

channel talk: Blog
resources, tips, tricks & info for PR professionals

channel talk

Advice For The PR Grad - Be Bold and Creative

In a tough job market it's more important than ever to stand out from the crowd by being bold and creative throughout your search.

BE CREATIVE:

Andrea Kobynik, a Bilingual PR pro has this advice for someone new to the Public Relations field. She holds that participation in social media is key for new PR pros. She recommends: "Think out of the box and show how creative you are!" For instance, you can start writing a blog about your area of expertise. It's a great opportunity to show you are innovative and that you have ideas that others probably don't. Reading and commenting on other blogs, participating in social networking sites, micro-blogging, etc. can help you not only establish a relationship with other participants of social media but also find a job. Your blog and your participation in the social media speak about you; they are the reflection of your knowledge and originality. Write every day about your innovative ideas and you'll see the results!"

You should also think "outside the box" in terms of where you apply. Zac Rantz, Communications Coordinator, says "One area the new PR people might look would be the education field. Schools are moving to new technology and those in the PR field might be the right ones to help usher them in. It could be a part-time job doing the district's e-newsletter or managing their website, but that could lead to getting your foot in the door when they can hire a full-time person. You could also look at doing design work on brochures or other informational handouts. It never hurts to ask." By considering other opportunities besides traditional agency experience, you may find yourself facing less competition for the jobs that are available. "There are some amazing jobs available in digital PR (and in the quality SEO firms who need digital PR skills). I would encourage anyone to think about the industry in those wider terms" -Will Cronlow

Christina Koszow, Managing Director at Branding Brand points out that "Every company has a different definition of public relations, so remember that some opportunities will not be listed as "PR" positions. Keywords such as "community outreach," "media relations," "publicity," "communications," or even "marketing" can often lead to jobs that require similar skill sets."

"Look in unusual places. If you know what industry you want to do PR in, search those industry tradebooks for PR jobs. Don't just look for jobs in PR trades. For example, if you are interested in Entertainment PR, scan Hollywood Reporter or Variety for their job listings. There are trades for every type of business and for some industries like say cycling, you're not going to get many PR people scanning Bicycle Retailer for a job." -Tracy B

"Contact marketing and advertising agencies they are seeking someone, but haven't pool also ask them if they would be willing to accept PR agencies (such as myself). There are plus graduates, but haven't had time to perform a job smaller firm and build more experience. Do them a resume/cover letter." -Melissa Casson

"Do not discount the importance of email, the biggest firms that get profiles in college recs places require candidates to research and candidates won't jump. Look at PRWeek and the usual suspects. Research those firms - Alert on them and see what has been written specifically (you'd be surprised how much in your cover letter and networking pitch based market is bad, but firms are always hiring. You also does." -Carolina Caniza-Levine, co-founder

Once you find a company or firm you are into crowd of applicants! "I once had a grad that is long. When you opened the box, she'd show you PR colors from the outset." Joshua

BE BOLD:

"Be passionate or don't bother - in the public be very successful. So find out your passion - the PR field that enables you to express it. If job at a huge PR firm in New York or LA campaigns might not be the right fit for you, if that specializes in information technology will not get you out of bed in the morning. Be a Rock Star - The "just calling to say hello" or "happy birthday" phone call, the willingness to meet a client for coffee before your work hours begin, staying late to do one last edit of a news release or proposal - these are the little things that go a long way. There are many people among us who are followers - worker bees who want to come in to work, do their work and go home. And then, there are leaders - the Rock Stars - who make work fun, fulfilling and rewarding. Be a rock star in your organization and you'll be rewarded in ways you never imagined." - Holly Rodriguez, Media PR Officer for University of Richmond

"Kick the 'hopeful' habit. (Just hoping for a call back) Make the decision makers notice and remember you, especially with larger agencies. Call and touch base, check in, send a note, thank you notes are a great tool; the more a company is exposed to your name and pit bull attitude the more willing decision makers will be to hire you or help you network if you are not able to fill their position. Or you could do what I did... partner with a friend and colleague to start your own boutique PR firm, make your own job and love every minute of it!" -Amy Kaufman - Partner Bluebird PR

Jan Bracamonte, Director of Public Relations with Crosby/Wright has this advice to offer. "In an effort to get a foot in the door, e-mail the head of the PR department (PR Director, etc.) and request an informational interview. Ask for only 10-15 minutes of the person's time; explain what interests you about the firm and what in particular you hope to learn from him/her. PR pros are more willing than not to share info about their firm and how they got into the business. Everyone, no matter their industry, likes to be asked for their "professional opinion" and to be seen as an expert. Play to this, but, when you actually get the meeting, don't do a hard sell. Find ways to ask questions that show the person your work ethic and experience. Ask the person at the end of the informational interview if he/she wouldn't mind if you sent them your resume for consideration for future opportunities. You've accomplished two goals: you've allowed the PR professional to put a face with a name and you've ensured your resume doesn't fall into the e-mail abyss."

"My strongest advice is to send your resume with a cover letter to owners of firms that you are interested in without waiting for the company to list a job with a recruiter or website. Since initiative and proactive activity is prized in the field of public relations, do all that you can to demonstrate these qualities, instead of merely stating that you possess them during the interview. After the resume is sent, follow up with the human resource department or higher executives at the firm to demonstrate your strong interest in working for the particular organization and your ability to perform. polite, yet aggressive, follow up." -DeAnne Marey, President, D M Public Relations

"Do your homework and personalize your outreach (no one - media or businesses - want the template letter; visit their website, find out the type of work they do and how you can complement their services); be persistent (in your pursuit); just as your employer would want you to be with your work (emails are not the only way; use the phone, stop by whenever in hand), it's ok to be persistent; a tenacious individual is someone I'd consider hiring! Be willing to pay your dues at an organization - do whatever is required and get a well-rounded understanding of the organization. Be willing to work your way up because employers value good talent and appreciate loyalty! Jumping ship after 6 months when things aren't so rosy does not build character. Find ways to add value and breadth to an organization. If a company or agency is focused on traditional PR/marketing and you have experience in social/viral marketing arena, tout your services and know-how as adding something new" -Lynn Luczkowski, owner of LZ Communications

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