How Do You Make Money on the Web?
Part II: Newspapers

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"Storytelling came to me in my mother's dress shop," he said. "Her customers were middle-aged women with," he paused, "large middles. And deep pockets. They were the bridge players, the women in white gloves, the wives of the attorneys and the Buick dealers.

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Dear COM Alumni, Parents and Friends:

A few years ago, author James Collins was struck by the number of well-known companies, such as Walgreens and Gillette, that had propelled themselves from comfortable mediocrity to the top of their industries. He analyzed each to find out what it had done to reinvigorate itself and to move upward among competitors. The result: his best-selling book Good to Great.

I believe that COM is already better than good. But the truth is we cannot be content with standing pat on our reputation. Given the dizzying changes in the world of communication, we either get better or we fall behind. And why would we want to remain just “better than good”? Why not go from good to great?

That, in a few words, is the question facing us at COM. But just how do you do that? It starts with a plan—a big thinker’s plan, a transformational plan, a strategic plan. A truly strategic plan is a combination of honest appraisal, realistic aspiration and road map, with many mile markers along the way to measure progress toward the destination. Although it includes a vision, it’s not a dream. Rather, a strategic plan is a sober assessment of what is possible to achieve given the assets that you have or can get. Like a road map, it imparts a clear direction atop what otherwise could be a limitless landscape with tempting side routes leading nowhere in particular.

There’s a South Florida saying: “When you’re up to your backside in alligators, you forget that your objective was to drain the swamp.” Translation: It’s easy to get so caught up in the day-to-day challenges of job, family and life’s curveballs that we neglect focusing on those overarching things—the really strategic things—that might move us from good to great.

And I’ll confess that I might still be fighting alligators if President Robert Brown hadn’t directed us to review our school or college plans and, if necessary, adjust them to be in harmony with the University’s plan. Truth be told, the years-old COM plan had long before been overtaken by emerging communication technologies. It was akin to a yellowing snapshot of what we were years ago, nearly oblivious to the looming revolution brought on by the Internet.

So we decided to start from scratch, as if we were writing a plan for a new college teaching mass communication in a digital age. This freed us to focus on our big objectives and to ask ourselves those truly big questions, such as: What do we want our students to learn? How do we get the best faculty and the best students? Whom do we admire, even envy, and what do we need to match them? What are our unique assets on which we can build? What resources do we have already, and what additional resources do we need to go from good to great?

Faculty, staff and alumni of COM were all invited to weigh in on those and similar questions. We hired consultants to guide us through countless discussions and hours of research to make sure that our dreams were grounded in realities. Associate Dean Tannny Vigil then pulled everything together into the document we call Pathways to Greatness: A Strategic Plan for the College of Communication. And what did we decide? To go from good to great, we now believe that we must be a leader in understanding and teaching new and emerging media; we must attract excellent, forward-thinking faculty, a blend of scholars and expert practitioners; we must finance and build state-of-the-art facilities to support teaching and learning; we must earn the respect of the professions we serve by providing them with meaningful research and by sending them top-quality graduates; and, of course, we must be the choice of the best and brightest students seeking to become professional communicators.

Finally, we must have your help. If you’d like a copy of Pathways to Greatness, just send me an email or letter. We want your feedback, suggestions and ideas. And we will need your support in many ways: your financial assistance, so we can provide them with meaningful research and by sending them top-quality graduates; and, of course, we must be the choice of the best and brightest students seeking to become professional communicators.

Sincerely,

Tom Fiedler (’71)
Dean, College of Communication
Back to the Future, in HD

An unused space on the COM building’s third floor has leapt from the 1950s into the 21st century, with the spring opening of the Ezratti Family High-Definition Editing Lab.

Workmen gutted the room, redid the ceilings and floors, painted the walls—and, most important, installed a dozen new workstations with the latest Mac Pro computers that boast the newest software for editing HD video, thanks to a gift from the Ezratti Family. Now, COM students are using the programs Final Cut Pro, Avid Media Composer to complete projects for their courses in film and television. A wall-mounted flat-screen TV shows a loop of student work, including film clips and news spots. A booth on a nearby wall is outfitted with the latest Mac Pro computers that boast the newest software for editing HD video, thanks to a gift from the Ezratti Family.

“Just a few years ago, students here using Final Cut Pro couldn’t even open a project from Final Cut Pro on a Macintosh,” says Maya Ezratti, pictured above. “Now, the Ezratti Family High-Definition Editing Lab is dedicated to students who are interested in working with the latest technology,” says Maya Ezratti.

The idea for reverse mentoring, Quigley says, came from Carol Cone (’78), who recently retired from the firm she founded, Cone, Inc., to take a position directing corporate social responsibility for the global PR firm Edelman.

“Who would have thought Bud Light Lime would be a success? As Joan Schneider (’72) explains in her new book with coauthor Julie Hall, a new product launch means make-or-break time, and the proper marketing can make all the difference. In The New Launch Plan: 152 Tips, Tactics and Trends from the Most Memorable New Product, Schneider and Hall—president and executive VP, respectively, of marketing communications agency Schneider Associates—draw upon their decades of experience launching new products, as well as upon eight years of research and data compiled from the annual Most Memorable New Product Launch Survey. Packed with tips and case studies, the book is designed to be a road map for marketers, entrepreneurs and PR professionals who want to steer clear of common pitfalls and ensure their new product is a hit.

Learn more at www.thenewlaunchplan.com.

Mentoring in reverse

When she’s not setting, giving presentations on product launches or celebrating Schneider Associates’ 50th anniversary (this year), Schneider finds time to stay active as a COM alumnus. She recently underwrote a unique new student agency called 4th Floor Digital. The students act as “reverse mentors,” giving workshops and tutorials to older COM alumni who need a handle on social networking, blogging and online video as business tools.

“This is the first time in history when the younger generation knows more intuitively about something than the older generation,” says the students’ advisor, Associate Professor of Public Relations Steve Quigley. “The digital natives” who make up the 4th Floor team are “incredible, phenomenal kids,” Quigley says, who have helped orient alum execs at Morrissey & Co., Travel Media Inc., and other companies.

Learn more at 4thfloordigitals.com.

Let’s do Launch

The NEW Launch Plan: 152 Tips, Tactics and Trends from the Most Memorable New Product

 launched new brands, and two of the top three are from the ’90s: Bud Light Lime and Mountain Dew.

But me, I was the business end of the past]

Learn more at www.thenewlaunchplan.com.

Worthwhile Californian Initiative

The BU in L.A. internship program continues to pick up steam. Variety recently gave the program positive coverage, although the writer insisted on calling BU “Boston U.” at every reference. (While not exactly inaccurate, “Boston U.” evokes memories from 1925.)

BU in L.A. students travel to Hollywood and live there for an entire semester, working in film studios and sound booths, taking classes taught by industry professionals and guest lecturers such as actor Michael Chiklis (CFA’86) and networking with established film and TV alumni such as HBO senior production VP Jay Roeie (“79), Comcast CEO Ted Harbert (“79), and Pulitzer producer Richard Gladstein (CGR’86, COM’83).

“This is the entertainment capital of the world,” says Harbert. “And this is where the jobs are.” Like characters in a real-world Real World, students live in Park La Brea, in the heart of Tinseltown, attend classes and study for three courses and work up to 40 hours a week at one or two internships, in settings directly related to their career goals, whether that means Wes Craven’s horror studio Midnight Entertainment or Paramount Pictures’ finance department.

“Since the program began seven years ago,” director Bill Linsman told Variety, “hundreds of students have come through here, and the vast majority have moved here and become employed. So the program has become a bridge to their employment.”

web extra

To see a video about the BU in L.A. internship program, visit www.bu.edu/LAmovie.
In Memoriam

Kendrick Fenderson (’52), public relations professional and St. Petersburg, Fla., community leader, passed away in December at the age of 82. Fenderson graduated from St. Petersburg High School, and then Rollins College after serving in the Navy during the end of WWII. He obtained a master’s degree from what was then the School of Public Relations at Boston University, where he was elected to Tau Mu Epsilon. His career began with General Electric in New York, but he was soon invited back to St. Petersburg, first to work for the St. Petersburg Times, and then for the First National Bank of St. Petersburg and as a professor of public relations and journalism for the University of South Florida. Fenderson became deeply involved in the community—leading up the City Council Goals Committee, sitting on the board of the St. Petersburg Symphony, and acting as a children’s educator in the Unitarian Universalist Church of St. Petersburg. Fenderson is survived by Caroline, his wife of 55 years, their daughter, Karen, and her husband Eric, and grandchildren, Sarah and Ana.

Biographer, political counsel and an organizer of the first Earth Day March on Washington, Robert E. Clarke (’57) died in February. He was 78. Clarke attended BU after serving in the Air Force as chief historian for the 802nd Air Division. He worked as counsel for several politicians and corporations, including service as press secretary and director of communication for Alaska governor Jay Hammond. Clarke also undertook various environmental endeavors, including working with explorer Paul Emil Victor to extend the United Nations’ protection of Antarctica for scientific research, producing TV coverage of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, and writing the 1973 biography of ecologist Elton Trueblood Richards. Clarke is survived by his children, Christopher, Montgomery and Rachel; sisters Ehrig and Melinda; brother Terence; and his grandchildren, nephews and nieces.

In Memoriam

Jeffrey B. White Memorial Fund in Journalism at the College of Communication

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The Fund is established as a tribute to Jeffrey’s life and work in journalism, and preference will be given to those College of Communication graduate students in the field of print journalism who are enrolled in the Washington, D.C., Journalism Program.

Recipients of the Jeffrey White Fund award will be chosen by the Dean of the College of Communication along with the Chair of the Journalism Department and the Director of the College’s Washington, D.C., Program.

Gifts can be made payable to the Jeffrey B. White Fund at Boston University and mailed to:
Steve Morin
Alumni Office, College of Communication
640 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215.

Please contact Steve Morin with any questions at smorin@bu.edu.

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Pet clothing is on the rise

BY ALI BHANPURI (10)

It used to be cute, a novelty. Empire Carpet commercials featuring groomed brown Labradors wearing deer antlers during the holidays. Jewelry ads aimed at men, but really for women, presenting a bow-wearing pug with a diamond ring attached to its collar. Fastening a favorite football franchise’s helmet to a bulldog during game day, or laughing at Scooby-Doo wearing a dress—it was funny, even adorable.

But, when did Lucky costumed as Rudolph for a snapshot become the norm? Is it Taco Bell’s doing? The chain’s crafty sombrero-sporting Chihuahua named Dinky won our hearts with his catchy slogan and checkered bandana. How many owners dressed their dogs like Dinky for Halloween that year? A dog, dressed up as another dog. Or, maybe it was Paris Hilton’s pooch-in-a-purse approach that ignited this trend, though condemning the heiress for her dog fashions may be a bit unfair.

So, is it the result of one person or a collective effort? I guess what I really want to know is, when did man’s best friend become man’s favorite toy?

Pet pampering, especially for dogs and cats, has quickly become one of the fastest growing industries in the country. Americans spent $46 billion on their pets last year, according to the American Pets Products Association, up nearly 29 percent since 2004. In 2008, the National Retail Federation reported that U.S. retail sales rose only 1.4 percent, while pet specialty businesses such as PetSmart rose as much as 8.4 percent.

One reason for the growth is the availability of dog-catering businesses and their accessibility to dog owners. Consumers have become surrounded by doggy-designed goods that, as Brittaney Kiefer says, are “too cute” to pass up.

Kiefer (‘10) says at first she thought it was dumb-dressing-up-dogs in different apparel—“They have fur, why do they need clothes?” But, when the 3-pound fossil-like Machado Carlos Humberto Ortega (“Macho”) arrived at her house last year, a Chihuahua who could lounge comfortably in his water bowl, she says she understood why the dog-dressing trend has caught on.

“I think people dress up their dogs first and foremost because it’s cute,” says Kiefer, who bought a Snuggie for her pup last Christmas to add to his hanging wardrobe in Kiefer’s brother’s closet. “Also, because the dog starts to feel like part of the family. One night, my mom came home and said to Macho, ‘You’re not a puppy, you’re a person.’ So, if he’s a person, he obviously needs clothes.”

That makes sense. People need clothes to stay warm. Similarly, short-haired dogs are not naturally equipped to withstand frigid temperatures in the winter. Shaking hind limbs, frost-covered whiskers—watching a dog shiver next to a tree as it does its business is as inhumane as it gets. We’re all guilty bystanders at that point. But, is it because of the cold that people masquerade their dogs in sweaters and Polos? Spending money on your pet is a sign of adoration. Dog owners do it because they love their pooches. Right?

It’s hard to say for certain. But, if I could get my hands on a Bashard Mendenhall jersey to fit my bulldog, would I slide it over his slobbering, skin-hanging head make him a fashion statement? No. Wearing a football jersey is totally different from bundling up in a Burberry sweater. Totally.

Erica Masini says getting antlers on her yellow lab retriever, Daisy, is a challenge every Christmas. Although the end product is “cute,” (there’s that word again), convincing the 11-year-old four-legged “princess” to wear the antlers is not easy. Daisy’s reluctance to don the reindeer garb has made Masini step back and reflect.

“I think the people who dress up dogs on a regular basis are taking it too far,” says Masini (‘10), who fears her family has crossed that threshold. “You can love your dog without making it look ridiculous. My mom wants to paint Daisy’s nails—I have to go home and save her.”

Similarly, short-haired dogs are not naturally equipped to withstand frigid temperatures in the winter. Shaking hind limbs, frost-covered whiskers—watching a dog shiver next to a tree as it does its business is as inhumane as it gets. We’re all guilty bystanders at that point. But, is it because of the cold that people masquerade their dogs in sweaters and Polos? Websites such as glamourdog.com and spoiledrottendoggies.com say otherwise, casting a light on an impractical but rapidly growing fashion trend.

“People are taking it too far,” says Masini (‘10), who fears her family has crossed that threshold. “You can love your dog without making it look ridiculous. My mom wants to paint Daisy’s nails—I have to go home and save her.”

Purchasing silly dog hats or unnecessary jewel-encrusted collars is not limited to a certain demographic. These products are like Facebook: every dog owner has one—just look through their posted picture albums if you’re skeptical. However, it’s hard to imagine that grandma, sitting in her armchair like Dr. Evil, is hatch-}

In Great Britain, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) has taken out its man-made pen and drawn a line at comfort. The animal welfare group says it will bring legal action against dog owners who dress their dogs in uncomfortable clothing, citing the Animal Welfare Act of 2006. Buyers of the biker jackets better hope the sleeves are loose around the paws.

Kiefer says she draws her line with bigger dogs, who shouldn’t wear clothing unless it’s for the holidays or their birthdays. “We dress up for special occasions, why shouldn’t they?”

It’s hard to say for certain. But, if I could get my hands on a Bashard Mendenhall jersey to fit my bulldog, would I slide it over his slobbering, skin-hanging head make him a fashion statement? No. Wearing a football jersey is totally different from bundling up in a Burberry sweater. Totally.

Ali Bhanpuri was published in the Boston Globe Magazine as an undergraduate last spring. To read more of his work, visit alibhanpuri.wordpress.com.
“...My grades being what they were,” Talese went on, addressing the Power of Narrative conference at BU, “meant I could not get into college in my state of New Jersey, nor in neighboring Pennsylvania or New York.” Fortunately, “My father, the tailor, had among his clients a doctor who had been born in Birmingham, Alabama, had come to Ocean City, New Jersey, and was a prominent physician in 1949. When my father lamented, ‘Oh, I wish my son Gay could go to college,’ the doctor said, ‘well, I can get him into the University of Alabama.’ Not that my father or I had any idea where Alabama was. It was a foreign country. Indeed, it was, as I would find out...”

“I wasn’t a lot brighter at Alabama than I’d been in New Jersey...I did write for the college newspaper [but] journalism in those days was formulaic. The best thing that happened to me at Alabama was meeting Jimmy Pinkston in my geology class. He told me, ‘You know, if you ever go to New York, look up my cousin Turner Catledge. He’s the managing editor of the New York Times.’”

Upon graduation in 1953, Talese returned to New Jersey, then bought a bus ticket and traveled the two and a half miles to New York City for the first time in his life. Unannounced, he walked into the Times building and asked to see Mr. Catledge. “Do you have an appointment?” the receptionist asked. “No, I don’t have an appointment.” “Well, why are you here?” “I know his cousin!” Within two weeks, a copy boy position opened up, and Talese began his career.

“The point of the story,” Talese said, “is that in journalism, you have to show up.” Three weeks into the job, while exploring Times Square on his lunch break, Talese spotted his first story. It started with the headline, or headlines, appearing in hundreds and hundreds of light bulbs, running around a three-sided building. “How in the hell do those words get formed with those bulbs?” young Talese wondered.

With a new program led by Pulitzer-winning feature writer and author Isabel Wilkerson, COM is back on the map as a mecca for long-form journalism. Last spring, the College where J. Anthony Lukas taught and researched his narrative nonfiction classic Common Ground hosted a gathering of writers, photographers, documentary filmmakers and others engaged in or interested in carrying on the human tradition of storytelling, no matter the platform. New Journalism veteran Gay Talese, Friday Night Lights author Buzz Bissinger, and New York Times executive editor Bill Keller were among the practitioners discussing the timeless art.
The Death of Narrative Journalism...

has been greatly exaggerated, said the silver-haired Bill Keller, executive editor of the New York Times. Some highlights from his keynote speech at COM’s narrative conference:

* Forget short attention spans. The Times’ most-emailed articles are often its long-form stories, such as Dexter Filkins’ deep reporting from Iraq and Afghanistan. Some people even read those articles on their Blackberries—a sure sign of a story that won’t go.

* The tools of narrative—such as suspense—can be employed even in a 720-word piece, as in Dan Barry’s 2004 “About New York” column about a Brooklyn fire in which a woman had to throw her baby daughter off a roof in hopes that a neighbor below could catch her. (Want to know what happens, don’t you?)

* Beware the excesses of narrative writing. “Like most creative talents, it can be misuse. An artful writer can distract you from inconvenient truths, turn portraiture into caricature, confound your prejudices, or write around important gaps in the story...Perhaps the most important responsibility we bear as journalists is to do justice to complexity.”

The dawn of online citizen journalism is welcome in that the conversation around current events is no longer one-sided. But, Keller says, “You get what you pay for, and most citizen journalists work for free. If I needed my appendix out, I’d hesitate to go to a citizen surgeon. If my roof leaks, I’m probably not going to call a citizen carpenter. When the celebration of citizen journalism becomes a rejection of authority, of expertise, of professional craftsmanship, then my news go off.”

* This year, the Times’ collaboration with the well-funded nonprofit Pro Publica yielded a dramatic 13,000-word report on doctor-assisted suicide in the aftermath of Hiroshima—through the story of Katrina. The article earned writer Sheri Fink a Pulitzer. Philanthropy may not be the sole savior of narrative journalism, Keller says. “But if nothing else, ventures like this demonstrate that some smart people, smart people with money, think journalism is worth saving.”

* Bringing Back the Fun

“I admire your fluency with the F-word,” one conference attendee told Buzz Bissinger after the Philadelphia Inquirer columnist and Friday Night Lights author finished his curses-riddled talk. Romantic, but perhaps strangely uplifting, Bissinger outlined some of the broad principles he employed in his book (later a movie and television series) about a hard-luck Texas town and its high school football team. He also ranted a little. Some highlights:

* “F—the past,” Bissinger said. As journalists, “We dwell on it way too much.”

* “On the other hand, ‘Newspapering should be fun. It shouldn’t be like f—ing insurance company.’ If it rains, we’d tear up the carpeting, rip out all the cubicles, and everyone would smoke and drink on the job. Why? Because it was fun!”

* “Most quotes suck. They get in the way of the narrative and take you right out of the story. Tony Luke’s is incredibly smart, but he speaks in disconnected three-word sentences. You’re insane to quote him.”

* “We have to drop this bulls— that we are dead. We’re not. We’re roughed up, but we’re still kicking, and we’re still producing and we’re still caring... We are still the nation’s greatest defense against greed, injustice [and] lying.”

* “We need to fight back. We need to stop taking it...”

We have to demand of our web editors that these comments sections after the articles we write not become some forum for us to gratuitously get the crap beaten out of us—incidentally. I know I’m short. Who f—ing cares? I mean, one guy compared me to Leona Helmsley! If the comments have nothing cogent to say, don’t run them.”
Media experts predict the future of newspapers won’t include paper at all. The future of newspapers (or, more accurately, of news organizations that have historically distributed news on paper) lies online.

But while newspaper audiences are moving to the Web, the advertising dollars that have traditionally supported the industry are not. Newspaper executives across the country are struggling to build a profitable business around their growing online audiences, and no consensus has yet emerged as to which revenue models will work best.

Many in the industry remain confident in the advertising and subscription revenues that have sustained them for decades, while others believe only radical change can save the news business.

In this second part of a series about how media can stay profitable online, we ask the crucial question of some old-line, forward-thinking print journalists.

By Corinne Steinbrenner

How Can Newspapers Make Money on the Web?

In this second part of a series about how media can stay profitable online, we ask the crucial question of some old-line, forward-thinking print journalists.

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Faith in Advertising

Print advertising space in Boston is relatively scarce, with slots available in the Boston Globe, the Boston Herald and a handful of other publications. The supply of advertising space on websites that Bostonians might visit—from Google to Facebook to RedSoxStats.com—is practically unlimited. The contrast between paper scarcity and digital plenty helps to explain why advertisers are willing to pay far more for ads in the printed Boston Herald than for ads on BostonHerald.com. Newspaper revenue figures across the country reflect this fiscal reality—according to the Newspaper Association of America, online ads account for just 10 percent of total ad revenue for newspaper companies.

Despite the dismal advertising picture, says Mark Jurkowitz (’75), “newspaper people are not giving up on the concept.” Jurkowitz is associate director for the Pew Research Center’s Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ), which recently surveyed newspaper executives about the revenue models they’re pursuing. The survey results, he says, show that newspaper executives are still largely focusing their online money-making efforts on advertising.

Jurkowitz suspects this continued confidence in ads is based on a belief that better online advertising models will eventually arrive. But, he says, “I don’t think anyone anticipates online advertising will ever become what display and classified advertising was for the traditional newspaper industry. It’s never going to work that effectively.”
Putting Up Pay Walls

Newspaper websites are making real money — the Boston Globe website makes tens of millions of dollars in revenue — Fiedler says, but online revenues are not yet high enough to cover the target 35 percent of a newspaper organization's budget. "Somehow you've got to find a way to get the online advertising revenue side up about 3 to 3.5 times what it is now." That's the conundrum," says Fiedler. "They make too much money in the old distribution platform to let go of it."

Apple's new iPad and other e-readers might provide opportunities for higher ad revenues as well. "People go to a website and they can't wait to defeat the ads because the ads are so good. But with counting ads on the iPad can actually be a pleasurable experience, much like reading the glossy ads that appear in magazines. Often, he says, "we read those ads with the same interest with which we read the content." If e-readers can duplicate the magazine experience, advertisers may be willing to pay higher rates for ads that appear in the e-reader version of a newspaper.

Combining these improved rates with other supplemental income streams — including some forms of subscriptions — will also help eliminate the manufacturing costs, Fiedler says, "and I'm confident we'll get there."
The public relations professional’s leverage is opinion, or attitudes. There are three—and only three—ways that leverage can impact how people think:

1. One can seek to change an opinion or attitude. One can try to persuade a person with pro-life sympathies to believe in the pro-choice alternative. One can seek to persuade a traveler to vacation to Greece instead of to Bali, or to buy Tide detergent instead of Wisk.

2. One can seek to reinforce a currently held opinion or attitude. One can hope to make a charter school supporter even more ardent in his or her support by increasing his or her participation or contribution or by demonstrating the greater worth of the institution.

3. One can create an opinion or an attitude where none previously existed. One can present sufficient evidence to turn people who had no interest in the humane treatment of animals into supporters of animal rights.

In effect, the overall role of public relations is to motivate a person or a group to take a specific action. No new invention or methodology can ever change the basic human characteristic of communicating ideas with a group to take a specific action. It was not until the early part of the 20th century when new inventions such as television and radio became available that the entire communications industry began to grow. In the mid-20th century, the miracle of all miracles, television. In their own

PUBLIC RELATIONS IS FOREVER!
BY HAROLD BURSON (HON ‘88)

The founder and chairman of global communications firm Burson-Marsteller, on the past, present and future of the field he has influenced for 57 years.

My greatest frustration as a lifelong public relations professional is that so many of my fellow professionals cannot define public relations in its totality. Otherwise, I would not read blogs and articles in the trade press titled “Will the Internet Replace Public Relations?” or “Social Networks Are Replacing Public Relations” or “Will Advertising Make Public Relations Obsolete?” What nonsense! The fact is that public relations has been practiced from the time humans began interacting with one another, from the time one person first wanted to persuade another to change an opinion or to take a specific course of action. The Ten Commandments were not written on parchment; they were carved onto tablets of stone. The Romans didn’t build wide boulevards to avoid traffic jams; that’s where their legions marched to demonstrate the grandeur and power of the Roman empire to the rest of the world. Martin Luther didn’t paste his 95 theses on the cathedral bulletin board; he nailed them on the cathedral door. The purpose of the Boston Tea Party was hardly to protect the small tea tax; it was to dramatize the broader concept “no taxation without representation.” Using the word “massacre” (as in the Boston Massacre) to describe the slayings of five colonists (in fact, the colonial firebrand Samuel Adams referred to it as the “horrible Boston massacre”) hardly depicted the event literally. Rather, these were manifestations of a sense of public interest; the second is communicating so persuasively that it will motivate the desired audience to take a specific action.

While there are at least as many definitions of public relations as there are textbooks and deep thinkers about the discipline, the one that most succinctly encapsulates its totality comes from the street slang: “If you’re going to talk the talk, you gotta walk the walk.” An early simplified version was Public relations is doing good and getting credit for it.

A more academic definition goes like this: Public relations is the approved social language employed to develop policies and behavioral patterns which, when communicated effectively, motivates individuals or groups to take a desired course of action.

This definition recognizes two components that must be brought to bear. The first is behaving in such a manner that accords with the public interest; the second is communicating so persuasively that it will motivate the desired audience to take a specific action.

Harold Burson is founding chairman of global PR giant Burson-Marsteller.
Q & A

PART

COMtalk

family’s business vision and, therefore, of extraordinary capacity for innovation Benetton Group has always displayed an entrepreneurial values and principles how does the Benetton Group represent the key values that still underpin our strategy: long-term vision, a sense of responsibility, creativity, a passion for excellence, a drive to take risks, and a commitment to the environment. Today, the Benetton Group is one of the world’s leading clothing brands, with a global presence in more than 120 countries and a reputation for innovation and social responsibility.

How does the Benetton Group represent the entrepreneurial values and principles of the Benetton family? Benetton Group has always displayed an extraordinary capacity for innovation and creativity, from the commercial side to production, from communication to product. Undoubtedly, many aspects of this focus on the new are in the genes of the family’s business vision and, therefore, of its companies.

These innovation values also form the core of the Benetton brand identity, one of the best-known brands in the world: a new, democratic identity, simple but original, inspired by life itself which, from a practical point of view, translates into products with an excellent quality-price ratio and a contemporary, new lifestyle.

The focus on the new, the capacity for creativity and innovation—can you give an example? I think the most obvious, global example is our advertising, which, starting in the 1980s, became an expression of our time. International, heterogeneous, characterized by universal social themes—so as to reach audiences in 120 different countries with the same effectiveness—it succeeded in arousing the attention of the public and the media. It went beyond the confines of conventional advertising campaigns, to take part in cultural debate across the world. Benetton campaigns have been criticized and praised; they trigger exchanges of opinion; they have always reassured their status as proponents of the avant-garde.

Since 1994, the evolution of Benetton’s young, modern, creative communication is entrusted to Fabrica, the group’s communication research center and another excellent, practical example of our philosophy based on originality, creativity and innovation. Fabrica has taken up the challenge of expressing innovation and an openness to new world visions. It’s a means of combining culture and industry in fields like design, music, cinema, photography, graphic art and the new media. Fabrica chose to back the creativity of young artists—researchers from around the world who, after careful screening, are invited to Fabrica to develop real communication projects under the art direction of experts in the various fields. We have learned that creativity and growth are the result of an encounter between different styles and approaches, not of the absolutist imposition of someone’s ideas.

Fabrica’s latest project? At the beginning of this year, Fabrica launched a major communication campaign for Benetton Group in the shape of a global, online casting session: It’s My Time. Aimed at young adults around the world, It’s My Time attracted the enthusiastic participation of over 160,000 young people of different ages and styles from over 200 different countries: from Ethiopia to Zimbabwe, from Nepal to Uzbekistan, from Guatemala to Cambodia and Iceland.

Through the means of the social networking tools preferred by young adults, this vast virtual plaza enabled Benetton to draw up an unprecedented, exclusive sociological sample of young people’s inspirations and aspirations, and their interest in the future.

An event was then held in New York to celebrate the 20 winners from across the globe who will feature in Benetton’s ad campaign for fall/winter 2010. Another very fresh, new project was the launch of Colors magazine’s issue no. 76, entitled “Teenagers,” devoted to the stories and lifestyles of the world’s young adults. This issue included—a world first—an “augmented reality” campaign, whereby readers can listen to the full version of interviews and see behind-the-scenes sequences and get to know the people featured in the magazine in their own words and movements. This technology was subsequently adopted by another prestigious publication, Esquire.

The world of communications is changing so rapidly. How does this impact your business strategies for your companies? We’re well aware we can’t rest on our laurels, despite our very positive results. So we’re attentive to new trends, keeping in tune with the zeitgeist. It’s My Time is a practical example of our approach. There’s Benetton’s traditional interest in the world, different cultures and crossing borders. At the same time, there’s a focus on the digital revolution that affects us all, a revolution that promotes dialogue, openness towards the rest of the world and new ideas. It’s My Time crossed the global vastness of the Internet to establish a new approach to fashion—and this was another significant innovation—with a strong participative aspect enabling young adults both to follow trends and help create new ones.
In the glamorous world of professional basketball, there is nothing grimmer than the morning shootaround. Conceived as a way for coaches to keep tabs on their players—With Chamberlain famously was not a fan—the shootaround is generally nothing more than a 30-minute dress rehearsal for that night’s game.

It stands to reason, then, that very few things could be any less glamorous than a morning shootaround in the NBA’s Development League—commonly referred to as the D-League, or just the D.

For no more than $26,000 a year and as little as $13,000, professional basketball players choose to play in the D rather than in the sometimes more-affluent overseas leagues for the simple reason that NBA teams are more likely to offer them a contract if they’re Stateside.

It’s a bit of a slim hope. About 20 percent of the league’s players were called up to the NBA this season. That was an all-time high for the league, which began play in 2001. But 20 percent of something is still way better than nothing, and in the early hours of a still chilly March morning, the Maine Red Claws are going through their paces under the watchful eyes of their coach, Austin Ainge, son of Danny Ainge, the Celtics general manager and president of basketball operations.

The only people in the Expo, Portland’s barn-like 3,200 seat arena, are the ten players, the coaches, and Jana Spaulding, the team’s one-woman public relations department.

Spaulding is working on media game notes for that evening’s opponent, the oddly-named Iowa Energy, and fielding inquiries from various media outlets. It’s one of the charming aspects of the D that the players are far more accessible here than they are in the NBA, and Spaulding takes it all in stride. “The players understand the value,” she says. They get exposure and so does the young franchise.

She’s not sure about this one, though. Someone wants Maurice Ager—former first-round draft pick of the Dallas Mavericks and one-time Final Four hero at Michigan State—to blog about the upcoming NCAA Tournament. The Red Claws are in a playoff push and they’re about to go on one of the D-League’s infamous “Road Trips From Hell” that will take them by bus across the Dakotas via Sioux Falls.

(Later, Spaulding will decide to forward the request to Ager, who emails back from somewhere in South Dakota, “OK, sure. I’ll have it tomorrow.”)

There are other concerns for Spaulding as well. The Expo will be sold out, as it will be for every game in its inaugural season, but there’s a storm brewing up the coast and there’s a section in the arena that’s been known to leak. It’s also ‘70s Night and various front office members are trying to get her costume for the evening.

On this Spaulding will not concede. She is, after all a Mainer—raised in nearby Cumberland, which perhaps accounts for what her boss, team president Jon Jennings, calls “a no-nonsense quality about her.”

She even had her life planned out at age ten, when she told her family that she was going to direct media relations for the Mariners, Portland’s minor league hockey team at the time. (None of her colleagues today are surprised when they hear this anecdote.)

Some three decades later, she has found her way back home after a career that included stops at Mankota (now Minnesota) State, the East Coast Hockey League, the 2000 Stanley Cup-winning New Jersey Devils, and a long relationship with the Travis Roy Foundation.

“Truth be told, she didn’t expect to wind up back in Maine. And with a basketball team? Come on. She was hockey through and through. It’s funny how things work out, though.”

Spaulding first became aware of Travis Roy (“he’s as we all did, with news of the Terrier’s paralyzing on-ice injury. Word spread quickly in BU hockey circles, and at the time Spaulding was working as communications director of the East Coast Hockey League. Someone, she thought, should do something for this kid, and it might as well be me.”

She organized a collection drive among the ECHL teams and delivered the check to Travis’ father Lee, at the NHL All-Star Game that year in Boston. Travis was still in the hospital then, but it wouldn’t be long before Spaulding would have an even bigger impact on his life and his nonprofit foundation.

She continued her association with Roy after she began working for Rick Minch (“Rick” in the Devils’ media relations department. She received word about a golfing fundraiser, called up and asked, “What can I do?” The answer: Run the tournament.

Spaulding’s life was about to change drastically. The Devils were sold to new owners and Minch’s department, recognized as one of the NHL’s best, was slowly dismantled. Spaulding was looking for her next job when her father was diagnosed with cancer.

She returned home with ample time on her hands and thought about the foundation. “It started off as just a way to fill some time until I got the job I wanted,” she says. “The more that time went on, I realized that it was the job that I wanted.”
As charitable entities go, the Roy Foundation, which helps survivors of spinal cord injuries, is relatively small. It relies primarily on volunteer work to sustain itself, and Roy was more than thrilled to have someone with Spaulding’s experience on hand.

“The first 10 years of the Foundation we just plugged along and Jana really set a plan to put us in the right direction,” Roy says. “She got us thinking of things that we should be thinking about.” A website, for example. She didn’t know the first thing about designing a website, but no one else did either, so she did it herself.

Working out of her home in Portland and commuting to Boston, Spaulding found comfort in her work, but as the years rolled on she was having a harder time making it viable financially. “If I could have made a living at it, I would have stayed forever,” she says.

The time was coming to make another career choice and Spaulding kept hearing things about a new basketball team in Portland. But she thought, “No one in their right mind is going to call this 42-year-old PR director with a hockey background.”

“Twenty-four hours after she submitted her resume, she got a call from Jon Jennings. In a league of fascinating life stories, few can compare with Jennings. A former assistant coach with the Celtics during the Bird era, Jennings also served various roles in the Clinton White House, served as chief of staff in the Clinton White House, served as chief of staff in the Bird era, Jennings also served various roles with Jennings’. A former assistant coach with the Celtics with Jennings. He settled on Portland, and with a strong local ownership group in place he was also committed to building something more than just a minor league basketball team. He wanted the Red Claws to be part of the community, and for that he needed a conduit to the community. He needed Jana Spaulding.

She has the “perfect marriage of the skill sets that I need for the position,” Jennings says. “It’s worked out perfectly.”

In their inaugural season the Red Claws not only sold out all 24 games, they also were an immediate sensation in Portland. ‘There’s a beer named after them, Gritty BAAstard. A crustacean who helped them lead the league in whoopie pie naturally; and out all 24 games, they also were an immediate sensation in Portland. There’s a beer named after them, Gritty BAAstard. A crustacean who helped them lead the league in whoopie pie naturally; and out perfectly.”

Spaulding’s job is a combination of media and community relations, and hardly a day goes by when she isn’t shepherding players from practices to local events. After the shootaround she’ll tell Billy Thomas that his schedule appearance at a school to read to kids was canceled. One of the all-time good guys, Thomas is disappointed.

“Man, I love that stuff,” she says. Spaulding just laughs because she does too. “In all my years of sports,” she says, “I never had more fun than I did this year.” Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home or the DL.

Paul Flannery teaches sportswriting at COM. He covers the Celtics for WEEI.com, and has also published a series about the Red Claws on the radio station’s website.
We are pleased that so many individuals, employers and community members share the personal and professional accomplishments of our alumni. Send news of career advancements, awards, family additions, educational milestones and other achievements to ClassNotes@bu.edu.

For a conversation with Straggas and Tingle, visit
www.bu.edu/today/tingle.

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Robert Altman and the late Howard Zinn, among others. The concept of the American Dream through the eyes of Filmmaker Vincent Straggas (‘82), co-founder of New York Originals, is featured in the documentary, Jimmy Tingle’s American Dream.

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Jodi (Papaj) Tanzen (‘89) and Glenn Tanzen were married on August 1, 2010. In attendance were bridesmaids Lauren Rozalis (CAS’97) and, as well as Kevin Packford (SAR’97), Shirley Glasgow (SAR’97) and Amy Reynolds (CAS’96). Jodi and Glenn recently bought a house in the historic East Side of Providence, R.I., where they will be relocating from Manhattan.

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Vince Bancheri

Vince Bancheri (CGS'06, COM'06) took this photo of Tyler Bissell and Alexandra Kalinowski (CFA'09) at a folk music hootenanny at an Allston apartment last spring. A freelance photographer and pedicab driver, Bancheri is also a musician and concert promoter who runs a record label, Mama Bird Recording Co.

When he was an undergraduate photojournalism major at COM, Bancheri, inspired by tales of Woody Guthrie-era rent parties, began hosting hootenannies in his attic at COM. He told BU Today, “They played ballads, drinking songs, spirituals. We sang songs by Hank Williams, Johnny Cash [and] the Carter family,” along with early 1960s folk revival classics by Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, and Pete Seeger.

Soon, these gatherings of musicians and fans outgrew the informal hootenannies continue in slightly more scale “Grand Ole Hoots” at the Democracy Center and the informal hootenannies continue in slightly more scale “Grand Ole Hoots” at the Democracy Center and of years, they have been putting on, and selling out, larger-scale “Grand Ole Hoots.”

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