

# KALEIDOSCOPE

EXPLORING THE MANY FACETS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Fall/Winter 2008



## Communicate MORE in tough times

by Anne Sceia Klein, Fellow PRSA

In the fall of 1991, I wrote a column titled "Coping with the Recession and a Hesitant Recovery." Then, as now, we were in the midst of a gloomy economy and hearing bad news at every turn. One thing we have learned over the years is that communications is just as important in bad times as in good.

Organizations that simply slash their public relations and advertising budgets in a bad economy find themselves losing market share much more quickly. Some go out of business while those that survive have a harder time recovering. You have to be smart – very targeted – in reaching your key audiences effectively. Scrutinize your communications programs to make sure they are focused and that each activity contributes to the bottom line.

Programs to increase employee recognition and morale are important to maintain job satisfaction during bad times, reducing the likelihood that valued employees will jump ship once the economy rebounds and jobs become more plentiful. Quality service and customer retention are

*(Continued on last page.)*

## Awards

### FIRM LAUNCHES "PROFESSIONAL PROMISE" STUDENT AWARD

Throughout its more than a quarter century in business, AKCG has supported the development of bright, young PR superstars in the Philadelphia area. To reinforce this commitment, AKCG has now established the Anne Sceia Klein Professional Promise Award. Each year, this award will recognize a college senior who is a member of a Philadelphia region chapter of the Public

Relations Student Society of America and who has demonstrated his or her dedication to advancement in the field of public relations.

Each year's award winner will receive a plaque and monetary prize, and will be honored at the annual Pepperpot Awards banquet hosted by the Philadelphia chapter of the Public Relations Society of America.

## Extracurricular Activities

### ♪ TAKE THE CLIENTS OUT TO THE BALL GAME ♪

While that doesn't have the same ring to it as the original song, it's exactly what AKCG did on August 6 for the agency's annual Client Appreciation Night. We couldn't have picked a better night to go to a Camden Riversharks game! (No, it wasn't the WORLD CHAMPION PHILLIES, but it was fun nonetheless.)

The weather was beautiful and the crowd was excited. With the Ben Franklin Bridge glowing in the background, guests mingled while enjoying traditional ball game fare: hot dogs, burgers, popcorn, cookies and more.

The turnout was terrific, and we truly appreciated the opportunity to show our clients how much they mean to us. An August baseball game is a great way to slowly say goodbye to summer

and provides the perfect setting for kicking back with our clients and friends.

To all who couldn't make it this year, we hope to see you next year. You might even catch a foul ball – it's becoming a tradition for AKCG!

In the photo below, Riversharks mascot Finley (FIN-ley. Get it?) begs for a cookie from AKCG client Susan Besaw of Thomson Reuters.



### AKCG WELCOMES BROOKE NEIFERT

Brooke Neifert has joined Anne Klein Communications Group as an associate

after serving as an intern for a public relations and marketing communications firm in Camp Hill, Pa. She recently graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of Pittsburgh, with a bachelor's degree in business and communica-



Brooke Neifert

tions. Her experience includes media relations and marketing communications for health care clients in South Central Pennsylvania, as well as internal communications and branding for the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania. Additionally, Brooke coordinated community relations activities and events with United Cerebral Palsy of Pittsburgh through the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. Brooke is a member of the Public Relations Society of America.

### SEDONA ROUNDTABLE

AKCG co-owners Chris Lukach and Mike Gross participated in one of the year's most exclusive PR firm development events – the Sedona Roundtable, hosted by Al Croft, author of a monthly newsletter, *Management Strategies for Public Relations Firms*, and a book on the same topic. During the Roundtable, which included about 20 PR firm owners from around the country, Chris and Mike participated in wide-ranging discussions about firm benchmarking, growth strategies, staff development and client service. The current economic environment provided the backdrop for candid discussion about marketing and new business development.

### LUKACH ON LIFE

Chris Lukach published "No Signs of Life," an article about the drawbacks of the industry-leading virtual world Second Life, in the September/October issue of *Ad News*, the magazine of the Philadelphia Ad Club. In the article, Chris contends that while the virtual world concept has merit, Second Life does not offer marketers a

substantial enough return for the weighty investment it requires. One of the largest marketing industry publications in the region, *Ad News* generates a readership of 25,000 professionals.

Chris is serving as vice president for Programs for the Philadelphia Public Relations Association's 2008-2009 programming year. In this capacity, he oversees the organization's educational and social programs, including its annual meeting – a capstone event held every June.

### MOSCATELLI GIVES ADVICE

John Moscatelli, AKCG's COO, shared insights from his more than 40 years of public relations experience by participating in PRNews' online book, *Best Advice/Worst Advice in PR*, which was published in October. The book quoted John three times. First, in Chapter 1, "BEST ADVICE for PR Pros," John said, "Listen before you talk. Ask questions. Take the time to find out what the real issues are before attempting to provide counsel and advice." In Chapter 2, "BEST ADVICE for Those New to PR," John advised, "Be a voracious reader. Read for content to stay informed about your profession and your clients' businesses; read for style to learn to be a better writer and to be alert to changes in usage; and read for impact to arm yourself with information that lends credibility to your authority." Finally, in Chapter 3, "WORST Career Advice," John shared a less than prophetic piece of advice he was given in the early '80s: "The Internet will never amount to much. It's too complex."

Drawing on his more than 20 years of agency experience, John taught his class in Client Relations at Rowan University once again this summer. The graduate level seminar touched on various facets of developing and maintaining strong relationships with clients.

### ANNE JOINS AHA BOARD

Anne Sceia Klein has been named to the Central-Southern Jersey Board of Directors for the American Heart Association (AHA). Anne has served on the Executive Leadership committee of the "Go Red For Women" campaign for

the past two years. She has been active with the AHA since 2001, and had served for two years as chair of the South Jersey AHA Sweetheart Ball Silent Auction. She also has worked with the Northern Jersey Region of the AHA on its "Go Red for Women" campaign.

### NEW SENIOR COUNSELOR

Sherry Tomlinson, a human resources (HR) and employee communications expert, has joined the AKCG Senior Counselors ALLIANCE. Sherry brings more than 25 years experience in all facets of HR, from strategic planning assessments to benefit roll-outs to business writing workshops. In her career she has worked at the Federal Reserve Bank as the staffing and development officer, the compensation and benefits officer, and the head of the Business Planning Department. Prior to starting her own consultancy, Tomlinson HR & Communications, Sherry was executive director of the Penjerdel Employee Benefits and Compensation Association. Sherry teaches Business Communications at both Rutgers University in the MBA program and at LaSalle University.



Jerry Klein (right) chats with longtime KYW Newsradio reporter Jay Lloyd (left) at the October meeting of the Broadcast Pioneers of Philadelphia, as Gerry Wilkinson, president of Broadcast Pioneers, looks on. Jerry and Jay worked together during Jerry's tenure at KYW in the '70s as an editor, reporter and anchor. Jay, who covered more than 70 elections during his storied career, was at the meeting to moderate a panel discussion on how broadcast election coverage has changed over the years. Jerry is a vice president of the organization, which is the largest of its kind in the nation.

## Spotlight on a Client

The Visiting Nurse Association of Greater Philadelphia (VNA), a nonprofit agency, has been making home and community health care history since 1886. The VNA views itself as one of Philadelphia's "best kept secrets." AKCG is working with the VNA to raise the public's awareness of the breadth of services it offers.

Serving patients in Southeastern Pennsylvania, the VNA is among the nation's leading providers of comprehensive home health services. Highly specialized, cost effective services available 24 hours a day make the VNA the agency of choice for patients, physicians, families, case managers and insurance providers.

Patients of all ages with acute and chronic illnesses are able to access a wide range of services available throughout the region, regardless of ability to pay.

The VNA's team includes nurses, home health aides, and physical, occupational and speech therapists. Working together, this team promotes recovery; restores health; teaches patients and families how to manage chronic illness; and maximizes independence in activities of daily living.



*AKCG generated a front-page feature in the Times Herald, a suburban Philadelphia daily newspaper, about the VNA's new "personal telehealth" service that enables VNA nurses to remotely monitor their patients' conditions on a continual basis.*

*Reprinted with permission.*

## Client News

In recent months, AKCG has welcomed an influx of new business, helping the firm weather the downturn in the nation's economy. Clients recently signing on include: **Asbury Communities**, a system of senior living communities in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Oklahoma, for *branding and public relations*;

**Croda Inc.**, in New Castle, Del., a manufacturer and supplier of natural-based specialty chemicals to personal care, pharmaceutical, household and industrial markets, for *community outreach*; and **The Visiting Nurse Association of Greater Philadelphia**, for *public relations and marketing* (see *Spotlight* above);

**Lehigh Valley Health Network**, based in Allentown, Pa., and **St. Mary's Hospital**, in Leonardtown, Md., have engaged AKCG to help them enhance their *crisis communications response capabilities*.

Other clients are employing AKCG for special projects, such as **The Lawrenceville School**, near Princeton, N.J., which is relying on AKCG for a series of *spokesperson training* seminars, and **The Burns Group**, of Philadelphia, who called on AKCG's *presentation training* expertise to help prepare their team pitch for a multi-million dollar program management oversight contract.

For the Scientific business of **Thomson Reuters**, a long-time client, AKCG made a media splash this fall promoting Thomson Reuters' "Citation Laureates" – researchers named by Thomson Reuters as likely candidates for Nobel Prize honors. Building on the success of the 2006 and 2007 campaigns, the 2008 Laureates campaign generated coverage in key major media, including *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, and in myriad publications around the world through the *Associated Press* wire service. This year, the AKCG team

Specialty services provided by expert clinicians address the specific needs of patients with Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, cancer, and mental and behavioral health problems.

Hospice of Philadelphia, another service of the VNA, enables patients with a serious, progressive illness to live at home as fully and as comfortably as possible, wherever home may be – including a nursing home or personal care facility. This spring, Hospice of Philadelphia will open a new free-standing in-patient unit. The unit is being designed to bring both peace and tranquility to patients and their families. AKCG is proud to have the opportunity to promote the unit, the first of its kind in the Philadelphia area.

AKCG is conducting media outreach on a number of levels. Mike Gross, AKCG co-owner and account manager, says, "We are developing stories on behalf of the VNA for both general media outlets and trade publications. We also are working to showcase the VNA's experts as thought leaders in this industry."

incorporated a Webinar into the media program, reaching out to top-tier media contacts and offering them a chance to learn about the methodology behind choosing Citation Laureates. David Pendlebury of Thomson Reuters research services led the discussion. Account Executive Kate McDermott was extremely successful in attracting to the Webinar reporters from several major media outlets including the *Associated Press* and *USA Today*.

## CLIENT REPORT CARD

AKCG recently concluded its annual "report card" survey of current clients. The survey, which got about a 50 percent response rate, informs us about how well we are meeting our clients' needs and how we might improve the quality of our service. One telling result: Of those clients who responded to the survey, 100 percent said they would recommend AKCG to others.

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high on the list of important business objectives. Naturally, visibility in the news media and on targeted Web sites remains an important goal for our clients because they recognize the value of customer awareness. Web sites are the "go to" source for accurate information about your organization. Keep your site up to date.

Environmental communications remains a high priority. Going green is good for your organization and the environment while building goodwill.

Community outreach programs continue to receive our clients' attention, because having the commu-

nity's trust is important for their businesses.

Because of concerns like these, our clients have remained committed to continuing their public relations programs. They want to stand out in a market where others have cut back.

These are tough times. But if you can maintain a strong communications program, you will fare better than those who don't.

Here's wishing everyone a better year in 2009!— *A.S.K.*

*P.S. - Congratulations to Melissa and Chris Lukach on their recent wedding.*

## NICE WORDS

"Great results. Thanks again. The announcement is delivering awesome success. Sales are above projections; and Philly to NYC is among the top-selling routes!"

*Ron Hanser, President  
Hanser & Assocs., Des Moines, Iowa  
(lead agency for introduction of  
Megabus.com, handled in  
Philadelphia and Baltimore  
by AKCG)*

"They do a top notch job!"

*Alyce Parker  
Vice President & Director  
of Public Affairs  
Harrah's Atlantic City*

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