

KALEIDOSCOPE

Exploring the Many Facets of Public Relations

Spring 1999



Is your Y2K Crisis Communications Plan Ready?

by Anne Sceia Klein, Fellow, PRSA

While the operations people are (we hope!) in the last stages of completing their Y2K readiness, it's time for communications professionals to dust off their crisis communications plans and check them for the same Y2K issues. (If you don't have a crisis communications plan, it's not too late to write one.)

Both The Gartner Group and Lloyds of London predict the potential for liability from Y2K lawsuits of \$1 trillion. Legislation may protect companies from some of this potential litigation, but public relations people must worry about protecting their companies' good reputations.

While you are working on your crisis communications plan, you should also be providing a consistent stream of information that focuses on real progress and solutions to the Y2K concern as it affects your company. You should be talking to your key constituencies to build and enhance your relationships.

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Awards

AKA Wins Five Pepperpot Awards From Philadelphia PRSA Chapter

The Philadelphia chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) presented Anne Klein & Associates with four first-place awards and an honorable mention at the 30th Annual Pepperpot Achievement Awards ceremony in December. AKA received awards in the following categories:

Special Public Relations Programs, for a program to gain community support for a new water pipeline for client New Jersey-American Water Company;

Crisis Communications, for its work with South Jersey Health System when two hospital emergency rooms were suddenly shut down by state and federal regulators;

Public Affairs, for a program to help the Southern Chester County (Pa.) Medical Center enlist grassroots community support when the township threatened to take the hospital's sewer system by eminent domain;

Special Events & Observances (Eight Days or More), for the AmeriHealth American Heart Walk.

AKA also received an Honorable Mention in the category of **Special Events (Seven Days or Fewer)** for the agency's own 15th Annual Tailgate Party promotion.

Details on each of the programs are available in the Case Studies section of our website, www.akleinpr.com.



Celebrating the Pepperpot wins are (left to right): George Gennaoui, director of PR and Marketing, and Jennifer Johnston, public relations specialist, South Jersey Health System; AKA senior VP Nancy Farwell; Stephanie Harnish, marketing and public relations specialist, Southern Chester County Medical Center; AKA executive VP Jerry Klein, account executive Kristina Broadbelt and president Anne Klein; Carmen Tierno, operations engineer, New Jersey-American Water Co.; and AKA senior account executive Donna Field and senior VP Nels Fellman.

Paterniti-Boivin and Field Promoted

Christina Paterniti-Boivin has been promoted to senior account manager. Since joining the firm in 1996 she has been responsible for client programs in the areas of industrial and consumer products, healthcare, management consulting, public utilities and insurance. As a senior account manager, Christina oversees a breadth of program components including media relations, community relations, special events and issues management. She is also responsible for strategic program planning and client service.

Also recently promoted, Donna Field is now a senior account executive. Donna has been with AKA since 1997. She serves clients in the areas of finance, technology, healthcare insurance and consumer products. She is active with the Philadelphia chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), for which she was recently elected treasurer. She previously served as chapter secretary and chairman of the annual Peppercorn Awards committee.

Wedding Bells

Account executive Kristina Davidson is now Kristina Broadbelt. Kristina and husband Mark married in December.

Broadbelt Named C⁵ Chairperson

Kristina Broadbelt has been selected as chairperson of the Collegiate Case Study Competition in Crisis Communication, also known as C⁵, conducted by the Philadelphia chapter of PRSA and sponsored by Anne Klein & Associates. This is the second year for the competition. All chapters in good standing of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) are eligible to compete for the \$500 cash prize. The student chapters were presented with a crisis scenario in the fall. Kristina will be heading up the committee that will select the winning entry based on research, planning, organization, execution, evaluation, effectiveness and creativity. The winning chapter will be announced April 15th, 1999. The University of Scranton (Pa.) won the award in 1998.

New Faces at AKA

Barbara Barr Jackson has joined the AKA staff as part-time receptionist and production assistant. This is Barbara's third career. In her first career, Barbara worked as public relations coordinator for Girard Bank (now Mellon Bank) in Philadelphia for two years after being hired as a college intern by Anne Klein over 20 years ago. She recently connected with Anne again after completing her second career, which was as a full-time mom.

Barbara, who has also worked as a freelance writer, graduated from Temple University in 1976 with a bachelor of arts degree in journalism/public relations. During her senior year, she was president of Temple's Public Relations Student Society of America chapter. It was through the PRSSA connection that Barbara first met Anne.

Jane Haber has joined AKA as book-keeper and billing manager. She provides accounting support for the firm and maintains the firm's computerized time records and billing systems.

Previously, Jane worked for 10 years as a paraprofessional for a CPA firm in Philadelphia. She has also worked as a bookkeeper and administrative assistant for the Philadelphia Typographical Union and for a CPA firm in Honolulu. She grew up in Philadelphia and attended Philadelphia Community College, majoring in accounting.



Barbara Jackson



Jane Haber

A Busy Speaking Season

Anne and Jerry Klein participated in a roundtable hosted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for members of Poland's Institute for the Ecology of Industrial Areas. The panelists gave advice on establishing community relations programs for environmental issues.

Anne spoke to a local chapter of the New Jersey Society of Certified Public Accountants in a forum designed to present professional women's perspectives on balancing careers and personal lives in today's society. She was joined by an award-winning business advocate and a New Jersey township mayor.

It's becoming an annual event — Anne's business etiquette and fine dining presentation to public relations students at Rowan University in Glassboro, N.J. Anne is now starting to hear from former students who attended past presentations and are now out in the working world. They report her advice and tips to them are paying off.



Anne Klein (center of photo) was one of five heads of major Philadelphia area agencies participating in a panel discussion at a packed March meeting of the Philadelphia chapter of PRSA. The panel talked about industry trends and the challenges facing PR practitioners in today's world.

Spotlight on a Client

Chemical Plant Community Relations Program Builds Ties with Neighbors

At the beginning of 1998, officials at Lonza Riverside in suburban Philadelphia were mapping out plans for a multi-year expansion of their plant facilities. A unit of the giant Swiss chemical firm Alusuisse-Lonza Group, Lonza Riverside manufactures "fine chemicals," which are high-purity chemical intermediate and active ingredients used in the production of many leading pharmaceuticals. But Lonza officials knew that in these environmentally conscious times, anything connected with "chemicals" was potentially controversial. So they asked AKA to develop an ongoing community relations program to build understanding and gain acceptance for the expansion program.

Working closely with plant management, AKA developed a program to affirm Lonza's position as a concerned and trustworthy company, and to let the community know that the Riverside facility was a good neighbor with an excellent environmental and safety record. The program established, promotes and reinforces an "open door" relationship between the plant and the community. It encourages two-way communication about not only the plans for expansion but also all facets of plant operations.

At the start of the program, AKA conducted a benchmark survey to gauge perception of Lonza among residents of the community around the plant. The survey, which was mailed to all homes and businesses located within a

three-mile radius of the plant, showed that the community did not know Lonza or what it produced. Clearly, the community relations program was a necessity.



Upper Merion Township Supervisor Chuck Volpi (left) presents a commendation to Lonza's Paul Sieracki, Director of Environmental Health and Safety, recognizing the Riverside plant's environmental efforts.

As a first step, AKA recommended forming a Community Advisory Panel (CAP) to encourage open communication with the community. A CAP allows members of the community to share concerns with plant management and act as liaison between the plant and its neighbors. In the summer of 1998, AKA began identifying, then contacting

community leaders to join the CAP. By the fall, Lonza hosted its first CAP meeting with over 20 community members eager to learn about Lonza and to help Lonza become an even more effective corporate citizen responsive to community needs and concerns. April 1999 will mark the CAP's fourth meeting. Plans are also underway to create a website that will showcase the CAP's activities and make information about the plant more widely available.

AKA also took advantage of an excellent opportunity in March 1998 when Lonza received a prestigious industry award for its state-of-the-art upgrade of the Riverside facility. *CONTROL* magazine's **Automated Plant of the Year** award is based on numerous criteria including environmental, health and safety concerns. AKA invited the local media and township officials to attend the award ceremony at the plant, then take a plant tour. Both attendance and media coverage were excellent and reinforced Lonza's relationships with local officials.

Within a very short period of time, Lonza has become known and respected by community residents and township officials. Upper Merion Township (Pa.) recently presented Lonza with a commendation recognizing the Riverside plant's commitment to environmental health and safety.

Client News

AKA Developing National Awareness Campaign for Internet Firm

ETI, Inc. – formerly KAPS, Inc. – has selected AKA to handle public relations activities related to its name change and forthcoming nationwide expansion. ETI, the largest private network provider in New Jersey, offers a host of communication services through the Internet.

Hard work and persistence paid off with a half-page feature in the March issue of *Money* magazine for long-time AKA client the **National Association of Investors Corporation** (NAIC). In the *Show Us Your Portfolio* section, NAIC

chairman Thomas O'Hara and CEO/president Kenneth Janke share the stocks and mutual funds they hold, as well as their investing philosophy, with *Money's* more than two million readers.

National Medical Services (NMS) has selected AKA to provide PR services. A full-service bioanalytic testing laboratory based in Willow Grove, Pa., NMS offers a wide range of services for business, industry, academia and government. AKA began the NMS program by announcing the company's acquisition of

the STAT Toxicology Laboratory formerly located at Allegheny University of the Health Sciences in Philadelphia.

Syngy Inc. has selected AKA to assist in the development and implementation of a public relations program to support its marketing plan. Syngy, a Bala Cynwyd, Pa.-based management consulting and information services company, designs, implements and administers incentive compensation plans for large corporate sales forces.

Nice Words from a Client

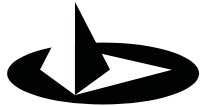
“Thanks for [your work on a recent project]. You always come through with creative ideas that can be applied. Thanks to everyone for dropping what they were doing and helping us out on such short notice.”

George Palmer
V.P., Corporate Relations
Fluor Corporation
Irvine, California

Anne Klein & Associates is a public relations consulting firm based in the Philadelphia region, with clients throughout the United States. It is a member of

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a leading network of independent public relations firms around the world.



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Most important, your employee communications programs should be directed toward training front line employees such as telephone operators, receptionists, and customer service personnel so they either know the answers about Y2K concerns or know who has the answers. In short, employees need to know where to get help.

Media hype will continue to be of concern. The doomsday believers are small in number, but the media will continue to sensationalize their every fear. Even the Red Cross suggested that

people should prepare for the new year as they would for a winter storm. As a result, people who might not have worried about Y2K are getting concerned. A speaker we heard recently said, “The panic may be more devastating than the reality.”

We are recommending two action steps:

(1) Keep communicating. It is important that everyone (at least your key constituents) knows what you are doing about Y2K.

(2) Review your crisis communications plan. Are there certain scenarios that you already have in your plan that could be caused by a Y2K glitch? Are there new scenarios you should add?

It is important to update your crisis communications plan so you will not have to scramble if there is a problem. Then, sit back, take an early vacation, and await the new year. We hope it will be a time of great celebration!—A.S.K.

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