



PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

All-Stars Issue

Every year we acknowledge the stars of PR : movers and shakers who show the rest of us what can be done with a great attitude, energy, passion and brains. Inside are the best talents in PR, from media relations experts to nonprofit spokespeople to the Hall of Fame, as well as our 15 to Watch. The awards were judged by a panel of PR professionals for the time period of calendar year 2005, with the exception of the Hall of Fame. The honorees were saluted Nov. 2 at the PR People awards luncheon at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

Media Relations Professional of the Year

Winner: Raymond L. Buse, III, Director of Public Relations, Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber



Raymond L. Buse has the “cool” thing down pat, and that cool is rubbing off on the city of Cincinnati, Ohio. As the director of public relations for Cincinnati’s regional chamber, Buse – who is fondly referred to as Buz by many, including the mayor’s office – has the daunting job of promoting a city. To make it even harder to wrap his arms around the task, the first adjective that comes to mind when discussing Cincinnati probably isn’t “cool.” [▶ PAGE 14](#)

PR Professional of the Year: Corporate

Winner: Kathy Callahan, Director of Corporate Communications, Ameristar Casinos



In recent years, casino properties and companies have changed hands as often as the dice at the craps table. Kathy Callahan faced the challenge in 2002 of creating a unified voice for five Ameristar Casinos properties across the Midwest and South, building unity out of a diversity that came from the brand personalities of several previous property owners.

She studied the company and its needs, built a team of communications pros, created programs that enhanced the brand at each of the properties, developed a crisis communications plan, and established effective internal communications strategies for the Ameristar family of 7,000 employees. Her contributions extend beyond the company into the communities of the casino properties, and the gaming industry as a whole. [▶ PAGE 18](#)

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Influence decisions.
Alter beliefs.
Create relationships.
Initiate dialogue.
Make them believe.**

**This is what perception
can do.**

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U.S. BOUTIQUE AGENCY OF THE YEAR (HOLMES REPORT)

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PR People Winners & Honorable Mentions

ACCOUNT MANAGER

WINNER: Lori Tokunaga, The Hoffman Agency

Paul Peterson, Off Madison Ave (honorable mention)

Rebekah Morgan, Burson-Marsteller (honorable mention)

AGENCY EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

WINNER: John Deveney, ABC, APR, Deveney Communication

Thomas F. Coyne, Coyne PR (honorable mention)

John Davies, DAVIES (honorable mention)

Lisa Throckmorton, SheaHedges Group (honorable mention)

Michelle Ubben, Ron Sachs Communications (honorable mention)

BRAND MARKETER OF THE YEAR

WINNER: Michael Keller, International Dairy Queen

Heather Philbin, Cybertrust (honorable mention)

CRISIS COMMUNICATOR OF THE YEAR

WINNER: Sandra R. Alstadt, Entergy Corporation

Ashley McCown, Solomon McCown & Company (honorable mention)

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

WINNER: Elaine Hinsdale, Lockheed Martin Corporation

Al Maag, Avnet (honorable mention)

MEASUREMENT/RESEARCH EXPERT OF THE YEAR

WINNER: Bryan Dumont, APCO Worldwide

Katie Delahaye Paine, KDPaine & Partners (honorable mention)

Angela Jeffrey, VMS (honorable mention)

Mark Weiner, Delahaye (honorable mention)

MEDIA RELATIONS PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

WINNER: Raymond L. Buse III, Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber

Sheri Baer, The Hoffman Agency (honorable mention)

David Ebeling, Sperry Van Ness Commercial Real Estate Advisors (honorable mention)

Jennifer Risi, Weber Shandwick (honorable mention)

PR PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR: ACADEMIC INSTITUTION

WINNER: Ann Marie Varga, Rollins College

John Morgan, Quinnipiac University (honorable mention)

PR PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR: NONPROFIT/ASSOC.

WINNER: Ted Nguyen, Orange County Transportation Authority

Emily Callahan, Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation (honorable mention)

Julia Cartwright, American Legacy Foundation (honorable mention)

Nancy Fletcher, California Milk Advisory Board (honorable mention)

Ron W. Roecker, The Recording Academy (honorable mention)

PR PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR: CORPORATE

WINNER: Kathy Callahan, Ameristar Casinos, Inc.

Lisa Marie Bongiovanni, Mattel (honorable mention)

Sunit Robert Vuppula, i-flex solutions, India (honorable mention)

LuJean Smith, Siemens Medical Solutions (honorable mention)

PR TEAM LEADER

WINNER: Peggy Heller, Vox Medica, Inc

Marita Gomez, HealthInfo Direct (honorable mention)

PUBLIC AFFAIRS EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

WINNER: Carolyn Tieger, Porter Novelli

Kelly Cox, APCO Worldwide (honorable mention)

SPOKESPERSON OF THE YEAR

WINNER: Stephanie Bunker, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Marv Hoyt, Greater Yellowstone Coalition (honorable mention)

15 TO WATCH

Young Stars of PR

WINNERS:

Lucy Allen, 32
Vice President, Lewis PR Inc.

Emily Buchanan, 31
Vice President, MWW Group

Lara Cohn, 35
Senior Vice President, Steele Rose Communications

Jeffrey DeMarrais, 35
General Manager of Communications, GE Industrial, Plastics

Tim Fry, 34
Senior Vice President, Weber Shandwick

Jackson Jeyanayagam, 28
Account Manager, Waggener Edstrom Worldwide

Ryan A. Jimenez, APR, 29
Communications Director & Press Secretary, Office of First Lady Maria Shriver

Nabeeha M. Kazi, 33
Sr. Vice President, Fleishman-Hillard Inc.

Holly Minch, 31
Executive Director, Communications Leadership Institute

James O'Leary, 26
Communications Leader, Honeywell

Jessica Pantages, 28
Senior Manager, Marketing and Public Relations, General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems

Christy Phillips, APR, 32
Vice President, Corporate Communications Manager, Wachovia Corp.

Carrie Strehlau, 29
Media Specialist, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

Haris Tajyar, 30
Managing Director, Investor Relations International

Kristin Warterfield, 25
Associate Director of Public Relations, Feed The Children

HALL OF FAME

Michelle Flowers, Flowers Communications Group

Victor Kamber, Carmen Group Communications

Richard S. Levick, Levick Strategic Communications

Tom Martin, ITT

Winner: D. Michelle Flowers, President and CEO, Flowers Communications Group

Entrepreneurial spirit and evangelical fortitude have guided D. Michelle Flowers' career in public relations. After graduating from Northwestern University with a Master's in advertising in 1982, she kick-started what would become a series of high-impact positions that culminated in her current role as president and CEO of Flowers Communications Group, an integrated communications marketing firm that specializes in the African-American and Hispanic markets.

Long before ethnic marketing embodied a definitive practice area, Flowers anticipated the need representing minority groups. Her early career was punctuated with such achievements as helping agency Golin/Harris create and develop an ethnic market division when she was an acting account supervisor. Later, she developed the entrepreneurial side of her brain by advocating for more African-American-owned PR firms; her efforts helped many, including her former employee Lon Walls, who opened Washington, D.C.-based Walls Communications Group.

But it's not just a nose for meeting the needs of oft-underrepresented markets that makes Flowers an exceptional practitioner; her knack for innovation and judgment in the face of business challenges helped her grow her firm, which was founded in 1991, to one of the largest African-American and female-owned agencies in the country. (It's worth noting that the combined African-American and Hispanic consumer market represents an estimated \$2 trillion.) Plus, initiatives like the Illinois HIV/AIDS education campaign affect her audience on a deeply

personal level. And, a true communicator, Flowers is no stranger to the need for careful preparation: Her agency's strategic planning model is founded on a seven-step tool that helps clients define goals and anticipate outcomes.

"I love sports cars. I got my first two-seater 20 years ago and fell in love. Since then, I have never driven anything that's not sleek, low to the ground and fast."

she supplements with painting and drawing classes, she likes to live life on the edge of her seat – literally.

"I love sports cars," she says. "I got my first two-seater 20 years ago and fell in love. Since then, I have never driven anything that's not sleek, low to the ground and fast."

Contact: mflowers@flowerscomm.com



D. Michelle Flowers

She's also no stranger to coincidences: One of six children, Flowers' father is a horticulturist. Now she has a family of her own, and the seven-foot oil painting of them that she created is what greets her when she walks into her foyer. Besides her passion for art, which

Winner: Victor Kamber, President, Carmen Group Communications



Victor Kamber

Victor Kamber isn't afraid to raise the stakes with a little bit of controversy. As a veteran consultant for the Democratic Party and an active political consultant and commentator, Kamber has authored four books, including *Poison Politics* and *Giving Up on Democracy: Why Term Limits Are Bad for America*, which incite debates surrounding the state of American politics.

But it's all good, clean fun for Kamber, whose career in labor communications and government affairs has been marked by success after success. To set his active professional life into motion, Kamber earned four degrees – J.D., L.L.M., M.A. in rhetoric and public address and a B.A. from the University of Illinois – assisted various Washington, D.C.-based lobbyists and federal departments, and then lit a fire under the public affairs, politics and labor communications industries by founding The Kamber Group in 1980.

Fifteen years later, he switched firms – and political labels – by joining Republican-leaning PR and marketing company Carmen Group Communications as its president. The move to close his namesake firm and go red, so to speak, raised more than a few eyebrows, but Kamber defended his decision with a "one door closes, another one opens" mentality.

"It was a terrific opportunity to go over to Carmen and create a new entity,"

he says of CGC's status as a fledgling off-shoot of the Carmen Group, which specializes in general lobbying and government relations. "You just decide to close parts of your life."

The move turned out to be fortuitous for both "parties;" 18 months under Victor's leadership took Carmen Group Communication from an embryonic subsidiary of its parent company to an all-purpose agency with big-time clients.

In addition, closing one part of his life and opening another only suggests an openness to change; to further that notion, Kamber has embraced the changing media landscape with his blog, www.victorkamber.com. True to his fire-starter personality, Kamber's blog voice is never rendered speechless by any political goings-on. (For the record, his blog entries still bleed Democratic.)

Rather, he waxes opinionated on everything from the Democrats' impending possible overthrow of the Republican-majority Congress to the (satirical) top 10 reasons why Republicans can win the midterm elections that were preparing to start as this issue went to press.

Satire is an intrinsic characteristic of Kamber – visible in his rhetoric, his writing and his public commentary – as is a laidback persona that Capitol Hill types often lack. For example, he promotes flexible hours – surely some-thing employees living outside the Beltway can appreciate.

And then there's that casual dress code. After all, whether you are Democratic or Republican, liberal or conservative, for Victor Kamber of The Kamber Group or Victor Kamber of Carmen Group Communications, the essential colors, for him, will always boil down to red, white and blue.

Contact: kamberv@carmengroup.com

Tri-Triumph!

1

Tim Fry was recognized
as one of the "15 to Watch."

2

Jennifer Risi was nominated as
Media Relations Professional of the Year.

3

Weber Shandwick was named
Agency of the Year for 2006.

PRNews has given Weber Shandwick
three reasons to be proud.





Richard Levick

Winner: Richard Levick, President/CEO, Levick Strategic Communications



Why would I want to be anywhere else?" That's what Richard Levick asks himself when faced with "what do you want to be when you grow up?" – a question that neither has age limitations nor plays favorites. And it's an apt response for Levick, who, as the president and CEO of litigation and crisis firm Levick Strategic Communications, has found himself in an elusive yet rewarding position: the top.

But any executive (communications or otherwise) knows that ascent to the top is the slipperiest slope of all, and Levick acts accordingly. It's a climb he began decades ago with his rise through the education system, beginning with his Bachelor's in urban studies and Master's in environmental studies, and continuing with the law degree he earned from American University School of Law. A seeming non sequitur, his evolution from all things urban and environmental to law to communications actually followed a strategic path, which Levick described for one publication:

"In the years immediately after law school, I began to realize that the common denominator in all the things that seemed important to me – law, business, politics – is communications. Perception trumps reality. How we

communicate is as important as what we communicate."

Levick, then, may be perceived as a lawyer, a consultant, a crisis communicator, but in reality he is a combination of the three. His firm, established in 1998 as an office of two, now employs 30 professionals and handles an industry Levick largely created himself – that of legal media, a specific yet pervasive niche of overall litigation and crisis communications. His clients and campaigns are among the world's most infamous: Dubai Ports World and its national security scandal, the Guantanamo Bay controversy, and the Catholic Church. (The recent difficulties of the Church prompt a reference to Levick's own religious experiences: Just prior to his Bar Mitzvah, his rabbi imparted words of wisdom that, metaphorically speaking, mentor him to this day: "Don't worry," the rabbi said. "Nobody out there speaks Hebrew anyway.")

Perhaps it was his rabbi's words that instilled in Levick a lack of fear – fear to fail, fear to lose, fear to make mistakes – or maybe it's his appetite for new opportunities. No matter the source, that fearlessness has driven him, his business and the overall communications profession to accept challenges and manage risk.

"If you're not losing, you're not in the game," Levick says. "Mistakes are the sound made when a door closes. Our wisdom comes from learning enough in the mistake to see the new door that opens as a result."

rlevick@levick.com

Winner: Tom Martin, Senior Vice President and Director of Corporate Relations, ITT Corporation



Tom Martin

Tom Martin is a man of many talents. He is a top-notch corporate communicator, of course, as proven by his resume: 18 years at FedEx saw him skyrocket through the ranks, from a training program writer when the company was hardly known to the VP of corporate communications for one of the most reputable corporate behemoths in the world. His next step landed him at ITT Corporation, where he currently serves as the SVP and director of corporate relations, and will continue to do so until the end of the year.

But the road to Martin's current corporate communications notoriety is more definitive of the talents that shape him. After majoring in English at Vanderbilt University, he had an opportunity to go to law school, which he bypassed in favor of a year-long exchange program in Switzerland to, of all things, work as a chef. (Cooking remains a passion of his to this day; his favorite meal to prepare at the moment is lamb.) As is often the case, the year abroad helped Martin "find himself," and, upon his return to the United States, a career in communi-

cations was born. (The early years at FedEx were supplemented by freelancing personality profiles and dining reviews for local magazines.)

Martin has built his career and his reputation on tenets of solid communications strategy. He helped build FedEx's corporate communications department, and today it remains the archetypal example of how an integrated, strategically aligned organization should operate. Likewise, his tenure at ITT has been defined by successful initiatives,

including the 1998 launch of a unified corporate brand identity and the 2002 plan to enhance the company's presence in China.

"I fell in love with teaching. I really want to work on the gap between how current PR students are being educated and what is needed."

If living abroad as a recent college graduate was Martin's first moment of self-efficacy, his second would be the day he spent at the College of Charleston as a visiting "professor" while serving as president of the Arthur W. Page Society (2004-2005). "I fell in love with teaching," he says. "I really want to work on the gap between how current PR students are being educated and what is needed."

To make strides in filling that gap, Martin resigned from ITT this year to join the College of Charleston as an executive-in-residence (his transition from communicator to academic will take place in 2007). And, after a successful career of doing what he loves, raising two sons, teaching them to sail, cooking, eating well and traveling, he now considers himself blessed with something so many people lack: an end goal.

"[After the day of teaching at Charleston] I called my wife and said, 'Now I know exactly what I want to do with the rest of my life.'"

And really, what could be better than that?

Contact: tom.martin@itt.com

HEAR WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY: The All-Stars have gone "audio" with a special PR People online recording session conducted by PR News and Medialink. We asked our All-Stars to reveal a few tidbits about themselves. Go to the PR People Awards page at www.prnewsonline.com to hear their answers....

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Agency Executive of the Year



Winner: John Deveney, ABC, APR,
Deveney Communications

To say that 2005 was a watershed year for John Deveney would be putting it mildly, as well as ironically. At a time when Deveney had just

shifted his agency's focus to the task of promoting travel and tourism in their home city of New Orleans, the perfect storm ravaged the city and

its hospitality industry.

Deveney and three other members of the agency team returned to the city just 20 days after Hurricane Katrina roared through, establishing a media center for the New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau a week before the state was able to set up its own media center. The team boiled their drinking water, bathed with baby wipes and ate military rations while manning the center 12 hours a day, seven days a week, to make sure the messages getting out to the world about New Orleans as a travel destination were both accurate and positive.

In addition to protecting the Big Easy's reputation as a wonderful city to visit, Deveney had to defend the careers and health of his staff. He allowed the majority of the team to work from remote locations using laptop computers, while continuing to pay their

salaries without interruption and adding bonuses to lighten the load.

And when the hurricane was followed by the loss of 50 percent of the agency's billings as a result of drastic changes at two prominent clients that were also located in that region, Deveney found ways to push those billings back up to 100 percent with new business.

As a result of his experience in the wake of Katrina, Deveney has become a PR industry expert on crisis response. He now helps PRSA refine its own contingency and crisis plans, and shares his knowledge with other communications professionals with presentations throughout the country on the topic: "Katrina: Lessons Learned."

Of course, we always knew Deveney would rise to greatness. He was among the very first group of young upstart PR practitioners we named to our "15 to Watch" list seven years ago.

Contact: jdeveney@deveney.com

Honorable Mentions

John Davies, CEO and founder of DAVIES, has positioned his firm as a growing powerhouse. Such clients as ExxonMobil and the Tiger Woods Learning Center reassert what industry peers already know: Davies is among the *crème de la crème* of agency executives.

Work/life balance is a specialty of **Michelle Ubben**, mother of six and executive vice president of Ron Sachs Communications. In 2005 she reengineered operations to increase revenue 27 percent while ensuring that no client was met with boilerplate campaigns. And she gives equal attention to in-house projects; her creativity shone through RSC's corporate identity brochure.

Coyne Public Relations owes its stature to president/CEO **Thomas Coyne**, who founded it on principles of innovation and strategy. The client list — from Walt Disney to Goodyear — shows what 10 years can do. Campaigns like Disney's "Magic Your Way" and the Pillsbury Bake-Off demonstrate that Coyne's adaptability is second to none.

Lisa Throckmorton, an executive of SheaHedges Group (SHG), balances traditional client responsibilities — increasing Macromedia's visibility and building awareness for Red Hats' new government group — with attention to industry growth through PR skills curricula and a lunch 'n learn series for SHG employees.

Winner: Lori Tokunaga, Account Executive,
The Hoffman Agency



PR is plenty of fun and games to Lori Tokunaga. She won the Hoffman Agency six awards last year, including a MarCom Creative Award, LACP Magellan Award and a SABRE Award. One campaign in 2005 was for Dolby, to show the benefits of its speakers to the videogaming world. She set up an Xbox and Dolby-powered surround-sound speakers in her office, so she could talk a good game with the gaming press.

Tokunaga set up her office to play Xbox with Dolby surround sound, so she could talk a good game with the gaming press.

Tokunaga also brings a fun element to her dealings with her team. When she needed to increase publicity for Philips Semiconductors, she packaged her plan in a top-secret dossier, setting up a system of rewards and lighthearted punishments for teammates as they succeeded or failed in their duties each week. Those who faced the "Wheel of Shame" could end up making a trip to Starbucks for lattes for their teammates.

But humor isn't her only skill. "When I'm

wholeheartedly behind a campaign, it shows," she says. "I've seen passion and excitement spread across the team to inspire everyone." This PR dynamo is far from resting on her laurels. Her proudest moment last year, she says, was "Taking on a direct report and contributing to her career growth. Since she was beginning her career in public relations, I had the opportunity to help shape her skill set and provide encouragement."

Contact: ltokunaga@hoffman.com

Account Manager of the Year

Honorable Mention

Paul Peterson, account manager of Tempe, Ariz.-based agency Off Madison Avenue, helped make organized garages a reality with his brand awareness and image launch campaigns for PremierGarage, even securing a segment on "Extreme Home Makeover."

Rebekah Morgan, account manager for Burson-Marsteller, implemented CSR programs for a tobacco company, crisis plans for hospitals, and protected a steel company's reputation. Her position document on a health care crisis for small Texas businesses got stellar results.



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Winner: Michael Keller, Chief Brand Officer, International Dairy Queen



Dairy Queen celebrated its 20th birthday with the world's biggest 'Blizzard.'

It may seem tough to mess up a campaign involving ice cream, but challenges exist; for example, how do you celebrate the 20th birthday of a signature dairy sensation, bring the brand to life and handle its pesky tendency to melt?

If you are Michael Keller, chief brand officer of International Dairy Queen, you fight fire with fire: you celebrate ice cream with ice cream. In honor of the "Blizzard" turning 20, he organized a year-long celebration to promote the brand. For starters, he launched a Blizzard-centric Web site, www.blizzardfanclub.com, which accumulated nearly one million

members and enabled Dairy Queen to reach an extended audience. And Keller's creativity and marketing savvy landed the Blizzard in the spotlight when it appeared on Donald Trump's primetime reality show "The Apprentice," further bolstering the brand's fan base.

And then there's the ultimate ice cream coup: a 22-foot, 8,225-pound Blizzard, made out of 2,575 pounds of crushed Oreos and 705 gallons of Dairy Queen soft-serve. The mammoth dessert was immortalized in the 2005 *Guinness Book of World Records* as the "largest blended soft-serve dessert." It would be an understatement to say the media was interested: 54 television stations did segments, and print and Web site coverage

totaled nearly one million impressions. (When it came time to clean up, one can only assume a very large straw was involved ...)

Beyond achieving brand greatness for Dairy Queen, Keller is a friend and mentor to his co-workers, and actively involved in philanthropy. He helps the company raise money for children in need through events like the North American Miracle Treat Day; a percentage of all Blizzard sales goes to the Children's Miracle Network.

Philanthropist, innovator, mentor, ice cream connoisseur ... Keller blends together enough leadership qualities to be considered the Dairy Queen Brand King.

Contact: michael.keller@idq.com

Brand Marketer of the Year

Honorable Mention

Heather Philbin had her work cut out for her with information security provider Cybertrust's creation through a three-company merger. As the VP of marketing communications, she had to develop a brand identity for the newly formed entity that employees, customers, media and analysts could identify with and support. Extensive preliminary research helped define organizational goals and sharpen focus, and Philbin used the results to streamline internal and external brand launches. When it was all said and done, 1 year and \$1 million allowed Philbin to turn three old companies into one brand new brand.

Crisis Communicator of the Year

Winner: Sandra Alstadt, Director of Utility Operations Communications and Crisis Communication Command Leader, Entergy Corporation



Sandra Alstadt is a risk-taker. In an industry where spontaneous judgment calls often prompt a series of unfortunate events, she possesses the take-charge ability and, quite literally, anticipates the calm before the storm.

As crisis communication command leader for Entergy Corporation, Alstadt was the woman in charge when Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the Gulf Coast last year. The company's location in the eye of the storm meant that, in addition to the chaos and personal tragedies, the corporate headquarters had to be moved, not to mention the usual communications challenges that go along with a crisis of that magnitude. But Alstadt kept her cool and directed her team of 30 storm communicators accordingly, following the 200-page crisis plan she had helped write prior to the disaster. But, as all good communications professionals know, following a preconceived plan doesn't always work; that's where her knack for risk-taking comes in.

Alstadt made the dicey decision to open the power restoration process to media evaluation, thus chancing opportunities for harsh criticism and negative publicity. But there was no criticism to be had, as her sound judgment call to be completely transparent didn't reveal a rotten underbelly of her operation; on the contrary, the media witnessed only positive efforts to restore power to 1.1 million homes, assuage weary customers (who, coincidentally, painted "thank you" signs for crew members), rally employees and reassure stakeholders.

Thus, Alstadt's communications make-up of strong leadership (how else could one direct an army of employees dispersed by the storm?), innovative thinking (kudos for the nontraditional media relations approach), creativity (helicopter rides over the city for members of the media offered a new perspective) and tireless energy (18 hours a day, seven days a week, anyone?) make her a one-woman show of crisis communications greatness.

Contact: salstadt@entergy.com

Honorable Mention

When it comes to crisis communications, no result is a good result. **Ashley McCown**, EVP and director of agency relations for Solomon McCown & Co., knows this for a fact, and she delivers on it. When real estate investment firm Beacon Capital Partners had to come up with preemptive crisis plans and strategies, McCown spearheaded the initiative to no avail — literally. Thanks to her foresight and accessibility, Beacon has faced no actual or potential crises to date regarding any of its properties or investments — a true testament to McCown's ability to plan for the worst and bring out the best.

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**Winner: Elaine Hinsdale,
Director of Communications,
Lockheed Martin**

In today's constant ebb and flow of technology development, it's no small task to keep up with the changes while fostering a stable, adaptable work environment. But no task is insurmountable for Elaine Hinsdale, director of communications for Lockheed Martin's internal Information Technology (IT) group.

Her creativity and style were put to the test with the redesign of Lockheed Martin's external Web site, as the site acts as the cyber face of the \$37 billion enterprise. Making the site streamlined, clean and easy to navigate, she was rewarded for a job well done with a NOVA award, Lockheed Martin's highest employee award. But tackling the external site was all in a day's work for Hinsdale, who also revved up the employee diversity Web site to convey consistent messages about the company's inclusive environment.

Honorable Mention

Ambivalence and unfamiliarity were two characteristics that plagued the employees of Avnet, an electronics distributor. Chief communications officer **Al Maag**, then, faced the challenge of rallying the employee base to celebrate the company's rich history and understand its unique identity after 40 acquisitions in 15 years. Maag saw an opportunity in the company's approaching 50th anniversary, engaging employees with a twice-weekly newsletter, a coffee table book documenting the 50 years, a conference-room-turned-museum, and, of course, a 50s-themed party.

**Internal Communications
Professional of the Year**

Being able to develop Web content is one thing, but facilitating the strategic alignment of 135,000 employees worldwide is quite another. Hinsdale's team is constantly on the lookout for effective ways to keep the worldwide network connected while defending against potential threats to the online infrastructure. Her noteworthy flexibility has enabled her to weather her fair share of storms – both literal and proverbial – that included the Y2K bug, the “Melissa” computer worm and, in 2005, catastrophic hurricanes.

But while IT development is serious business, Hinsdale is known among her peers as a laid-back spirit who is always reminding her team of the importance of a work/life balance. She pencils in periodic team outings to balance out the otherwise fast-paced tempo. Plus, her attention to community relations is laudable; she braided Lockheed Martin's community relations efforts with a CD calendar that reinforces the company's spirit of volunteerism. As for the “practice what you preach” tradition, Hinsdale personally logged more than 100 hours of volunteer work in 2005, and she is instrumental in keeping Lockheed Martin at the \$1 million employee-giving level in support of the United Way campaign.

Contact: elaine.t.hinsdale@lmco.com



**Winner: Bryan Dumont, Senior Vice President
of Corporate Reputation Research,
APCO Worldwide**

**Measurement/Research
Expert of the Year**

first quantitative research models that measures the emotional connection people have with brands, distilling the results down to nine discrete emotions that most directly impact peoples' connection to products.

He also developed Reputation Insight, an approach to defining and measuring corporate reputation research through structural equation modeling.

If “structural equation modeling” sounds like a foreign language to you, not to worry. While the dialect Dumont speaks is one of advanced quantitative methods (read: numbers), he can translate statistical techniques and results into a language understood by the senior execs and PR pros among us.

Dumont has worked with a number of Fortune 500 companies to help them better understand and manage their corporate reputations. His clients represent a number of industries, including

energy, tobacco, automotive and healthcare.

And, judging from his past accomplishments in the area of public rela-

tions research and measurement, there seems to be little, if anything, that Dumont can't measure.

Contact: bdumont@apcoinsight.com

Angela Jeffrey likes to keep it in the family. In 1996, long before measurement tools were en vogue, she foresaw their potential and appealed to her hi-tech brother to build a tool that could create analysis reports. Thus, PRtrak was born (and subsequently acquired by VMS, where she is vice president of editorial research), and Jeffrey has spent the 10 years leading up to today making her mark in the world of measurement.

Katie Paine is a natural-born innovator. She paved the way for media messaging measurement by founding The Delahaye Group in 1987 (sold in 1999 to

Medialink Worldwide), and then pushed it to new heights with her current enterprise, KDPaine & Partners, her 20,000+ audience blog and her recent measurement development, the Do-It-Yourself Dashboard.

Mark Weiner wears many hats, but all of them accessorize one integral piece: measurement research. As the president of Delahaye, he used both theoretical and tactical expertise to be a key part of the ubiquitous communications coup d'etat of 2005: working with behemoth corporation Procter & Gamble to validate the “PR-to-sales connection.”

Honorable Mentions



Give Bryan Dumont an inch and he'll measure for miles. As the SVP of corporate reputation research at APCO Worldwide, measurement is the crux of his mission to protect and enhance companies' most valuable asset: their reputations.

Dumont's seven years at APCO are marked by strategic and advanced innovations to measure things previously thought to be immeasurable: emotions, messages, perceptions. He spearheaded the creation of one of the



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Mattel salutes Lisa Marie Bongiovanni, *Vice President of Corporate Communications, Government Affairs and Philanthropic Programs* – mother of August and Zane – as a PR People Awards 2006 Finalist, PR Professional of the Year (Corporate).

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★ American Girl

Media Relations Professional of the Year

Raymond L. Buse CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

But Buz won't take that news sitting down. He has brought positive name recognition to Cincinnati and the surrounding region through aggressive, creative campaigns to demonstrate its many flavors. And no flavor is too bitter. Case in point: He coordinated a "Downtown Hop Around" to bring positive media attention to an otherwise negative observance of the city's fifth year anniversary of the 2001 civil unrest, prompting a reported 20 percent increase in business for local bars and restaurants for the evening.

As for events that didn't require a positive spin, they are innumerable. Buz worked with the mayor's office to stage "Blitz Jay Leno Day" to celebrate the winning streak of the Bengals, whose less-than-desirable performance was once fodder for Leno's nightly banter. The event prompted Leno to personally phone Buz to accept the challenge to "play ball."

Beyond the "fun" events, Buz takes action to fight injustices within his city's borders. In 2004, he coordinated media relations in support of the successful repeal of an anti-gay amendment to the Cincinnati City Charter that denied gay citizens the right to petition the city government.

Buz is also an innovator, as seen through the wi-fi initiative to connect Cincinnati with two Kentucky towns via a virtual Internet bridge that offered interstate wireless service.

The list of accolades Buz garnered for Cincinnati goes on and on thanks to his creativity and gumption in positioning it as a fun, lively, up-and-coming place, and the media definitely takes notice time and time again. It's hard to imagine what he'll cook up next.

Contact: bbuse@cincinnatiachamber.com

Honorable Mentions

In 2005, **Sheri Baer's** broadcast coverage for Amazon.com's 10th anniversary reached more than 16 million people, using "special deliveries" that thanked customers by arranging for their purchases to be delivered by their favorite celebrities. She also tapped into the podcasting frenzy, helping Hoffman build an in-house broadcast studio that enables clients to create and record their own podcasts and reinforce their image as industry thought leaders.

David Ebeling, communications manager for Sperry Van Ness Commercial Real Estate Advisors, raised the company to prominent national recognition by putting its 600 brokers in front of the media on a daily basis, garnering 4.6 articles

per day as of the last counting. His efforts in behalf of the Miami Arena earned him a Protos Award from the PRSA.

Jennifer Risi hangs her media-relations hat on the power of the pitch, and it has served her — and Weber Shandwick — well in recent years. As the executive vice president of the Global Strategic Media Group, she understands the evolving strategies for reaching all constituents in a fragmented media environment, and her skills in this area have assisted in brand building for Allstate Corporation and Siemens Corporation, and in securing a higher level of corporate coverage for Sealed Air Corporation — a client of four years.



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PR Professional of the Year: Academic Institution

Winner: Ann Marie Varga, Assistant Vice President of Public Relations, Rollins College



Varga works to save the license plate



Anyone who has worked (or studied) in academia knows shoestring budgets are a *sine qua non*. But Rollins College's Ann Marie Varga learned to make the most of what she's got. A Rollins alumna, Varga returned to the Florida school in 2000. One of her best skills is her ability "to treat others as I want to be treated – as an esteemed colleague. I'm not a pushover; I can be tough, but I'm always fair and try to

lead by example."

For Varga, "Success has come from striving for excellence and surrounding myself with people who have the same dedication. I try to find creative and innovative ways to do things, I try to maintain a nurturing, inclusive community, and we definitely have fun."

Highlights of her years at Rollins include creating a plan to save the institution's beloved specialty

license plate, as well as building an emergency communications plan. Her outreach program for the college was covered by *The New York Times* and "Saturday Early Show."

Varga – who tries to make "a positive difference in everything" she does – supervises an annual event on campus to generate stories from her "internal clients." About 50 new ideas every year go into the *R-Community News*, as well as *R-Journals*, which share students' experiences of life at Rollins.

Her working relationships over the years have flowed both ways. "I have had four mentors whom I have also mentored or influenced," she says. "These colleagues have retained my services, have been my intern then later my boss, or my boss then later my freelance

consultant. Today, we all continue to be treasured colleagues."

The winner of Central Florida's 2004 "PR Professional of the Year" award takes her energy and commitment into the community. She helped the Florida Hospital implement a community awareness program during a medical malpractice crisis on a volunteer basis.

Varga notes, "I think my proudest achievement in 2005 was earning the oversight of the Rollins home page. By doing our research and showing tangible results, my team was able to earn the confidence of the administration. With a revised design and major changes in functionality, our site will make a great leap this academic year."

Contact: avarga@rollins.edu

Honorable Mention

John Morgan has made Quinnipiac University a household name in his role as director of public relations. He was instrumental in keeping the university's law school visible last year when Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor was retiring, and arranged appearances for another professor on "The O'Reilly Report" to talk about media coverage of air marshals who shot a passenger in Miami.

Winner: Ted Nguyen, Communications Manager, Orange County Transportation Authority



Liberal or conservative, rich or poor, people are usually resistant to news that will impact their wallets. Given this tendency, Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) communications manager Ted Nguyen had to boost aware-

ness and raise public support for a sales take that would provide \$12 billion for transportation improvements, as well as bus rate increases for the disabled and seniors. The chances of overwhelming public support were slim, but Nguyen's engaging and approachable character allowed him to convey the needs to his audience with minimal negative reaction.

That's just one of many examples in which Nguyen uses effective communications principles to deliver results for OCTA. His efforts have increased positive news coverage to 75 percent in just two years. He is able to pull off such impressive numbers through his attention to transpar-

ent, honest practices and creative solutions. Nguyen spawned the Extreme Traffic Makeover concept surrounding a major road widening, which resulted in suggestions from 10,000 people on future traffic improvements. He also spearheaded the "Stuff a Bus" holiday toy drive that netted 3,500 toys for children throughout Southern California.

Beyond his knack for creativity and charity work,

Nguyen was able to steer OCTA through a series of challenges in 2005 that included the failure to secure federal funding for light-rail transit, a bus driver charged with sexual harassment, and bus and train accidents that resulted in multiple deaths.

Thus, Nguyen's professionalism and compassion help drive OCTA's efforts while keeping its constituents' interests at the forefront.

Contact: ctnguyen@octa.net

PR Professional of the Year: Nonprofit/Association

Honorable Mentions

Julia Cartwright, senior vice president of communications for the American Legacy Foundation in Washington, D.C., has been crucial in promoting the organization's blockbuster "truth" campaign, helping to prevent young Americans from smoking. She turned the National Press Club into a celebration of the campaign's fifth anniversary.

Emily Callahan, PR manager for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, secured millions of media hits for the organization on television and in print. Her efforts during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month surpassed all the organization's prior performance and goals.

Nancy Fletcher, vice president of communications for the California Milk Advisory Board, has received accolades for her work on the "Real California Cheese" campaign of 2005 from Columbia University and literally helped write the textbook on *Advertising and Promotion: an Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective*.

Ron W. Roecker, vice president of communications and media relations for The Recording Academy, has raised the GRAMMY awards to new heights, while promoting the organization's myriad other activities and contributions to music.



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PR Team Leader



Winner: Peggy Heller, Executive Vice President of Health-Care Public Relations, Vox Medica, Inc.

Peggy Heller gets behind her people, whether it's the clients for a multicultural campaign or her own staff. Her accomplishments in 2005 speak poignantly to her passion for contemporary issues and the human lives they affect: she developed and launched a multicultural communications health-disparity program for AstraZeneca. The campaign, which was titled "Through the Kitchen Door," also was translated into a His-

panic version in Los Angeles late last year and an African American version called "Cooking with Hearth and Soul" early this year.

In addition, an educational program she created, "The Memory Initiative," boosted awareness of Alzheimer's Disease in Hispanic and Latino communities in Miami and San Antonio. Also last year, Heller played a pivotal role in running a multimillion-dollar, 27-state campaign called "My Medicare Matters," a grassroots education initiative that reached thousands of seniors at local market events around the country.

Heller's client list features some of the most prominent names in health care, among them AstraZeneca, Berlex, Pfizer and GlaxoSmith-Kline. Her work for those companies has brought culturally sensitive materials to both consumers and professional audiences, touching thousands of lives with information about how to take advantage of health and government resources available to them.

Beyond her dedication to the campaigns, however, Heller devotes considerable attention to the people with whom she works on a daily basis. She has implemented a

comprehensive staff development program and is known for her mentoring activities at Vox Medica. She also reaches out to the PR industry and community on a volunteer basis, sitting on the planning committee for the PR Annual Essay Conference on behalf of the Health Academy, getting involved in fundraising and allocation efforts for the Overlook Hospital Foundation, and working tirelessly in the nonprofit sector on PR campaigns for Schering Corporate, the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, and the North American Menopause Society.

The fruits of Heller's labors have taken many forms. Her work earned her a spot on the Board of Directors of the Healthcare Businesswomen's Association, and she earned the HBA Metro Chapter and Volunteer of the Month Award last year. Last, but by no means least, the PRSA recognized Heller's work with the Silver Anvil in acknowledgement of her commitment to excellence in public relations.

Contact: pheller@voxedica.com

Honorable Mention

Marita Gomez does more than run an award-winning healthcare marketing communications company: she also runs marathons for charity. As CEO of HealthInfo Direct, LLC, Gomez has gleaned numerous awards for her work, including an IABC/Chicago Spectra Award for excellence in Marketing/Branding Communications and her selection as one of PharmVOICE magazine's 135 thought leaders to forecast trends in the pharmaceutical industry this year.

PR Professional of the Year: Corporate



Kathy Callahan CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Callahan invented and implemented a program that has garnered her much praise, in addition to several awards. The program is dubbed "Ameristar Cares." This venture fosters a corporate culture of giving and volunteerism among employees through supporting nonprofit organizations in the regions where each of the casinos is located. This year, the campaign raised close to \$5 million for the several communities where Ameristar team members live.

Other programs and events have also helped to bring the team closer together, whether it's interactive kiosks at each property that help keep the members in touch with each other, or a three-day star-spangled event in Kansas City to celebrate that property's reopening, complete with the biggest fireworks display the region had ever seen.

In addition, Callahan unified the company's crisis communications plan, nominating herself to be the touchstone for any property that needed help in a media emergency. She is on call to every manager 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And to maintain continuity of the brand from one property to the next while keeping them unique, she developed a Property Planning Matrix that identifies stakeholders and their desires for each of the properties, tailor-making each approach to achieve property-specific desired outcomes by delivering key messages to their target markets.

Her efforts in behalf of her company's team members are unflagging. While still at Harrah's, she created a bonus program to reward front-line employees, and launched that company's first stock-option grant program for employees.

Callahan has also given back to the PR and gaming industries, co-chairing the IABC awards program for two years and writing a regular column for *Casino Journal*, for which she has won several awards.

Contact: kathy.callahan@ameristar.com

Honorable Mentions

Lisa Marie Bongiovanni isn't just playing around when it comes to PR. As VP of corporate communications for Mattel, Inc., she most recently led the charge to re-launch the company's Mattel Children's Foundation to promote education, health and well-being for all children, as well as girls' empowerment. She was also behind Mattel's first Corporate Social Responsibility Report.

Sunil Robert, director of corporate communications at i-flex, a medium-sized information technology firm, helped bring an Asian firm to light among the "Ivy League"

of business media. Placements in *BusinessWeek*, the *Financial Times*, and other publications of note raised i-flex's profile to new prominence last year in a crowded marketplace.

LuJean Smith had a busy year: this director of public relations for Siemens Medical Solutions implemented a PR measurement program, managed the communications of a \$1 billion acquisition, led the launch of the first dual-source computed tomography system, and worked to elevate the reputation of her department. And that was all during her first year in her current title.



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Public Affairs Executive of the Year

Winner: Carolyn Tieger, Partner and Global Leader, Public Affairs, Porter Novelli

Follow-through and attention to detail are just two of many reasons for Carolyn Tieger's success. A warrior and advocate, she has won major battles for clients involving such tension-laden topics as asbestos liability, chemical risk, legal reform, healthcare reform, and China trade. "Not being afraid to take risks has not only helped me in my own career advancement, but I think it has become a leadership quality that has allowed me to challenge clients and encourage them to

think 'outside of the box,'" Tieger notes. Her fearlessness and creativity show.

Tieger is particularly proud of two

Tieger and her client at the White House.



events in 2005. "The first was the signing of the Class Action Fairness Act by President Bush in February of 2005," says Tieger. "After four long years of an intense legislative battle, it was so rewarding to be at the White House to witness the signing ceremony firsthand. The event also signaled the culmination of the communications campaign in support of the legislation, which I led for Porter Novelli on behalf of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for Legal Reform."

Her efforts generated a wealth of editorials in support of asbestos legislation, as well as orchestrating a media outreach effort that exposed rampant fraud among trial lawyers, doctors and screening companies in diagnosing asbestos disease. Porter Novelli moved three West Coast offices under her control last year, and was named the "2005 Washington PR Woman of the Year" by the Washington Women in Public Relations. (Her second proud career moment in 2005.)

Tieger's staff members also have reason to appreciate her. Many of her executive assistants have achieved – with her help – positions of far more prestige. One heads communications at Unilever, and another is President Bush's personal assistant. All of them are still friends of

Honorable Mention

Kelly Cox faced some tremendous challenges last year, among them the earned media launch of PhRMA's Partnership for Prescription Assistance, the largest private-sector effort to help patients in need gain access to required medicine. In her role as manager for APCO Worldwide, she was nominated by co-workers and won three "APCO A" awards for her crisis simulation work, the media launch, and her efforts for a client during a difficult litigation.

Tieger's. "Teaching people new things and helping them grow is a real high for me," says Tieger.

In supporting her team members, Tieger is passing along lessons she learned early on. "Marvin Pitkin, an aerospace engineer by training and a natural born marketer, was a mentor to me early in my government career when I was working with the maritime industry," she says.

Tieger sits on the board of the Accokeek Foundation, which helped build an educational center for disadvantaged students. She also is a senior advisor to George Washington University's Graduate School of Political Management.

As Marvin Pitkin taught her, "a combination of substance and style and a good sense of humor can not only win business and grow it, but also keep the client happy."

Contact: carolyn.tieger@porternovelli.com

Winner: Stephanie Bunker, Spokesperson United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Spokesperson of the Year

What are the odds of a PR practitioner's job actually being a matter of life and death? While Stephanie Bunker is not literally in the eye of the physical storm or starving in a third-world nation, her efforts draw the public's eye to such crises the world over, prompting further action to stave off suffering.

In 2005 alone, she spearheaded the U.N.'s public information strategies on the Indian Ocean tsunami, the devastation wrought by 26 named storms during the Atlantic hurricane season, the deadly situation in Darfur and the dangers faced by tens of thousands of "night commuters" in Northern Uganda, and the humanitarian workers themselves, who face danger daily as they try to ease the suffering of the victims.

Bunker's team rolls into action the minute they get word of a crisis, calling the BBC, CNN or Al-Jazeera to relate the U.N.'s concerns and disseminate the message. She built her network of "co-workers" by regular contact with journalists and producers at such organizations as *The New York Times*, *Financial Times*, Radio France International, *Al-Arabiya*, *Pravda*, *Asahi Shimbun* and the Xinhua News Agency.

Bunker's high-water moment, if you will, was her work after a tsunami struck the regions touching the Indian Ocean last year. She deftly orchestrated a public information campaign of more than 20 press conferences within the first three months after the disaster, as well as 150 tsunami-related interviews by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

But perhaps her most remarkable accomplishment for the year was the judgment she exercised in bringing the situation in Somalia to the world stage. She reached out to Al-Jazeera and asked it to participate in a mission to the beleaguered country, rather than inviting a Western media outlet. Because Somalia is inherently interesting to the Middle East, which shares religious and cultural ties, she cultivated a relationship with a Nairobi-based journalist and talked him into sharing her mission.

Contact: bunker@un.org



Honorable Mention

Marv Hoyt has climbed a few public relations mountains in his time as Idaho Director of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. His efforts last year helped prevent damage to some of the nation's most treasured public lands by raising awareness of and forming alliances to regulate development, logging, mining, use of off-road vehicles and other threats to the environment. His partnerships have built support among environmental organizations, educators and governmental entities.

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Name: Tim Fry
Title: Senior Vice President & Microsoft Client Relationship Leader
Company: Weber Shandwick
Age: 34

career I had in mind," he says. He started his career conducting public opinion research for a small firm in Seattle. "When Weber Shandwick opened a Seattle office in 1996, I was ready to expand into a more traditional public relations career." As the client relationship leader for Weber Shandwick's Microsoft account, Fry turned the account into a global relationship, expanding its remit for each Microsoft division to Asia and Europe. "I'm proud of the fact that our other account leads now look to me for advice on how to better run their global teams; I've been asked to lead a taskforce within the agency focused on client service," he says. The early portion of his career saw one or two stumbles, but they made him better at his job. "My biggest mistake year was misreading a major client's request in a pitch," he recalls. "I brought the 'big and bold' team, and it turned out they wanted 'small and safe.' The lesson for me is to try harder to get a gut check from prospective clients on some of those big ideas before bringing them into the room, where so much is at stake."

Fry's mentor is Casey Sheldon, president of Weber Shandwick's technology practice. "In the ten years I've worked for her, she's taught me...the most important leadership trait is knowing when to get out of the way and when to step in." Fry advises new PR pros to ask: "How well can I communicate? Am I a good writer? How comfortable am I in chaos? Am I willing to share the workload and limelight? Know the answers to those questions before you jump in." Moving ahead, Fry says, "Organizations are starting to engage more directly with audiences. PR, more than any other discipline, is about conversation. And as marketing transitions from monologue to dialogue, PR is in the middle of that conversation. I wouldn't be surprised to see PR agencies start leading integrated communications campaigns."

Contact: tfry@weber-shandwick.com



Name: Nabeeha Mujeeb Kazi
Title: Senior Vice President
Company: Fleishman-Hillard, Inc.
Age: 33

Nabeeha Mujeeb Kazi is good with a cause. She worked with UNICEF to evaluate its anti-child trafficking initiatives in Romania, Moldova and Albania, and the First Lady of Rwanda tapped Kazi as a consultant when the Organisation of African First Ladies launched its "Treat Every Child as Your Own" campaign to engage adults to fight HIV infections.

Kazi started at Fleishman-Hillard in 1996 as an assistant account executive. Since then, she has become a valued asset to the company and is sought-after for her experience. She was recently named practice group head for the Kansas City Public Health and Multicultural team, and in six months built a base of business to \$1.5 million. She has led the charge in gaining such accounts as Johnson & Johnson, Royal Caribbean, and Abbot. Two of her programs received Silver Anvil Awards from PRSA. A public health campaign, "Did you take syPHILis home last night?" raised awareness of an increase in syphilis cases around Kansas City. The other, for Royal Caribbean, focused on a "Royal Celebration of Art," an art auction program that built affinity to the cruise brand among African-American travelers.

She was invited to join the William Jefferson Clinton Foundation in promoting HIV/AIDS care and treatment in the Caribbean and Africa and worked on-site in the Dominican Republic with President Hipolito Mejia's administration and the President's Commission for HIV/AIDS. This year, Kazi has been invited to serve as a panelist during the Global Health Symposium - a fitting challenge for a proficient young PR professional.

Contact: kazin@fleishman.com



Name: Jessica M. Pantages
Title: Senior Manager, Marketing & Public Relations
Company: General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems
Age: 28

Since Jessica Pantages joined General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems in 2004, she has made her mark. She was recently tapped to lead strategic marketing and public relations for the company's largest segment.

Pantages formed the company's first integrated advertising program - General Dynamics was formed out of the merger of four separate business units. In addition, she invented its first company-wide community outreach program, built a media relations program and incorporated industry best practices into its day-to-day operations. But working for an engineering company wasn't the original plan for Pantages. "When I was a kid I wanted to be the next Jane Pauley," she admits.

In college, she elected to pursue a broad business degree. "I learned that how businesses communicated - both internally and externally - was paramount to their eventual success. I thought I might make a difference there." She was right.

Her favorite achievement is the company's community outreach program. She established an overarching program that included a week-long, company-wide event during National Engineers Week. In addition, a scholarship program was created through the Military Officer's Association of America. "The creation of one, consistent program focused on science, engineering and education is helping to increase our company's recognition with key stakeholders in our communities."

Pantages credits her first supervisor, Robyn Slater, she says. "She taught me a lot about being a good manager - the importance of recognizing your employees, how to be a diplomat with clients and coworkers without becoming emotional, how to nurture the careers of talented, eager individuals, and how to balance personal life with professional life. She is the manager I aspire to be." Pantages recommends that other young PR pros never stop learning. "Try to learn everything you can about your clients' and your company's business," she advises.

"Everything comes down to the financial bottom line, and PR practitioners need to be able to show how their activities are impacting it."

She anticipates a future where PR, marketing, community affairs, government affairs and investor relations will be more closely aligned. "Protecting one, integrated, external picture of a company will become more important," she believes. "It will become more difficult for certain PR and marketing departments to protect the company's brand as 'pop-up' employee-created materials and blogs appear."

Contact: jessica.pantages@gdais.com

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Name: Lara Beth Cohn
Title: Senior Vice President
Company: Steele Rose Communications
Age: 35

Lara Beth Cohn has worked on some of the most important clients her agency has, including Noxzema, Old Spice and Revolu-

tion Tea, but it is her unique work for a unique product that has gained her the most attention in the past year. Defense Vitamin & Mineral Supplement is a new "FreshCan" technology, which keeps the vitamins and minerals dry and separate from the beverage. As the consumer opens the can, the FreshCan Wedge releases the vitamins and minerals into beverage, ensuring their freshness. Cohn's team created a novel press release and sought celebrity buy-in. A 3-D press kit included a video of the FreshCan in action, a sample of the beverage and a clear can that earned the product a spot in *Marie Claire's* "Best of 2006" issue. When Cohn read about "In the Air," an off-Broadway production about the Great Flu of 1918, she arranged to hand out Defense to audiences at performances. She also had inserts placed in the show's *Playbill* with information on where to buy the drink. More than 1,400 cans of Defense were guzzled by thirsty playgoers. Finally, the team connected on an ongoing basis by making sure the beverage was served in Green Rooms of national television daytime and talk shows, to reach celebrities, media influencers and style makers. Cohn got the drinks into gift baskets for the private dressing rooms of 300 stars over three months. Actor Adrian Brody (a self-professed health and vitamin nut) actually contacted the agency - to ask for more.

Contact: lcohn@steelerose.com



Name: Ryan A. Jimenez
Title: Press Secretary, Communications Director
Company: California First Lady Maria Shriver
Age: 29

Ryan Jimenez has had a star-studded career already at the age of 29, managing public relations for productions involving Mary Steenburgen, John Goodman and Alicia Silverstone. He is directing public relations for the Geffen Playhouse's LA premiere of Sam Shepard's *The God of Hell*, and serves as Press Secretary and Communications Director for California First Lady Maria Shriver.

Previously, Jimenez managed public relations for productions featuring such musical luminaries as Yo-Yo Ma, Renee Flemming, James Brown and Herbie Hancock. When former President Bill Clinton did a visiting lecture as part of the Music Center of Los Angeles' Speaker's Series, Jimenez worked on the media campaign as a consultant, and he has worked for two years on PR for the annual Art+Design Walk.

Not only has his work been high-profile, but it's also been acknowledged for its high caliber. The launch of the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles earned his team three PRSA-LA Prism Awards and two Awards of Excellence. In addition, he helped publicize the re-launch of the renovated Hollywood Bowl and bolstered the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association's minority press outreach programs, as well as managing media relations for the Building Music Project.

But it's not all about fame and fortune for Jimenez. He gives back to his community, donating \$10,000 of pro bono PR counsel every year to a non-profit organization. He has worked for the past two years with the Urban Education Partnership in Los Angeles. This lecturer in the USC Annenberg School of Journalism's Public Relations sequence also has taught modules in arts and education public relations, as well as media relations.

Contact: ryanajimenez@yahoo.com

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Name: Lucy Allen
Title: Vice President
Company: Lewis Global Public Relations
Age: 32

Lucy Allen has made great strides in her first decade in PR. She is in charge of Lewis PR's San Francisco office and U.S.

account servicing, developed the firm's core account management methodology and helped win three important campaigns for the company's London office (SAP, CMGLogica and British Telecom). Her recent successes include positioning Airgo Networks as the top developer of wireless chips and leading the media launch of Tello, a developer of instant communication and collaboration products.

But the achievement of which Allen is most proud is the dramatic growth of the San Francisco office, where the headcount rose by 50% in the past year alone. "We've moved into new space, won great new clients, hired some fantastic people, built formal HR and IT departments, grown our reputation locally, won several awards, and executed some exciting business and trade media campaigns," she says. It hasn't all been a bed of roses, unless you count the thorns. "My biggest mistake was underestimating the recruitment challenge that hit Silicon Valley PR firms in 2006," she says. She learned to approach recruiting as if it were a PR campaign.

Allen notes that PR pros can't continue to rely on tried and true methods. "Old school' PR is being replaced by an altogether more energetic approach, where values such as speed prevail and an international outlook is vital," she says. "This is good news for the industry," because it will continue to draw bright, ambitious people and raise levels of professionalism and innovation. Her best advice? "Keep an open mind, work hard, show willingness and see everything as an opportunity." **Contact:** lucya@lewispr.com



Name: Haris Tajyar
Title: Founder and President
Company: Investor Relations International
Age: 31

Tajyar cut his teeth in PR as an administrative assistant for the Financial Relations Board (FRB), now owned by Weber Shandwick. He was 18. By the time he was 23, he had graduated with honors from California State University in Northridge and was the youngest vice president ever at FRB. When Weber Shandwick let go most of FRB's executives after the acquisition, the company asked Tajyar to stay, but he was more interested in starting his own firm. He was 26.

Since then, *Entrepreneur* magazine has named Investor Relations International one of the fastest growing private companies in America. This year, the company will be on the magazine's annual "Hot 100" list for the second consecutive year, at the grand old age of five.

Tajyar says "placing investor relations as a growing and important industry on the map" is among his best achievements. But it nearly didn't work out that way. "I started diverting away from what I was great at, investor relations," he says. "I started dabbling into the commodities market, where oil cost me nearly the entire shop." He learned to spend his time and energy truly mastering his topic.

He gives credit to Daniel Saks, now vice president, finance and investor relations for Taro Pharmaceutical. "Dan cared more about my well-being than my potential contributions to [FRB at the time]," says Tajyar - a faith that resulted in his becoming a vice president at FRB.

He tells young PR pros to aim high. "Never think as PR practitioner, as they are expendable," he warns. "Act as a CEO - albeit with a PR practitioner's badge - that has the ability to execute a unique, creative, productive PR campaign on the spot and without his PR firm - which, of course, he would never do." **Contact:** htajyar@irintl.com



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Name: Jim O'Leary
Title: Headquarters Spokesperson,
 Honeywell Hometown Solutions
Company: Honeywell
Age: 26



Most veteran executives will tell you to follow your passion, and the success will come naturally. "I've always been interested in public policy and public affairs," says Jim O'Leary. "In 2002, I did an internship in Burson-Marsteller's Public Affairs practice and was instantly addicted."

Now, he spearheads award-winning CSR programs for Honeywell Hometown Solutions. "FMA Live! Where Science Rocks," a traveling multimedia science concert, uses live performers, hip-hop music, videos and scientific demonstrations to teach students about Newton's Laws. (See *PR News*, 9/25/06, for a profile of the campaign, which earned an honorable mention in this year's PR Platinum awards.)

Among other challenges last year, he led a global communications assessment for Honeywell Aerospace, a \$10 billion business unit. "I visited about 20 company sites worldwide in less than six weeks," while doing his regular job. "I learned what it's like working from random locations 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

He has learned much from his co-workers. "I've been really lucky to have two great mentors," he says. "My boss, Michael Holland, taught me how to be a leader as well as how to navigate the halls of corporate America – not an easy task. My first boss, Jim Cunningham, taught me to think on my feet and have confidence in myself." The secrets of his success boil down to three maxims: First, be prepared to work if you want to get ahead. Next, roll with the punches. And last but not least, be your own advocate. "When the time is right, don't hesitate to tactfully remind your superiors of your accomplishments to set yourself apart," O'Leary recommends. "But don't overdo it."

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Name: Kristin Warterfield
Title: Associate Director of
 Public Relations
Company: Feed the Children
Age: 25



Feed the Children has seen more media exposure this past year than in its previous, 26-year history, largely thanks to the efforts of Kristin Warterfield, who was hired straight out of school.

Warterfield tells the story of an African toddler who was mauled by dogs

after being abandoned in a trash heap at birth. "When I met four-year-old Daniel Wachira, I knew the best thing I could do for him would be to create a storm of media exposure," she says. She flew to Nairobi to hold an international press conference. Next, she scheduled one-on-one interviews across the U.S., generating 10,000 stories. Daniel has since received his first, free craniofacial reconstructive surgery, and his dream – to have a face that isn't "broken" – is coming true.

Warterfield is grateful to mentor Larry Jones, president and co-founder of Feed The Children. "Before...I had no clue what a 'white balance' was, nor did I fully understand how to say exactly what you want to say in an interview," she says. "I have learned so much from him." She's also adjusting to the realities of making pitch calls and being ready to give up her personal life when she's needed.

But she says, PR pros should not forget to have fun in this great career. "Many companies are just starting to fully understand the true power of PR and how persuasive PR professionals are," she concludes. "We probably have the 'hottest' and fastest growing profession." **Contact:** kristin.warterfield@feedthechildren.org



Name: Carrie L. Strehlau
Title: Media Specialist, Public
 Relations Department
Company: St. Jude Children's
 Research Hospital
Age: 29

Carrie Strehlau has turned her career transition into a mission. "My first job, although in a communications department, focused on writing for its magazine, and I was a news editorial/magazine major in college. I learned public relations as I worked in that department," she says. What keeps Strehlau in PR is her job at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. "I believe you have to love and believe in where you work just as much as what you do there."

In 2004, Strehlau pitched a story to a new teen magazine. "They kept the pitch until this year, and wrote an amazing story about one of the St. Jude patients. The patient was thrilled to be featured, and I was honored to have helped facilitate that."

St. Jude was in a unique position to help children with cancer in the Gulf Coast region when Hurricane Katrina hit. The team minimized gaps in treatment for young patients who were evacuated to a St. Jude facility in Baton Rouge, LA. But first they had to convey the message to the Gulf Coast medical centers and hospitals that they were making the aid available.

Strehlau developed strategies to reach families who had lost their homes and trained non-media relations staff to post press releases, gather information and spread it to the media. As word traveled, it trickled down to rescuers and others who were in contact with the hurricane victims. Pediatric cancer patients and their families heard the message and made their way to St. Jude.

She produces a weekly radio sound bite called "St. Jude Medical Minute," which reached 26 million listeners last year, and contributes to the hospital's *Promise* magazine, which educates the public about research and medical care at St. Jude; it has reached more than 13 million readers. **Contact:** carrie.strehlau@stjude.org

Name: Christy Phillips
Title: Spokeswoman, Corporate Communications
Company: Wachovia Corporation
Age: 32

In 2005, Wachovia made the controversial decision to outsource a number of jobs, opening the company to negative perceptions. Christy Phillips earned her stripes with a comprehensive communications plan that increased awareness and understanding of outsourcing and offshoring by employees and the media. Not only did she execute the plan, but she also consulted and coached internal leaders and devoted substantial time and energy to increase understanding among the press.

Phillips took a chance early in the campaign by making the head of technology available for a Q&A with the hometown newspaper. The interview went well, and Wachovia was positioned as an open, forthright and thoughtful company.

Phillips is also the company's crisis management professional, whether she's handling fallout from 9/11 or executive changes. As the point person for corporate communications for the security and incident management departments, she always garners positive feedback. Her challenges have included such corporate issues and crises as customer data breaches, anthrax scares, fraud, bomb scares, pandemic planning, large regulatory settlements and legal issues.

Phillips helped integrate a new CFO when the existing executive left to pursue a position with another company, guiding news reporting and employee knowledge, introducing the new CFO in a positive way, and providing a clear picture of the transition plan. She was also on the spot with a plan when Wachovia acquired Golden West, getting the right messages out during a seven-day nonstop work-a-thon of strategizing. Her planning resulted in clear, consistent media coverage that presented the acquisition in a positive and prominent way despite the extremely short lead time. **Contact:** christyphillips@wachovia.com

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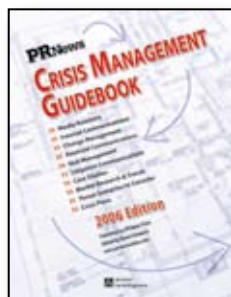
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Name: Emily Buchanan
Title: Vice President
Company: MWW Group
Age: 31

Certainly, as an outstanding client manager and expert in the restaurant and food service field, she was a natural fit for the McDonald's account. The burger giant had fallen on hard times in the New York Tri-State region, with slumping sales and fierce competition. She created a marketing communications program that targeted McDonald's two biggest assets: its restaurants and its charitable work. Her campaign, "Community Service is a Team Sport," tapped celebrities and sports stars and encouraged young people to raise money and volunteer for local Ronald McDonald House Charities. It garnered more than 506 million media impressions, with 354 minutes of positive publicity on TV and radio.

But Buchanan is good for more than burgers and fries. In fact, she makes herself an expert in every field where she has a client. This multi-tasker leads teams in the New Jersey and New York offices of MWW Group, and when Amazon.com wanted to promote the release of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, she positioned Amazon.com as the resource for all things Potter. "We were named Agency of the Year by The Holmes Report and PR News and have achieved some recent marquee client wins: Samsung, Volkswagen, Sun Microsystems.... I feel like I'm having an impact in the future of our business."

She adds, "The argument for generating buzz and other new media are the new working, blogs, Web sites, mobile technologies and other new media are the new 'influentials.' Clients can't afford to be silent. And PR practitioners need to learn how to join in the dialogue or risk being left behind."

Contact: ebuchanan@mww.com



Name: Holly Minch
Title: Executive Director
Company: Communications Leadership Institute
Age: 31

Holly Minch loves nonprofits. "Once I got into nonprofit work, PR just seemed like a natural way to extend the reach of the organizations," she says. "I'm a professional do-gooder who happens to be a decent 'flack.'"

At 21, she started working at the Sierra Club's press office. Two years later, she joined the SPIN Project, a nonprofit group that offers low-cost strategic communications consulting, training, coaching to social justice organizations. By the time she was 27, she was director and sole fundraiser for its \$1 million annual budget.

"This year, the SPIN Project merged with the Communications Leadership Institute, where I am now the director," she says. She also assumed leadership of the CLI's executive training program and has garnered rave reviews from clients.

"I've probably made a million mistakes," Minch admits, referring parenthetically to a story about switching Senate candidate John Edwards' photo with a photo of a local real estate agent – also named John Edwards – in a campaign brochure. But the lessons she has learned have built on her teamwork skills.

Colleagues have been there for her. Kim Haddow, Sierra Club communications director, taught her: "If you aren't enjoying yourself doing this work, you are doing it wrong." Minch has her own words to live by: "Throw yourself into a job you love, and opportunities will find you."

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Name: Jeffrey DeMarrais
Title: General Manager, Communications
Company: GE Plastics
Age: 35

Jeffrey DeMarrais grew up in a PR household. His father was the head of sports information for Columbia University and worked in PR agencies in New York City. While in college, Jeffrey worked in the sports information office, got an internship at NBC for the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, and "was hooked."

In 2005, DeMarrais joined GE Plastics, a leading provider of engineering thermoplastics materials solutions. "The global communications team plays a real leadership role in enhancing GE Plastics' image and reputation," he says. But three months after DeMarrais started, the group lost its PR lead, Bob Hess, to a stroke.

"We lost a legendary PR leader, a great team member and friend, and we're still feeling shockwaves," he says, but it taught him to: "(1) treat and support your team like family; and (2) cross-train in a variety of PR and communications skills and learn everything about your business/client as quickly as you can" to avoid the problems inherent in a "silo" model.

Last year, he was drawn into hurricane relief efforts at a GE Plastics plant, helping communicate to employees, working with media and briefing business and company leadership. He led an initiative to co-brand sports equipment for the 2006 Olympic Games, with the tagline: "Made with GE Plastics."

DeMarrais notes that "PR is the core competency upon which the rest of my experience is built. If I'm stuck with an employee communications or marketing communications problem, I can often solve it by putting my PR hat on and working the issue from that angle."

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Name: Jackson Jeyanayagam
Title: Account Manager
Company: Waggener Edstrom
Age: 28

When Jackson Jeyanayagam was a junior at the University of Oregon, a friend told him that "public relations was all about meeting new people, winning and dining important folks and schmoozing." He started taking PR classes, joined PRSSA, was elected vice president of public relations for his fraternity and interned in the PR department of the McKenzie Willamette Hospital. "I found out very quickly that PR wasn't what I thought it was," he says, "but I was still very interested because of the many different disciplines I could work in."

It's fortunate for Waggener Edstrom that Jeyanayagam pursued PR. Last year, he helped grow the company's consumer marketing practice and worked to develop and build its capabilities beyond traditional PR, winning an important client along the way: HTC. He also helped develop the agency's event marketing and event planning capabilities through successful events for T-Mobile. "Within four months, we secured additional budget to market and produce four media events in NYC to celebrate the launch and availability of upcoming products," he says. He is also proud of work he has done on the agency's work/life balance initiatives. "I helped spearhead a 'Dreaming Team Think Tank,' a focus group of employees dedicated to improving work/life balance at the agency. Recently, we launched the first annual 'WE Make a Difference Day,' developed to bring Waggener Edstrom employees together and lend a hand to the community."

Going over budget on an event was a bit of a shock, but it taught him important lessons, too. He "implemented a much better system of tracking the budget for the next event," and kept a closer eye on how the money was being spent.

The future looks bright to Jeyanayagam. "This is a great time to consider a career in PR," he says. "A lot of organizations are just now understanding the significant role PR can play in helping build their brand."

Contact: jacksonj@waggeneredstrom.com

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