simplify things, manage your time and work more efficiently.

One of the first steps to taking control of your time and maintaining focus is to batch your emails. Pick two specific times a day for your email to be delivered to your inbox and look at it during those windows, suggests an article from *Entrepreneur*.

Set up filters for newsletters or less pressing communications, and unsubscribe to those that no longer serve you, allowing you to prioritize the most important emails.

"Context-switching between different types of tasks can be mentally taxing and inefficient," says the article. Try to group similar projects and activities in the same time frame to save bandwidth.

Turn off your phone, social media, and Slack or Teams notifications while working or you'll risk constant interruptions. Silencing these will increase productivity and help you maintain concentration and momentum.

Respond to your team's needs early in the day and prioritize their questions — rather than being a blocker — so that you don't hinder their work and you can both progress with your day.

Schedule as few meetings as possible and decline invitations if you feel like they are unnecessary or a poor use of your time. Figure out shorter, more efficient and meaningful ways to communicate, which can also help reduce meeting fatigue.

Try out an asynchronous communication platform, like threaded discussions in project management platforms or playing back videos and messages at twice the speed, says *Entrepreneur*. "This allows recipients to process and respond to information at their convenience, promoting a more flexible and productive workflow."

Practice using Slack or Teams for urgent matters only and encourage your team to do this as well. Then, everyone can focus on their work without worrying about constant notifications and monitoring.

Here are five ways to help you improve focus, minimize distractions and boost productivity. — Amy Jacques

- 1 Batch emails and create "unsubscribe" filters.
- 2 Group similar tasks together.
- 3 Silence notifications.
- 4 Prioritize communication and avoid being a blocker.
- 5 Limit meetings and embrace asynchronous communication.



new office

## By the Numbers



halfpoint

Deloitte's annual Holiday Retail Survey predicts consumer spending will top pre-pandemic levels in 2023, with the average shopper spending \$1,652 — a 14% increase over 2022's totals.

67% of U.S. adults say they understand little to nothing about what companies are doing with their personal data, up from 59% in 2022, Pew Research finds.



song\_about\_summer



hejill

Local sources of information today are the most trusted, according to Stagwell's Risk and Reputation Unit. Overall, 84% trust friends and family above all other sources.

78% of U.S. workers said an emphasis on healthy and sustainable workplaces would be moderately to extremely helpful for mental health, per a Mind Share Partners and Qualtrics report.



tanisspark



drazen

American teens spend an average of 4.8 hours on social media per day, a Gallup poll shows.



icemanti

## Dispatch From Montana

### POSTCARD



*"The current economic climate has created a trickle-down effect, putting a strain on many businesses. This has led to doing more with less, leaner business models and a reduction in marketing (and other) budgets. These limitations have encouraged Chapter members to lean on one another and PRSA National as a resource for professional growth, networking and idea generation and sharing."*

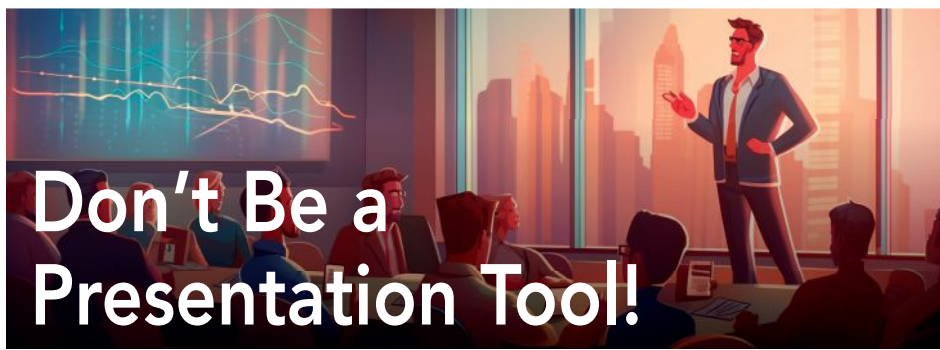
—Aly Eggart, MSPR, CATP  
Leisure Marketing Director, Visit Billings  
President, PRSA Montana Chapter



## Issues Trends

These were the most popular topics from our daily *Issues & Trends* e-newsletter in the past month.

- ▶▶ Universities struggle with responses to Israel-Hamas war
- ▶▶ Lawmakers shift on TikTok ban
- ▶▶ When your boss is younger than you
- ▶▶ Combating toxic workplaces
- ▶▶ CEOs discuss remote work
- ▶▶ The "flex-forward" approach to office days
- ▶▶ About the synthetic social network
- ▶▶ How cellphone etiquette has changed



By Rob Biesenbach

Of the countless valuable workplace lessons gifted to us by the television show “The Office,” this is a personal favorite:

**Michael:** “We’ll ask PowerPoint.”

**Oscar:** “Michael, this is a presentation tool.”

**Michael:** “You’re a presentation tool!”

Oscar is correct. PowerPoint is simply a tool like any other. And just as we wouldn’t hire a plumber based on the tools in their truck, nobody tunes in to a presenter for their slide deck.

What audiences want are the insights, ideas and solutions the speaker offers.

So don’t be a presentation tool. Put your PowerPoint in its proper place as a supplement, not a substitute, for your own knowledge and expertise. Here’s how.

### Avoid the multipurpose deck.

A Swiss Army knife is a handy tool that can slice, open or uncork practically anything. But a professional chef isn’t going to rely on it in their kitchen. They have specialized tools for different purposes.

But too often we force our slide deck to be multifunctional. It’s a preview document! It’s a handout! It’s a leave-behind! It’s a floor wax!

It can’t be all those things *and* be the right accompaniment to a presentation. Because if all the necessary information is on the screen, then your presence is superfluous.

For presentations, I create a modern, minimalist deck containing mostly images and headlines. For the handout, I create a simple outline of the key points.

Another approach is to put most of the verbiage and details in the notes section then print the presentation using the “notes” layout. You can give them a printout or send a PDF afterward.

Of course, fewer words means you really have to know your material — which you should, anyway!

### Make the slides a backdrop.

To mix metaphors, think of your slides as the supporting player and you as the star. The focus and attention should be on you, not the screen.

But when audiences are reading a bunch of words (and when speakers themselves turn to face the screen and read those very same words aloud) you’ve ceded your position in the spotlight.

Seth Godin once said, “Talking



about pollution in Houston? Instead of giving me four bullet points of EPA data, why not read the stats but show me a picture of a bunch of dead birds, some smog and even a diseased lung?”

All you need for most slides is a short headline and an evocative image that illustrates your point or provides an emotional underscore.

Now this may pose a challenge for highly technical content, but there is a solution: Present just *one* idea at a time. Whether it’s bullet points, columns of information or trendlines on a graph, build them one-by-one.

Because your audience can read much faster than you can speak. And if you have seven ideas on your slide, then they’re reading ahead instead of listening to what you’re saying. The message gets muddled.

### Talk like a human.

Refusing to be a presentation tool is about more than what’s on your slides; it’s about what you say.

Speak in normal conversational terms. That means rounding off numbers: If the slide says 32.74%, then say “nearly a third” or “about a third.” And scale your data: “the length of three football fields,” not “951 feet.”

For dates, approximate them: “about a decade ago” instead of “February 22, 2014.” Call things what they are instead of how they’re labeled: “purchasing” instead of “Enterprise Procurement & Contract Management Department.”

Finally, showcase your expertise. I compare it to the color commentator in a sports broadcast. They’re typically a former player or coach who provides the inside scoop, the texture, the stories.

So give them the color they’re looking for:

☞ “Here’s how this plays out in the real world...”

☞ “Of the five steps, I’ve found No. 3 to be the most critical...”

☞ “This reminds me of another company that had this same problem...”

Remember: You’re the expert. You’ve earned your place at the podium. Don’t settle for being a presentation tool! ❖

**Rob Biesenbach** helps leaders break free from death by PowerPoint, tell their story and communicate like humans should. He’s an in-demand speaker, workshop leader and coach, an award-winning communicator and a bestselling author. He’s worked with great organizations including AARP, Allstate, Caterpillar, Coca-Cola and Lockheed Martin.

# Influencing Culture Through Entertainment PR

By Melissa Vela-Williamson, APR

Popular culture is a part of how people relate to one another and feel connected to the times in which they live. Popular fashions, music and entertainment changes by decade and can even swing back around. (Scrunchies and high-waisted jeans are back in fashion at my daughter’s high school!)

With my PR practice, I work to elevate Latino voices and to integrate minorities into mainstream popular culture.

Gabriel Reyes is president of Reyes Entertainment in Los Angeles, a PR agency for entertainment and media clients, celebrities and brands. I asked him about his experience of working in celebrity and entertainment PR and the growing influence of Latinos on American popular culture.

### How did you come to specialize in entertainment PR?

I came to public relations in an accidental way. After a short stint as an actor in New York and doing several stereotypical roles, I realized that Latinos had an image problem and I decided to pursue a career in communications to help transform the image of Latinos in U.S. mainstream media.

I moved to Los Angeles and began my Hollywood career working for Latina producer Nely Galán. She was launching a production company devoted to creating entertainment content for Latinos in English, which was a novel concept during the early 1990s. I was so excited that I began writing letters to the media alerting them to the work we were doing.

News of our company caught fire, and soon, people were asking who was doing PR for Nely. I told her people wanted to hire me to do their PR. Nely said, “You’re fired. Go start your own company and I’ll be your first client.”

### What’s different about managing entertainment or celebrity PR than most people realize?

There are many differences between managing entertainment or celebrity PR. For example, if you’re representing a film project, then your duties are mainly to secure media placements and amplify awareness of the movie.

With celebrity PR, it gets more personal, such as securing designers and stylists to provide wardrobe and styling, hair and make-up professionals, guiding and advising celebrities on public stance and media-training them to be effective interviewees.



I met Xolo Maridueña from “Blue Beetle” recently and I felt for him since the Hollywood strike was preventing him from promoting the film — especially because this was the first live-action film to focus on a Latino superhero! What has been your perspective on the Hollywood strike?

My heart goes out to Xolo and everyone involved with “Blue Beetle.” While I am extremely proud of the first Latino superhero, I am sorry the release coincided with the strike and prevented the proper promotion for the film.

I also think there should be more Latino superheroes, if only by virtue of our numbers and influence on American society. Latinos are one of the youngest, fastest-growing and largest communities in the United States.

My perspective on the strike is that

it is sorely needed. The entertainment industry — like every other industry in this country — is severely unbalanced in terms of compensation. CEOs are taking in hundreds of millions in compensation while rank and file talent are paid very small amounts for

their work. In addition, new technologies are making it much more difficult for talent to keep control of their Intellectual Properties as well as image and likeness.

### Is there anything you’d like PR professionals to understand about celebrity or entertainment culture? Are there nuances or certain communication strategies we should be aware of?

I’d like PR professionals to understand that celebrity and entertainment culture is not the glamorous fantasy world they might imagine. In most cases, there is a difference between a celebrity’s public and private personas which may or may not coincide.

Your celebrity clients are not your friends. They expect you to work and be professional, not become one of their “squad.” If you accompany a celebrity client to an event, then it is work, not a social date. You shadow your client and control photos and interviews, and ensure her credentials and participation have been discussed and decided.

As a publicist, you think of every eventuality, and you leave no stone unturned. ❖

**Melissa Vela-Williamson, APR**, specializes in integrating public relations with DEI principles. She is an author, podcast host, and boutique firm owner. Connect with her at MVW Communications.





## Show Up for Yourself When No One Is Watching

Brian Jackson

By Mark Mohammadpour, APR, Fellow PRSA

The legacy of winning a significant PR award like a Bronze or Silver Anvil isn't just in the quantifiable metrics. Or the headlines. Or the executive kudos.

It's the planning. The last-minute changes. The managing of egos. The delay. The acceleration. The blood, sweat and tears.

These are often the aspects of the process most people forget about.

People don't talk about it at the award ceremony. Or in the celebratory social media post. But it's what you remember most when you hold the award.

And that's the same when it comes to changes to our well-being. In my case, that was my 150-pound weight-loss journey that started on a dark Friday night in December 2007.

The changes were one at a time. It was shifting breakfast options. Exercising a few more times weekly and not eating so late at night.

But no one was watching to help



monitor me. No one was waking me up at 5 a.m. to work out.

No one was telling me to swap sugary mochas for green tea. I was on my own.

But that's what I remember most about the journey. Not the compliments. Not the photos afterward. But the journey.

### Begin the journey

And that's what I want you to think about as we head into the holiday season. Start the journey now. Not Monday. Not Jan. 1. Today. Because I am Exhibit A that any positive change to your well-being is an extraordinary journey. And you want to experience those memorable journeys as soon as possible.

So, no matter what change you want to make for your well-being, there's no reason to wait for the New Year. Are you looking to save a few more dollars, lose a few more pounds or gain more sleep?

Start today, and in 60 days, you will feel so much better and so proud of the decision you made at this very moment.

Most of all, you'll look at specific days and reflect on how the choices you made had an impact.

Remember, it's the journey and the process, not the result, that you will remember most.

The journey starts with you. You're the author of your story; pick up your pen and get writing!

It's been an honor to serve as your Workplace Wellness columnist again this year. Thank you for the privilege. Have a wonderful holiday season, and may 2024 bring you and your family good health. ❖

**Mark Mohammadpour, APR, Fellow PRSA**, is a senior communications executive and employee well-being consultant. His company, Chasing the Sun, empowers PR professionals to prioritize their well-being so they can shine in the family room and the boardroom. Before launching Chasing the Sun, Mark was an executive at Weber Shandwick and Edelman, leading award-winning campaigns for Adobe, Microsoft, Samsung and the U.S. Army. Mark served as president of the PRSA Oregon Chapter in 2016.

### In Brief

A recent Forbes Health/OnePoll survey revealed a notable change in New Year's resolutions for 2024.

While fitness, weight loss and improved diets have traditionally dominated resolution lists, a significant shift toward prioritizing mental health has emerged.

The survey found that 45% of respondents considered an enhancement in mental well-being as their top New Year's goal, surpassing fitness (39%), weight loss (37%) and diet improvement (33%).

These findings reflect a cultural shift in Americans' wellness priorities, emphasizing that health encompasses more than just physical appearance and numbers on a scale.

## AI Tips for Job Seekers and Hiring Managers

By Christina Stokes



Fun fact: We have been using artificial intelligence (AI) to support us in the hunt for talent (and new jobs) for a long time!

Algorithms on career-focused social media platforms push the most appropriate candidates to hiring managers and jobs to seekers based on the information you have shared about yourself, your skills, your company, and so on. Even so, with the lightning-fast rise of ChatGPT, Bard and other AI platforms, conversation around the use of AI in our work and lives has been a hot topic.

Pew Research recently released a report regarding AI in Hiring and Evaluating Workers. Through their research, it was determined that some 62% of Americans think the use of AI in the workplace will have a major impact on workers over the next 20 years. They also noted that people are generally wary and uncertain of AI being used in hiring and assessing workers.

As the capabilities of AI become more refined and efficient, and as the use of these tools becomes more accessible and integrated, we should be open to embracing them, as long as we utilize them in a purposeful and ethical way.

### I am a job seeker. How should I use AI to support my search efforts?

➔ **Crafting résumés and cover letters:** Writing a great résumé and cover letter is a pain point for many job seekers throughout their careers. There are AI tools available now that can help you craft a résumé that best presents your experiences and capabilities. Grammarly is just one example of a solid AI writing assistant. If you've been having trouble getting responses to your applications, then consider trying one.

➔ **Tracking your applications:** Career-focused websites have AI widely incorporated to both push appropriate jobs your way, and they also have ways for you to track the applications you have sent. Huntr is a cool CRM that allows you to create job wishlists, take notes and keep track of contacts. Follow up (and follow through) is so much easier when you can stay organized.

➔ **Generating questions:** Most interviewers will ask, at some point in the conversation, "Do you have any questions for me?" It's never a good idea to

miss that opportunity, so come prepared! An AI chat bot can generate questions for you to bring into an interviewer. Paste the job description into the chat and ask the AI to create questions for you to bring to the hiring manager.

### I am a hiring manager. How will AI help me hire more efficiently?

➔ **Simplifying the application review:** At the end of the day, all hiring managers and talent acquisition professionals want is to find the best talent and fill open positions as quickly as possible. Think of the hours you have spent pouring through résumés and applications and imagine getting some of those precious minutes back. With AI tools, you can. LinkedIn, for example, has sophisticated tools available to recruiters that allow you to quickly whittle down your application pool based on qualifying factors.

➔ **Streamlining responses:** Auto-generated smart text has made replying to messages faster, and it's clear that those tools are rapidly improving. Consider automating some of the more routine

tasks by utilizing a chatbot to answer some standard questions from applicants. LinkedIn has recently rolled out AI-generated message responses. When used correctly, these tools can enhance your employer brand, too.

➔ **Embracing inclusivity:** There are incredible tools available that support hiring teams in diversifying their workforces by embracing inclusivity and removing barriers. Textio has a product that aids you in refining your job descriptions that may be inadvertently turning away candidates you want to reach by swapping in more inclusive language.

While there are so many great ways to use AI to support you in job seeking and hiring alike, I maintain that the human brain cannot be replicated. Our jobs are not being replaced. We can, instead, use these tools to work more quickly and efficiently. Experiment to find out what works, and what doesn't, for you and your teams. Finally, continue to be involved, thoughtful, cautious and honest when using any tool, not limited to AI. ❖

**Christina Stokes** is the senior vice president and director of talent acquisition at Rubenstein. She is passionate about refining and enhancing employee engagement, company culture, and diversity and inclusion efforts. Twitter: @NewYorkRoses.

# Meeting Up in Music City

Some 2,000 communications professionals and students came together at the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center in Nashville, Tenn., on Oct. 15-17 for ICON 2023.

Led by Board Chair Michelle Egan, APR, Fellow PRSA, the conference served as the backdrop for several concurrent PRSA events, which included PRSSA ICON 2023, the Health Academy Conference, Counselors to Higher Education Senior Summit and the Educators Academy Summit.

The General Sessions featured renowned writers and journalists Michele Norris and David Epstein. The Shindellas, a local musical trio, delivered a soulful performance before the Oct. 15 opening session, while Nashville Mayor Freddie O'Connell welcomed attendees before the Oct. 16 keynote address. There was also an immersive keynote salon titled, "AI in Communications: Today's Tools, Future Projections and the Ethical Frontier," moderated by PRSA Chair Linda Thomas Brooks.

There were ample social and networking opportunities, including the opening night reception featuring country music star Jake Hoot, season 17 winner of NBC's "The Voice."

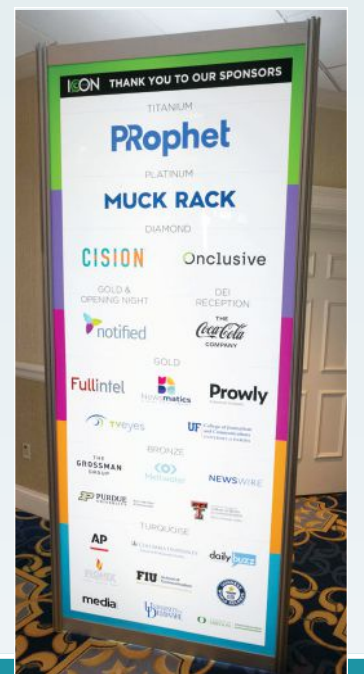
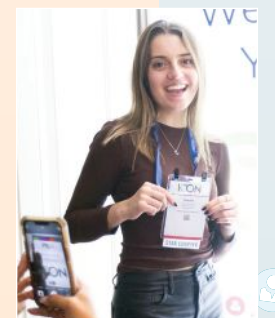
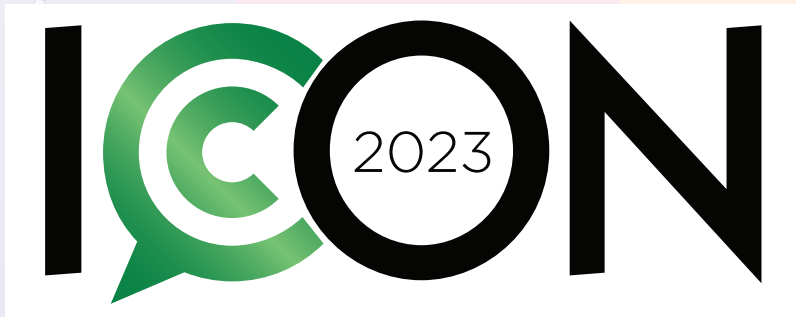
Attendees had the opportunity to enhance their perspectives and skill sets with communications leaders from Comcast, the Conference Board, IBM, John Deere and Weber Shandwick, among many other agencies, colleges and universities, organizations and PR service providers.

During the DEI Awards Celebration sponsored by Coca-Cola on Oct. 16, PRSA honored the winners of its annual Chapter Diversity Awards:

- ◆ **First Place:** PRSA Minnesota Chapter
- ◆ **Second Place:** PRSA New York Chapter
- ◆ **Honorable Mention:** PRSA New Mexico Chapter

Wrapping up the conference, PRSA Chair-elect Joseph Abreu, APR, unveiled details about ICON 2024, scheduled for Oct. 15-17 in Anaheim, Calif. A discounted Early Saver Rate is now in effect until Dec. 31. Visit the PRSA website for details.

Photos: jim cowsert/grapevine photo





## David Epstein on the Value of Being a Generalist

Journalist David Epstein, *The New York Times* bestselling author, discussed the value of having a breadth of experiences rather than specialization as he presented the keynote on Oct. 15 at the opening General Session.

Epstein presented data, research and stories from numerous professional athletes, outlining their career scenarios and paths to success. From Roger Federer to grand masters of chess, Army recruits and even the creator of binary code and Nintendo, he tracked the development of these performers over their lives.

Epstein referenced the “10,000-hours story, or the idea that the only route to exceptional performance is 10,000 hours of so-called deliberate practice,” but clarified that it wasn’t always a clear-cut path to success for these people who excelled in their field.

Delving into these developmental backgrounds, he noted that many of these “domains that we associate with early obligatory specialization” were deemed average at first and that these people dabbled in other



Scan this QR code for more on Epstein's presentation:



things before specializing.

Traditionally, Epstein said that people trained for their specific role, there was less change with their day-to-day work, and they solved the same problems the same way, often without much opportunity for career movement. But now that’s changing.

“Even when you’ve figured out the right general place to be, there are still advantages to keeping yourself broad over the course of your career,” he said. “And this will be increasingly true, especially as PR and advertising and marketing and social

media and all of these things are converging.”

There are many benefits of working in many different genres that can often lead to innovation, Epstein said. “It’s difficult to replace the skills of those broad individuals” — like many of the professional athletes he mentioned — “who often maybe looked like they were behind early in their career until they really weren’t.” ■■



Scan this QR code for more insights from the panel:



## Panelists Talk AI in Communications

For the closing General Session on Oct. 17, PRSA presented an AI Keynote Salon. Focusing on “Today’s Tools, Future Projections and the Ethical Frontier,” PRSA CEO Linda Thomas Brooks moderated the panel, which featured: Carmen San Segundo, global communications director of corporate social responsibility and sustainability, IBM; Aaron Kwittken, CEO, Stagwell Marketing Cloud, Comms Tech Unit; Cayce Myers, APR, Ph.D., professor and director of graduate studies, Virginia Tech; and Michelle Olson, APR, managing partner, Lambert.

In an era where technology is rapidly changing, topics ranged from AI in today’s PR landscape to the future of AI in public relations, as well as navigating the ethical maze and legal insights on AI as it relates to communications.

Here are a few takeaways from this wide-ranging conversation:

➔ **Aaron Kwittken:** We can’t talk about AI without talking about cultural shifts. We often focus on

people and process, but we need to add technology to that, too. Use multiple platforms in order to advance all of this rather than focusing on only one.

➔ **Cayce Myers:** There’s also a human element to AI. You have to bring something to the table, too. AI may not be something that’s going to totally replace communicators or communications processes — you will still have to get your message out.

➔ **Carmen San Segundo:** Long-term is hard to see regarding AI. Managers who don’t use AI will be replaced by the ones that do use AI... All of us will have to be exposed to a more collaborative environment.

➔ **Michelle Olson:** Ask yourself: ‘Am I transparent? Am I truthful? Am I honest?’ We are also telling ChatGPT to cite its findings for fact-checking purposes [at our agency]. Transparency and ethics are very important... I think we need to assume everyone here is using AI for good. ■■

Recaps by Amy Jacques  
Photos: jim cowser/grapevine photo

## Michele Norris on Inspiring Unity and Inclusion

Michele Norris, an award-winning journalist and author, spoke on race, cultural identity and inclusion during the Oct. 16 General Session.

“I feel like we are fellow journeymen because I am a storyteller and story collector just like you,” she told attendees, noting that her focus was on the importance of gathering people’s stories through the lens of The Race Card Project.

*The Washington Post* Opinions columnist and former host of NPR’s “All Things Considered” started The Race Card Project in 2010 as a way to make it easier for people to engage in conversation about a topic that was often complex and difficult.

The premise was to write a response to this prompt on a supplied postcard and mail it back: “Race. Your Story. Six Words. Please Send.” The project is now also online and has vast digital archives. Over 500,000 responses have been recorded to date from every U.S. state and 100 countries as people share their experiences, triumphs, sorrows, memories or anthems — thoughts about race, cultural identity and an evolving America expressed in just six words. A book based on the project is out in January.

Norris chose six words because it’s approachable and you can easily tell a story with six words, she said.

She offered that this type of brevity is helpful for any complicated narrative: “If you have something difficult to write, if you can bring it down to one sentence — six words — you can tackle it.”

Norris concluded her talk by urging the audience to actively embrace one another’s perspectives, fostering genuine understanding through attentive listening and the exploration of differing points of view.

“We are changed by each encounter we have and each new person we meet,” she said. “Do you have it in you to be that one person who can create a sense of belonging for someone — to make them feel seen, heard and valued?” ■■



Scan this QR code for more from Norris:





# Immerse Yourself

## Exploring the Potential of Immersive Media

By Donna Z. Davis, APR, Ph.D.

**W**hat do you picture when you think of immersive media? The term may conjure different images depending on your experience with immersive tools such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR).

Immersive media has become an inevitable addition to the communication toolbox for PR professionals. Whether you embrace it now or later, it's bound to become a significant aspect of your work.

This isn't the first time that communication has undergone a transformation. Over a decade ago, some PR professionals were hesitant to use social media platforms, but now they are an essential tool for building communities and engaging with audiences. Similarly, we are now at a moment where immersive media is becoming an essential part of communication.

### Today's immersive media

A simple definition of immersive media is a tool that takes you somewhere or puts you in a place for an experience via a mediated environment. The two main methods for doing this are AR and VR.

Examples of AR experiences, which are lightly immersive screen-based experiences, include using an app to superimpose an image of glasses over a 3D image of your face to show you what different frames look like on your face,

“placing” an image of a couch in a 3D representation of your living room or chasing Pokémon characters through your neighborhood.

Examples of VR experiences, which are fully immersive in a VR headset but can be experienced on a computer screen, include attending concerts, going deep-sea diving, getting trained on a new job or sitting around a virtual bonfire with friends who don't live near each other.

“With immersive media tools, you can bring a compelling and engaging experience to your audience from any place in the world.”

These are all activities that you used to have to go somewhere to do, and experience in person. And now you can do it through the lens of whatever camera or screen you're working with, creating an experience that immerses you in that space and allows you to interact with it in a way that traditional media does not.

### Its role in PR

With immersive media tools, you can bring a compelling and engaging experience to your audience from any place in the world. In this way, you can reach them more broadly, and you can let them experience things in ways that fit their needs.

Take, for instance, game spaces. Virtual reality has long been considered a tool for children's games, but the opportunities for community and connection go so much deeper and wider than in these legacy game environments.

Examples of this are the online games Fortnite and Roblox, each with millions of engaged players worldwide. In the last few years, we've seen major events take place on these platforms, such as concerts by Ariana Grande and Travis Scott in Fortnite and Lil Nas X in Roblox.

Not only did these events reach millions of people live, but attendees also listened and danced in their avatar forms. They were virtually present, not just sitting at home watching it on a screen.

Few brands and organizations have fully embraced game spaces and virtual worlds as places where they can have a presence and build community. Nike is an exception. In Roblox, millions of visitors a year come through Nikeland and play in a Nike-branded content experience. Players can try on clothes for their avatars and play games to win rewards and prizes.

While it's a branded experience and players can make purchases, it also enhances the Roblox experience while building loyalty to Nike.

### The right audience

In virtual reality, the uncanny valley is the gap between what we perceive as real and what we are willing to accept as real. When you can cross that uncanny valley, your brain accepts that you are embodied, immersed and present in that virtual environment.

While these immersive spaces are native to Gen Z and Gen Alpha, especially after COVID and the adoption of virtual learning and working, it has traditionally been less popular among older generations.

When an organization finds the right audience, it can recreate itself in virtual environments and reach its audience in infinite ways. Take the Smithsonian as an

example. People can use VR to transport themselves to its museum exhibit, “No Spectators: The Art of Burning Man” and wander through it as though they were there in person.

When they see a little “i” for information, they can click on it and read all about that piece, just like walking up to read the card next to the piece in the brick-and-mortar museum.

Imagine the possibilities in internal communication. With the expanding hybrid work environment, you can bring people together in a more engaging way. Instead of interacting through the boxes on a computer screen that we've become familiar with, you can meet in a virtual office.

For instance, Accenture has an enterprise metaverse experience where it onboards new employees, hosts learning sessions and provides opportunities to socialize. The sense of being present with others and the ability to interact in real-time has proven to build real connections, even when a workforce is globally dispersed.

These are just a few examples of the potential of communicating with immersive media. And while cost and technological development are still challenging, mass adoption is likely to happen faster than anyone can predict.

So now is the time to build awareness of and skills in immersive media communication to help reach your future audiences in a meaningful way. ■■

### Learn More



Join Donna Z. Davis, APR, Ph.D., for the PRSA webinar, Taking Internal Communications Into the Metaverse, on Dec. 5, 12-1 p.m. ET. Visit the PRSA website for details.



Donna Z. Davis, APR, Ph.D., is an associate professor and director of the Immersive Media Communication Master's program and the Oregon Reality (OR) lab at the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communication in Portland..

Set aside time now in your 2024 calendar for opportunities to expand your skill sets and network at the following Section conferences:

**APRIL**  
**9-11**

**Counselors Academy**  
Palm Springs, Calif.

**JUNE**  
**2-5**

**Travel & Tourism**  
Greenville, S.C.

Stay tuned for updates about more Section conferences!

[prsa.org/conferences](https://prsa.org/conferences)

# Networking News

## 6 Ways to Build Relationships on LinkedIn

By Bridget Castellini

While the importance of networking hasn't changed in the past 25 years, how we build and nurture relationships certainly has. It's increasingly happening through LinkedIn — called “the world's largest professional network” for a reason — with over 950 million members and growing.

Individuals and companies turn to LinkedIn to learn more about connections and brands. In fact, according to LinkedIn, nearly half of its U.S. subscribers are using it once monthly, and in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2022, the network saw more than 15 billion user sessions.

In some ways, LinkedIn is a gigantic virtual networking event. It has transformed from a job-seeking platform into a place where you can expand your network, build relationships and grow your business.

Here are six ways to start using it that way:

### 1. Polish and optimize your profile.

First, this may sound obvious, but make sure that your profile is up to date and reflects your current role and responsibilities. Your profile is often the first introduction to you. Consider how it positions you as an expert in your field. Is it ready for people to check it out as you engage more with others on the channel?

If it's hard for you to write about yourself, then ask others on your team to offer ways to enhance it. Finally, be sure it's optimized with a headline (clearly and concisely communicating what you do and what you offer) and keywords pertinent to your areas of expertise.

### 2. Prioritize your connections.

Fortunately, we have strong relationships with clients, so they often refer prospective clients and team members to us. Those relationships have taken time and effort and didn't get built overnight.

LinkedIn is 20 years old, so if you're like me and have been working for just as

long, then you likely have a lot of contacts — and that can be good and bad. Good in the sense that you might have a history with many connections; bad in the sense it's a lot of contacts and updates to mine through.

Start by prioritizing contacts within your network that you want to build relationships with and maintain a presence with — and focus on them. An excellent way to think about it would be how you can help the individuals on the prospect list with your expertise or connections.

### 3. Strategically build your network and personalize the invitation to connect.

LinkedIn isn't just a numbers game. Resist the urge to simply add connections to your network, focusing on quality over quantity. Instead, research a connection to a prospect and write a quick note of interest to accompany the request. Every relationship begins with an introduction. Give your new contact a reason why they should connect with you but make it brief.

“Strong business relationships are essential to your success as a PR leader, and LinkedIn can be a powerful place to cultivate them.”

### 4. Engage authentically.

Spend dedicated time each day on engagement with your prospect list. Leave meaningful comments on a post — even



## THEN

In the early 2000s, networking events often included speed networking events. With a pocket of business cards and a 15-second elevator pitch rehearsed, you quickly worked the room to mine for new contacts. The goal was to stay until the end of the event, and you'd undoubtedly make more connections.



## NOW

Today, it's common for networking events to be Zoom chats, but in-person events post-COVID are increasing, and so are coffee meet-and-greets, lunches and happy hours.

those who you are in the early stages of building a relationship with. Leave an engaging and thoughtful comment instead of a generic comment such as: “Thanks for posting this article.” I always try to think about how I would speak to this person if I were at an event where they just presented, or we were introduced at a networking event.

When responding to a question they posted, think about how you can genuinely help them (if you genuinely want to take that step) and respond that way. That is often reciprocal; when it's your turn to post asking a question, people will naturally want to return the favor.

### 5. Respond to notifications, messages and connection requests.

For all the spammy, sales-driven requests you receive, there are legitimate requests from people looking to get their services in front of you or simply trying to build a relationship. Take time to respond to new messages or notifications, even if it means turning them down. Don't underestimate the likelihood that

you may cross their path in the future, and they may be connected to someone you'd like to meet.

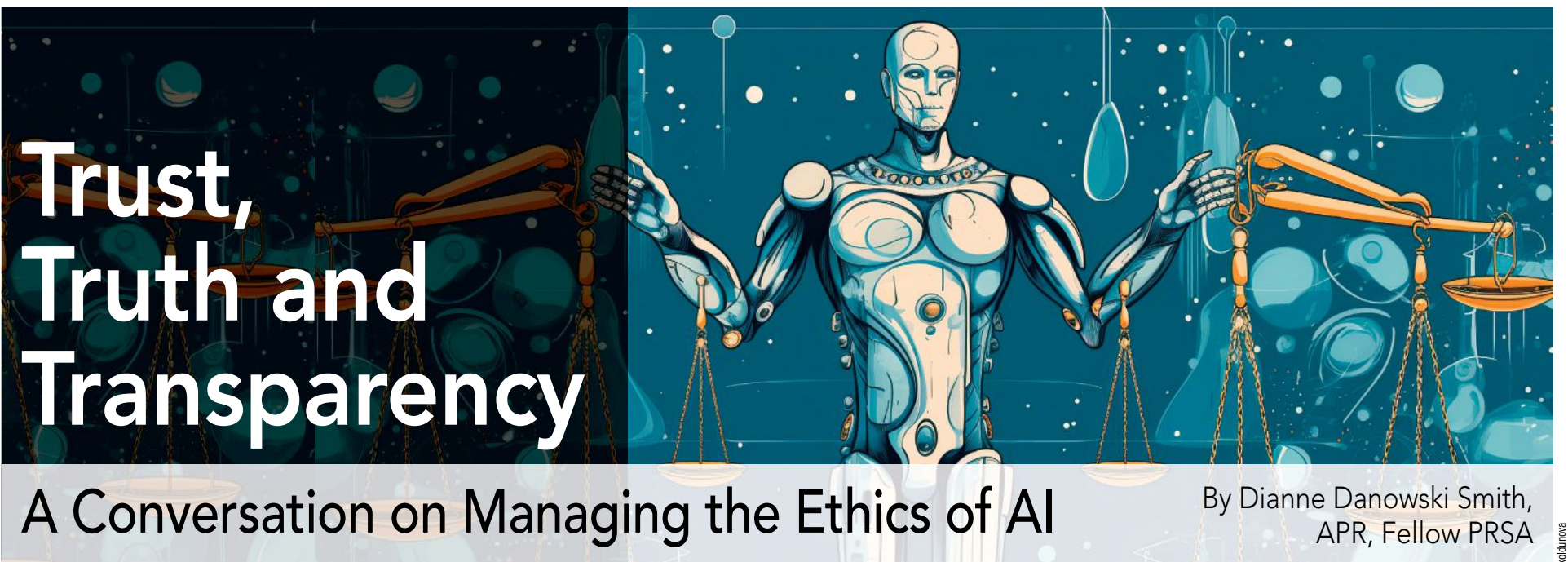
### 6. Publish thought-leadership content.

As part of our client's content strategy plans, we encourage them to publish content communicating their expertise. Take your advice, develop your agency's content strategy and publish on LinkedIn. Develop a calendar and cadence and stick to it.

Strong business relationships are essential to your success as a PR leader, and LinkedIn can be a powerful place to cultivate them. Be patient, and don't rush the process. Slow, steady — and authentically — wins the race. ■■



**Bridget Castellini** is the managing partner of Wordsworth Communications and has over two decades of strategic communications experience. She is proud to cultivate a culture that attracts the best and brightest talent. Connect with her on LinkedIn: Bridget-Castellini.



# Trust, Truth and Transparency

## A Conversation on Managing the Ethics of AI

By Dianne Danowski Smith, APR, Fellow PRSA

**P**R professionals have many questions on AI use.

Here are just a few. How is AI rolling out in your company, organization or classroom? How does its use affect our communications strategies and tactics? What is AI's impact on our branding, voice and human dynamics? How can PR leaders create such important conversations at their organizations, to achieve real outcomes and brace for the coming wave of rapid change?

To find answers to these questions, I talked with Janet Johnson, co-founder of the AI Governance Group, a technologist for marketers and marketer for technologists who also teaches PR strategy at Portland State University in Portland, Ore.

Here, she shares insights about the rationale and ethical use of AI in business and beyond.

### How can PR pros get to the table as a voice in AI governance and use?

Governance is widely defined as the process of making and enforcing decisions within an organization or society. It encompasses interactions (read: communications) shaped by laws, policies, social norms, power dynamics and language within a culture, organization, etc.

As communicators, we must take the lead in informing, educating and supporting employees and organizations

around the opportunities and challenges of this new tech transformation.

**So as AI becomes aware of itself, we as communicators become aware of its capabilities and pitfalls. What are the three top things that we need to start doing to be a leading voice for the ethical and accurate use of AI?**

We can focus on three main areas — trust, truth and transparency.

➔ **Trust:** Deeply understand the challenges that are inherent in new technology and educate leaders on them especially generative AI, which creates new content. Users are beta testing and training it constantly. We need to treat generative AI tools as if they were a small child learning how to get around in the world. Any resulting content should be checked and refined by humans, so trust in content's truthfulness is constant, too.

➔ **Truth:** Understand that generative AI can “make stuff up” — it hallucinates. And it should be used for first drafts only. Always check every link it comes up with — many of them simply don't exist, leading to 404 pages.

➔ **Transparency:** Ensure that leaders understand the importance of

communicating to employees about AI uses. Most modern software employs some sort of AI, and usage guidelines and policies should be updated and widely communicated to protect the organization and its employees from overreaching, oversight and use.

Keep track of how AI is being used to craft content. Use the tools. Just attribute your work as you do.

“Ensure that leaders understand the importance of communicating to employees about AI uses.”

### What are the most salient pitfalls with the use of AI? How do we avoid them?

Gen AI systems such as ChatGPT have been trained to recognize word patterns and essentially guess the next word in every sentence. When they can't, they can fabricate information. The tool might respond with links and content that sound real, and the authors it lists may have even written about content before — but the source files may not actually exist.

Another challenge with AI tools is they've been trained on data sources that weren't protected from this kind of use, so copyright challenges are making their way through court.

Most troubling is the ease with which a voice, a photo and a presence can be duplicated, resulting in deepfakes that allow bad actors to fake audio, video and social media posts saying anything they want someone to say.

### How does a PR pro get to the decision table when our companies, organizations or clients are formulating AI implementation strategies?

Start speaking up now! Educate leaders in your organization with thoughtful information. Start at the top, with an eye toward communications and education, to establish trust, truth and transparency you need to thrive when using these tools.

Read voraciously. Use generative AI for your work. Become a student of AI and, in doing so, you'll set yourself up as a teacher and a leader.

And encourage others to do the same, with critical thinking, patience and empathy — all very human traits. English is the new programming language, and comms pros are prepared to lead the way. ■■



**Dianne Danowski Smith, APR, Fellow PRSA,** owns her firm, Publix Northwest PR + PA. She works with clients in almost every sector and industry providing strategic counsel, implementation and training/coaching. She's active in the PRSA Oregon Chapter's leadership as well as the College of Fellows.



## PRSA On-Demand Learning

Invest in you! Grow your skills and strengthen your abilities on your own schedule, 24/7, to achieve the success you want. Check out:

- Advancing Your Communication Strategy in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Integrated Marketing Communications
- APR Practice Exam

For a complete list of courses, visit: [prsa.org/on-demand](https://prsa.org/on-demand)

# A Matter of Trust

## 4 Steps to Take to Ensure the Accuracy of Your AI Content

By Monique Farmer, APR

Whether or not we realize it now, Generative AI is all around us. It can take the form of a social media caption, the music in the background of a television commercial, the images that accompany a magazine article, and even the response we get from the chat feature on a retailer's website. Put simply, it's more commonplace than ever before.

For PR professionals, using Generative AI platforms like Propel PRM, ClickUp and Open AI can help support our own ideas, strategies and creativity. When used correctly, these resources can provide new ideas for a media pitch, build the foundation for a feature article, process audience data or help us craft the narrative for a campaign.

But like any emerging technology, generative AI has its own limitations. It's new and ever-evolving, and its accuracy is never guaranteed. Blindly trusting its output could result in the spread of inaccurate data and embarrassing mistakes, which in turn erodes trust and can damage reputations.

For this reason, large corporations, universities and other organizations are working to put safeguards in place to check (and double-check) AI output, and now the PR profession is offering its own guidelines as well.

In response to the increasing presence and usage of AI technology, PRSA's Board of Ethics and Professional Standards is releasing "Promise and Peril: The Ethical Use of AI for Public Relations Practitioners." The guide provides best practices for preventing and managing potential ethical challenges that may arise from the improper use of AI tools.

“Any information you pull or content you create using Generative AI should be thoroughly fact-checked before it's used in your work.”

To better adhere to those guidelines, here are four important ways you can help ensure the accuracy of any AI content or data you use. Take the time to follow these steps before putting any AI-generated information out into the world.

### 1. Look at the source material.

The information that an AI tool uses to generate content should come from a trusted author or source — not another AI source. Check the source material to see if an author and/or a credible publication is listed. Also, be sure to look at the date of the



original material to make sure it's recent.

**2. Fact-check everything.** Any information you pull or content you create using Generative AI should be thoroughly fact-checked before it's used in your work. From numbers and names to dates and other historical data, AI is only as good as its sources and needs human eyes to ensure that the facts it shares are actually, well, facts. While simple Google searches can help, you can also use tools like Google Fact Check Explorer and PolitiFact.

**3. Proofread.** Just like humans, AI content is fallible when it comes to misspellings, grammatical errors, and incorrect or confusing wording. Take the time to thoroughly proofread any AI-generated content, using tools like Grammarly for extra support. While you're reviewing the content, this is a great opportunity to confirm that it aligns with your voice or your client's, making edits and revising sentences as needed.

**4. Trust your gut.** As a PR professional, you have an eye for quality

content. And as a human being, you view content in a way that an AI bot never will. When you're reading through the data or writing produced by a Generative AI platform, trust any uncertainty or uneasiness you feel, and do your due diligence to check the work.

Our work requires us to constantly think creatively, in new ways with new perspectives. Generative AI can help us do that while working more efficiently, but taking the time to fact-check and ensure its accuracy is an essential step.

By having the final word on the content that you create, you'll preserve trust with your clients and your audience, and solidify our own reputation as a purveyor of quality ideas and content. ■■



**Monique Farmer, APR**, runs a PR consultancy, Avant Solutions, and is the creator of Anvil Ready, an online communication strategy builder that aids the communication professional in creating communication plans. She teaches at the University of Texas at Austin. Farmer spent 12 years in the federal government prior to working in corporate communications for ConAgra, then served as the director of communications for Nebraska's largest school district.

### In Brief

#### AP Stylebook Announces New Chapter on AI

The AP Stylebook recently announced a new chapter on AI to cover key terms and guidance on this quickly changing topic. Below are a few highlights. For the full chapter, visit the AP Stylebook Online.

**algorithm** — Detailed computational instructions that describe how to solve a problem or perform a specific task. A simple, real-life example is a recipe, which describes both a set of inputs and an output consisting of the dish itself.

**algorithmic bias/AI bias** — Decisions guided by AI tools that replicate and amplify human biases, leading to discriminatory outcomes that can systematically impact specific groups of people.

**artificial general intelligence** — An emerging branch of artificial intelligence that aims to build AI systems that can perform just as well as humans in a wide variety of tasks, including reasoning, planning and the ability to learn from experience.

**artificial intelligence** — Computer systems, software

or processes that emulate aspects of human work and cognition. Such systems are not conscious but trained on vast datasets to accomplish tasks such as visual perception, analyzing and using speech, and learning.

**ChatGPT** — An artificial intelligence text chatbot made by OpenAI. It is a free web-based tool, trained to mimic human writing. Some but not all commercially available chatbots are powered with GPT. Use *chatbot* as the generic term. Don't use *GPT* or *ChatGPT* to refer to all *chatbots*.

**face recognition** — A technology for automatically detecting human faces in an image and identifying individual people. It is a form of biometric technology that relies on comparing aspects of a face against a database of images to find a match.

**generative AI** — A term for AI systems capable of creating text, images, video, audio, code and other media in response to queries. Humans can interact with generative AI models in a seemingly natural way but the models aren't capable of distinguishing

between facts and falsehoods or fantasy.

**large language models** — AI systems that use advanced statistics to uncover patterns in vast troves of written texts that they can apply to generate responses. Such systems are increasingly capable of applying the syntax and semantics of human speech and can be used to generate a variety of media.

**machine learning** — An AI process in which computer systems identify patterns in datasets to make or refine the decisions and predictions that they generate without being explicitly programmed to do so. Examples of machine learning include face recognition, language translation and self-driving cars.

**training data** — A dataset used to teach an algorithm or a machine learning model how to make predictions. The types of training data used in different AI tools can vary widely, from large quantities of written texts to vast digital libraries of images of human faces to historical arrest records from specific geographic areas. — Compiled by Amy Jacques

# Well and Good

## Navigating Employee Mental Health With Help From Tech By Kate Finley



peopleimages.com

**E**mployee mental health affects us all, particularly in public relations. According to research published in *PR Week* in December 2022, a survey of 175 PR professionals found that 90% had experienced poor mental health at some point in the previous year.

Even worse, PR practitioners are about half as likely as other professionals to take time off to deal with their mental health challenges. In public relations, we often find ourselves juggling heavy workloads. But client demands and our fast-paced workdays are not the only factors taking a toll on our states of mind.

As clinical psychologist Marianne Brandon wrote for *Psychology Today* in September, the news and social media can make people feel anxious, depressed and helpless. So, it stands to reason that PR professionals who are constantly connected to news and social media would be even more susceptible to the deleterious effects on mental health that can result.

When your profession requires you to be digitally engaged and informed, it can be hard to avoid negative headlines

and unrealistic social media pressures. It's tough to switch off, unwind and simply be present.

More than our well-being is on the line. Our clients rely on us to deliver high-value work. Meeting and exceeding those expectations become more difficult when additional stresses enter the picture. Mistakes happen more often, creativity plummets and innovation is pushed aside in favor of completing immediate tasks. When communicators face undue stress, it's not a great situation for anyone.

Helping to mitigate and manage mental health pressures in public relations starts with the leadership of agencies and in-house communications departments, creating workplace environments that champion mental health. Perhaps counterintuitively, technology can be a big part of the solution when used with thoughtful boundaries and guidelines.

Here are some tech tools and policies that PR leaders can employ to make mental health a top priority for their teams:

### Use AI to streamline workflows.

For PR pros, stress often stems from having to perform mundane tasks in a chaotic work environment. Let's work smarter, not harder. Where I work, we're using AI tools such as Zapier to automate administrative chores. We're also diving into generative AI that speeds up our research.

“We can view technology not as a problem but as part of the solution to help employees thrive, make clients happier and grow the bottom line.”

Tasks that used to eat up our time, such as crafting media lists or compiling performance reports, can now be completed automatically with AI technology. We've built a companywide “prompt library” to record the AI shortcuts that prove most helpful. With our Slack channel, we can share new experiments and wins with our teams. The result has been improved reporting metrics and more time for us to develop strategic insights and creative solutions for our clients.

### Set healthy tech boundaries.

To improve the mental well-being of PR professionals, we should make it culturally acceptable for people in our industry to block their calendars or turn off notifications when they need time to focus on work. Without these practices, lines blur and stress takes over.

Leadership sets the tone. For us, there isn't an expectation that employees must reply to emails or group chats after work hours. We also respect the time that our colleagues block. We've even made it clear to our clients that our account leads are generally offline in the evenings,

except for during crisis situations or planned activations.

### Check in regularly.

Digital feedback and anonymous forms are great ways to check in with your employees about their mental well-being and to assess how connected and fulfilled they feel at work. We've found that weekly surveys help spot when someone needs extra support or a breather. When mental health issues arise with our team members, we start conversations to help tackle those problems.

### Offer mental health resources.

Many digital applications can help employees manage stress and boost their mental well-being. Consider covering subscription costs for meditation apps such as Headspace, Calm or Sensa. You might also invest in memberships such as Audible so your team can access audiobooks and training.

We choose to work in public relations because we're passionate about what we do. We love to help clients shine and to find creative new ways to get the attention they need, which includes closely watching trends relevant to their businesses. But we can't ignore the fact that our work can be overwhelming, especially when screens are our constant companions.

So, let's harness the power of technology to create a culture that values mental health breaks and boundaries. We can view technology not as a problem but as part of the solution to help employees thrive, make clients happier and grow the bottom line. ■■

### In Brief



blacksalmon

### Evaluating Mental Health Apps

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), there currently aren't any national standards for evaluating the effectiveness of the hundreds of available mental health apps.

NIMH officials note that people should be cautious about trusting an app. However, the NIMH offers these suggestions for researching apps:

- ◆ Ask a trusted health care provider for a recommendation.
- ◆ Decide if you want an automated app versus an app that offers opportunities for contact with trained professionals.
- ◆ Search for information on the app developer, including their credentials and experience.
- ◆ Check the PubMed database offered by the National Library of Medicine, which includes articles on mental health app development.



**Kate Finley** is the founder of Belle Communication, a PR and creative strategy firm that helps brands think bigger for now and next. The firm has partnered with more than 100 brands, including Dearfoams, Nestlé, Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams and Nationwide Insurance.



## Companies Facing Criticism for Their Support — or Silence — in Response to Israel-Hamas War

Brands and executives have been tangled in geopolitical messaging following the Oct. 7 Hamas terrorist attack against Israel.

As the Associated Press reports, executives at J.P. Morgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, Google and Meta were among dozens who swiftly condemned the Hamas attacks in public statements, social media posts or during corporate earnings calls. Many pledged humanitarian aid.

Starbucks said a union of its baristas damaged the brand and endangered employees by issuing a pro-Palestinian tweet two days after the Hamas attack, the AP reported. Meanwhile, the CEO of a prominent tech conference resigned amid backlash over his public statements against Israel.

As multiple media have pointed out, since

the police murder of George Floyd in May 2020, corporations have set the expectation that they'd weigh in on urgent sociopolitical issues — even if those issues did not directly impact their business.

“Once you get into this game, you cannot get out. That’s the expectation now, post-George Floyd,” Paul Argenti, professor of cor-

### Purpose-Driven Communications Resources

More and more, communications professionals are faced with situations that prompt discussion on if, when and how societal issues and current events, at home and abroad, should be addressed by their organizations. To help inform the decision-making process, PRSA recently added a section to the website providing an array of resources for member use.

porate communications at Dartmouth’s Tuck School of Business, told Bloomberg.

However, as *The Wall Street Journal* noted, given the “fraught, complex history” between Israel and the Palestinians, many company leaders “have the sense that there is no right thing to say.”

To date, Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), told CNN that corporate responses to the Hamas terror attacks have been “disappointing at best, disastrous at worst.”

Islamic-rights advocates say corporate responses have minimized the suffering in Gaza, where thousands have died in Israel’s retaliatory airstrikes against Hamas.

— Greg Beaubien

# How to Write Like Axios, Your CEO's Favorite Newsletter

By Ann Wylie

It might be your CEO's favorite email. Every policy wonk in D.C. sits by their inbox waiting for it to come. It's the only newsletter I know of that has ever been covered — for formatting! — by *The New York Times*.



It's Axios. And if you haven't started learning from it yet, it's time to start learning from it now.

Here are four things to learn from — and one way to improve on — everybody's favorite newsletter.

## 1. Report average reading time.

If your newsletter is short, you might boost readership by letting readers know.

One recent issue of Axios weighs in at 4.5 minutes. That would be a little long, if editors didn't have a great formatting hack. (See No. 4.)

## 2. Cover one big thing.

Email newsletter subscribers ding senders for underpromising and overdelivering.

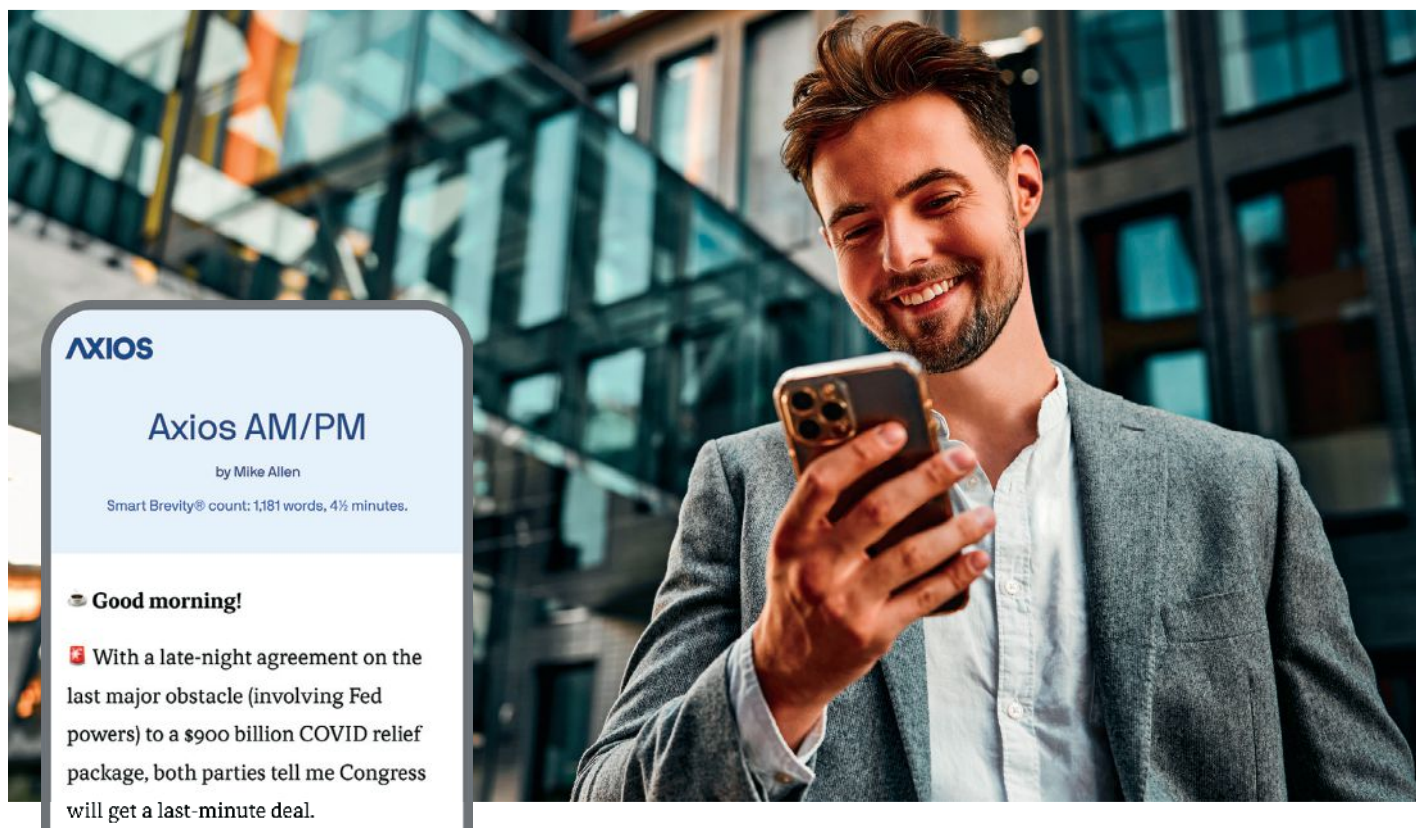
Give them fewer stories, and make them better. Even better: Focus your newsletter on one story and cover it well.

## 3. Practice smart brevity.

One recent issue of Axios weighed in at:

### Are You Ready to Be Loved by Your Recipients?

Learn more ways to boost open and clickthrough rates, readership and shares. Learn Ann Wylie's full system for writing marketing emails and newsletters at [Think Inside the Inbox](#), our email-marketing course. PRSA members: Save \$100 with coupon code PRSA23.



### 1.3 sentences per paragraph.

That's perfect for emails and other screen reading. Make your paragraphs hyper-short for the hyper world.

### 20.6 words per sentence.

That's actually a little long for an average sentence length. 21-word sentences can be hard for people to follow. Outwrite Axios: Make your sentences shorter and sharper.

**5 characters per word.** Axios covers science, technology, business and health in an average of 5-letter words. Don't tell me your topic is too complex for short words; it's your writing that's too complex! Short words convey complicated topics to more people more easily.

**0% passive voice.** Passive sucks the energy out of your message, makes sentences longer and more sloggy and makes it look like you're trying to avoid pinning the blame on someone. Who needs that? Zero passive sentences is all you need!

## 4. Pass the palm test.

Break your message up into chunks no larger than the palm of your hand. Use bullets, boldfaced lead-ins and links to make your newsletter look easier to read. The easier it looks, the more people will read it.

(And there's your solution for the 4.5-minute newsletter.)

**“Use bullets, boldfaced lead-ins and links to make your newsletter look easier to read. The easier it looks, the more people will read it.”**

## 5. Pass the skim test.

Can skimmers learn everything you want them to know about your topic —

without reading the paragraphs? If so, you pass the skim test. If not, you need to keep working.

Axios breaks the newsletter up — but does not facilitate skimming — with emphasized words. Here's what a skimmer of a recent issue would read:

Voicemail might be dead... People are dropping... The voice message... Supposedly abandoning... What's happening... A group chat studded... By the numbers... YouGov poll, conducted by Vox... On Hinge...

So outwrite Axios: Help skimmers get more from your message with a better strategy for emphasized words. ❖

Copyright © 2023 Ann Wylie. All rights reserved.

Ann Wylie (WylieComm.com) works with communicators who want to reach more readers and with organizations that want to get the word out. To learn more about her training, consulting or writing and editing services, contact her at [ann@WylieComm.com](mailto:ann@WylieComm.com).

Stay focused on networking and professional development.

**Oct. 15-17, 2024**

Anaheim Marriott • Anaheim, Calif.

Register by 12/31/2023 to get the best rate!

[prsa.org/ICON24Reg](https://prsa.org/ICON24Reg)



# How to Be a More Effective Leader Right Now

By Ken Jacobs

I recently returned from PRSA's ICON 2023 in Nashville, Tenn. — the first time I'd ever attended this global gathering of PR professionals.

In addition to presenting at the Leadership Rally on Oct. 13, I presented a workshop titled "11 Things You Must Start Doing NOW to Be a More Effective Leader."

Here are six of them:

## Earn your team's trust and stand by them.

I believe this is the most important leadership action for you to take: Without trust, you don't really have a relationship with your team. No relationship, no followers. No followers? You're not a leader.

As Richard Jones of The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America said in a previous issue of *Strategies & Tactics*, "At the top of the list is trust. Effective leaders cultivate a high degree of trustworthiness. They do this by behaving ethically and by being open, honest and direct in interpersonal dealings."

## Treat people with respect.

The Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin, was right, and not just about the role of respect in romantic relationships. To be truly effective, leaders must consistently treat everyone with whom they interact with respect. And that's true no matter the quality of the work they might be discussing or the person's behavior.

In fact, it's when things aren't going well that leaders must be careful to be respectful. And when it comes to respect and some other essential leadership actions, consistency is everything.

## Be more transparent.

Companies and leaders that are more transparent are proven to drive some critical, palpable benefits. Niraj Ranjan Rout, the founder of Hiver, said that

## Taking the Lead



greater transparency leads to trust, fosters a collaborative work environment and improves employee empowerment. I hope you can see how impactful that can be in an era of employee disengagement.

According to the NeuroLeadership Institute, leaders who communicate with transparency boost employee engagement and performance and are seen as more trustworthy and effective. Further, transparent leadership is the most important predictor of employee happiness.

Many leaders resist transparency for fear that it will make their employees anxious or fearful. Perhaps surprisingly, quite the opposite is true, according to the Institute: "When leaders share information, reveal the reasons behind their decisions, and express their true feelings and vulnerabilities," it instills a sense of psychological safety.

When you consider what many of your team members have experienced over the past three-plus years, I hope you agree that doing so is exactly what we need.

## Set high standards for your own leadership.

This is where you should set the bar high, and don't settle for less. Each week, reflect on how you led your teams.

Better yet, ask the toughest graders on your team would grade you in the following areas:

➔ Did I truly earn their trust, and demonstrate that I have their backs?

➔ Did I let them know that I trust them back?

➔ Did I consistently communicate respect, no matter the situation?

➔ Did I listen more than I spoke? Much more than I spoke?

➔ Did I communicate to understand not to be understood?

➔ Did I communicate to hear, not to be heard?

➔ Did I not just delegate, did I empower?

➔ And did I INSPIRE?

**“Without trust, you don't really have a relationship with your team. No relationship, no followers. No followers? You're not a leader.”**

## Take care of yourself.

I believe that you've got to be at the top of your game to lead others. Your cup must be full to lead others to fill theirs. This year has been particularly challenging, and 2024 appears uncertain. So, the chance of your burning out is real.

If you haven't yet put together the suite of things you need to be at your physical, mental and emotional best, then now's the time to do so. If you once employed exercise, yoga, meditation, mindfulness or some combination of these,

now's the time to return to them.

There's a reason that flight attendants tell us to put on our own oxygen masks before we help our traveling companions. The same is true here. If you want to take care of your people, then you must take care of yourself.

## Expect superior performance, not perfection.

Perfectionist leaders, and those with perfectionist tendencies, think they're driving their teams to enhanced performance. What they're actually doing is driving their employees out the door, or at least to a state of disengagement.

Since "perfect" is impossible, when you expect, encourage or — worse — demand perfection, you're expecting, encouraging or demanding the impossible. What impact do you think that has on their morale, engagement and desire to follow you?

Perfectionism delays getting the work out, and it can ultimately lower work quality because your team members — knowing that you're going to edit their work to a fare-thee-well — simply stop trying.

So, unless you're Michelangelo creating "David," stop expecting perfection. ❖

**Ken Jacobs** is the principal of Jacobs Consulting & Executive Coaching, which empowers PR and communications leaders and executives to breakthrough results via executive coaching, and helps communications agencies achieve their business development, profitability and client service goals, via consulting and training. Please find him at [www.jacobscomm.com](http://www.jacobscomm.com) [ken@jacobscomm.com](mailto:ken@jacobscomm.com) @KensViews, or on LinkedIn.

## Learn More

Ken Jacobs was our guest on *Strategies & Tactics Live* in September. Watch a replay of the session here:





## Profiles in PR

**Q** You are currently the senior director of public relations at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. How did you first get your start in public relations?

**A** I majored in journalism, and I had dreams of being a journalist and writing about music. I had this dream to save the world as well. I was inspired to be a journalist by a college professor in Nashville and I wanted to cover areas with civil unrest and make a difference in that way.

After I graduated from college, I moved to East Africa for a year and wrote about topics that I thought were important... related to HIV, and international adoption laws.

Then I came back and started interning for Nashville Public Radio, WPLN. So, I covered a wide variety of things as a journalist. I had been writing about music separately and writing album reviews.

Initially, I [questioned] whether I wanted to go into PR. But as I learned more about the museum — it's a non-profit focused on education — it was an opportunity to do something [to make a difference] and still write and be creative.

**Q** How is your PR department structured?

**A** We're a big museum — last year, we had 1.5 million visitors. We're one of the most visited museums now in

# Jeremy Rush on Storytelling and Celebrating the Legacy of Country Music

the United States. And our team is small; we have the benefit of really focusing on earned media, PR and working with journalists. We have a big external affairs team, but my team is focused on developing [relationships with] reporters and serving journalists as they come through.

**Q** What is a typical workday like for you?

**A** On a typical day, I could be writing press releases. And we have a lot of video crews that visit, so we help them with their pieces. We host travel writers. We are promoting our exhibits and public programs.

We also line up our historians and spokespeople for interviews. For instance, when Loretta Lynn died [in October 2022], we had someone talk about her career and the importance [of her legacy].

**Q** What are some key tenets of storytelling and how can you make a meaningful connection with audiences, and continue to foster relationships?

**A** Country music itself is a narrative art form. That's what makes the music special. For the museum, we stick to our mission, which is telling the history of country music, and the depth and breadth of that. But also making you feel something, like music, while you learn. That's an important part of storytelling

for us. We do that in a variety of ways, but it's using those best practices of communicating

across all your channels.

Our exhibits are thought-provoking too. It may not be what you expect from the museum. In particular, "Western Edge," examines the country folk, blues and bluegrass influences that birthed that sound out of California, starting in the '60s on to the '80s. At one point, it became one of the most popular sounds across the country and the world.

**Q** How has your outreach broadened and evolved as both the city of Nashville and country music have been embraced by a new generation and younger audience?

**A** Nashville has grown and the museum has benefited from that. Originally, when the museum moved to Music Row in 2001, there wasn't a lot in that area, but now it's thriving.

For young audiences, we did something that's not typical for us. We did a pop-up exhibit for Taylor Swift; we knew that she was coming here for The Eras tour. Taylor Swift has had a longtime relationship with the museum and made a big donation to underwrite our Education Center, which serves people in our community in a lot of different ways.

She's connected to country music from her beginnings to today, so we showcased 10 of her iconic outfits from different eras. And people responded well to it.

People were coming into town for the concert and the museum sold out for four straight days in advance, which we had never done. People lined up to see this one portion of the museum, but also got to see the Education Center because we had artifacts in there from her *Midnights* era, which we always rotate.

**Q** How do you promote such a storied brand like the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum — as well as the legacy of Hatch Show Print and Historic RCA Studio B?



**A** It's all about communicating that we are a museum with an unduplicated collection and that we're focused on education — in addition to having all the exhibits in a place like a tourist destination.

And Hatch Show Print is a 140-year-old business that has created this iconic artwork for all the artists and has been a huge part of the national story as well as for graphic design. It continues to use historic letterpress, woodblock carvings and a lot of the original presses to make something new with fresh eyes. And that's appealing to people who come to cover it because it's using history to create this new thing.

For Studio B, it's the same. It's a historic studio that was originally built for Elvis and yielded tons of hits from Waylon Jennings to Dolly Parton to The Everly Brothers. And a lot of the original instruments are still in that space and used.


We have a big exhibit that we update every year called "American Currents." It reports on what happened the previous year and the big moments in country music.

That's another way that the museum is sticking to its mission. It's being thoughtful. We have some of the foremost historians, writers of country music and scholars on our staff who deliberate on that exhibit every year. And it's only the museum that can contextualize what's happening today and look at what informed that in the past. ❖

Managing Editor **Amy Jacques** interviewed Jeremy Rush, senior director of public relations at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, onsite at PRSA ICON 2023 in Nashville, Tenn., for this month's member profile.



Memorabilia from the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum



[prsay.prsa.org](https://prsay.prsa.org)

Thought Leadership

**Bridging the Health Literacy Gap: A Vital Step Toward Mental Well-Being**

Thought Leadership

**ICON 2023 Q&A: ESPN's Amanda Brooks on Finding the Human Element in Stories**

Diversity

**How Diversity Can Be the Catalyst for Cultural Change**

**Visit our PRsay blog — an extension of *Strategies & Tactics* — throughout the month for thought leadership, career advice, recaps of special events, PR training and more.**



**Widen your sphere of influence – make sure your work gets the attention it deserves.**

Enter your outstanding campaigns and projects from the past year into the prestigious 2024 Anvil Awards Program. Spotlight the impact your work has made!

Getting involved in a distinguished industry awards program like the Anvils – the iconic program that started it all, way back in the 1940s! – can bring many benefits in a wide variety of ways, internally and externally. It makes solid business sense.

**Participating enables you to:**

- Enhance your reputation.
- Build your brand & your business.
- Benchmark your work against industry colleagues.
- Boost employee morale & increase employee retention.
- Review all you've accomplished.
- Make your work a part of public relations history – the Anvil Awards Program is celebrating its 80th anniversary in 2024!

**Silver Anvils** single out strategic campaigns in a wide variety of categories, while **Bronze Anvils** honor specific tactics. Remember, to streamline the entry process, **you can submit your Silver and Bronze Anvil Entries together on the same entry form.**

Entries are open for both Silver and Bronze Anvils so start planning your submissions now. Early entrants enjoy significant savings on their entry fees!

**DEADLINES**

**Early Entry: Jan. 18, 2024**  
**Regular Entry: Feb. 1, 2024**  
**Final Entry: Feb. 15, 2024**

The Anvils will be presented at a gala awards ceremony in New York on May 9, 2024!

For all the details, visit:

[prsa.org/AnvilAwards](https://prsa.org/AnvilAwards)

