

THE TOWER

Two weeks in the life of a PR intern

By **JESSICA POKORNY**
For The Tower

If you would have asked me a year ago what my plans were after graduation, I would have told you to “Forget the career! I’m going to start a family!” In fact, that was my response to friends and relatives who would ask me that very question. Looking back, I know I couldn’t have been more wrong!

I began pursuing my public relations degree not knowing what I was going to do with it. I guess you could say I “fell” into my internship through a conversation with Tricia Zelenak at my previous place of employment – a childcare center in Grove City. Tricia is the community relations director at Monterey Care Center, which is a local nursing facility. She would sometimes chat with me while dropping her daughter off at the childcare center. This happened during the time when I was frantically looking for a place to intern. I was a bit reluctant to take the intern position only because I didn’t quite know what I would be doing, but I soon found out.

I meet with my supervisor two days a week but usually leave feeling like it was five

days of work compiled into one. However, do not get me wrong, the work I am doing is a blast! Follow me as I take you through a very crazy, fascinating world that I like to call “Public Relations.”

The week of spring break wasn’t such a break for me. I attended a St. Patty’s Day pancake (green pancakes, at that) networking event where I met with several representatives from local nursing facilities. I had met with a lot of the community relations directors from these facilities before so it was a great chance to continue building on relationships I had already made.

Next we went to the Evans Senior Center in Grove City and began the planning for their annual “Senior Prom.” “How cute is this?” I thought, “I can just imagine my grandparents getting dressed up in ‘prom’ attire and dancing the night away!”

Then we took Monterey’s mascot, Max the Moose, to Mount Carmel West and visited some of our residents who were in the hospital.

To end the day, I called several local chefs to ask if they would judge the annual Grove City Pie Bake-Off. This

posed a bigger problem than you might think – the chef

who decided to judge in this bake-off would be responsible for tasting over FIFTY pies! While I have never considered myself a good telemarketer (we rarely see eye to eye...) I finally landed the right guy for the job – a culinary arts director at the Bradford Institute.

The rest of the week included attending a meeting for the Alzheimer’s Association Memory Walk steering committee, drafting a press release for Monterey’s Employee of the Year and touring several assisted-living facilities. The highlight was that I got to lead a discussion about social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) during the weekly marketing meeting. I was blown away by how little most business professionals know about the topic.

The Taste of Grove City is a business expo where 140 vendors/businesses display information about their services. Monterey had a booth set up, and I was there to help “man the site.” (Just a brief word of advice to all of the women reading this: Don’t wear high heels when you know you will be standing for 6 hours straight!) I was also able to walk around and speak with prospective employers about job openings.

Whew! What a week!

I feel so fortunate to be working for a professional like Tricia. She has such high energy and makes me so excited to work. She explains everything we do in detail, why we are doing it, and what the expected outcome is. I have always been a very extroverted, social person. However, I have never liked things that were out of the norm and unpredictable; that is, until I met Tricia. She made me realize that it is OK to have days that vary.

This internship has introduced me to a side of myself I didn’t know existed. It has opened doors to so many different opportunities and I plan on taking every last one of them. Tricia has given me a few words of wisdom that I will carry with me. “Self confidence is number one. People love confidence. If you walk into a job interview or are speaking with a prospective customer and seem unsure of yourself, that person will lack trust in you.” I couldn’t agree more. I look forward to implementing what I have learned and carrying it with me as I build a successful career in public relations.

Pokorny graduates in May and has started her job search.

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Connections land jobs

Perseverance pays off when networking

By **ERIN POPE**
For The Tower

It has always been a goal of mine to intern or work at Fahlgren Mortine Public Relations.

Two years ago, I applied for their Founder's Award which is a paid, full-time summer internship with a \$1,500 scholarship and although I didn't get it (not even an interview – I was crushed) I didn't give up hope.

Now, almost two years later, I am interning at the agency I had always dreamed of working at with some of the brightest minds in the public relations industry in Columbus.

It goes without saying that these days it's all about who you know.

Same is true for about any industry especially public relations.

With the help of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), I have had the opportunity to attend many networking events to meet and greet with professionals from the central Ohio area.

From speed networking events to luncheons, I have met over 100 professionals



Erin Pope

from around the country that have helped me to where I am at today.

A good friend of mine works at Fahlgren Advertising (there are four parts – public relations, advertising, creative and machine) and asked if I wanted to come in and see their new offices at Easton. So, of course I said, "Um, yes!" and we arranged a time and date for lunch and a tour.

When I was on tour, I ran into a few associates who I had met at different networking events over the past year.

I introduced myself again and thanked them for letting me come in and take a look at the place.

So, when I got home, I dug up their business cards and followed up with an email thanking them for their time and simply asked if they were ever looking for an

intern, to please let me know (including my resume and cover letter of course!).

Just 20 minutes later, I received an email from the intern supervisor asking if I could come in for an interview later that week – score! So, I went in for an interview and three days later, I had the internship that I had always wanted!

While most would simply give up and forget about landing the internship of their dreams, I took that as a stepping stone to where I am today.

If it wasn't for getting turned down the first time, I probably would not be in the position that I am in right now.

I have been fortunate enough to secure many internships in different sectors of public relations and it has all been because of networking.

I would encourage everyone to take advantage of any networking opportunities that might come before them.

Whether it is through a student organization or attending a luncheon, the relationships you make now will last a lifetime.

Pope will graduate this spring and is counting on networking to land her first full-time PR job.