# Student-run Firm Handbook
# 2018–2019

Public Relations Student Society of America

June 2018
Dear PRSSA Member,

Thank you for your interest in Student-run Firms.

The mission of PRSSA is "To provide exceptional service to our members by enhancing their education, broadening their professional network and helping launch their careers after graduation." PRSSA Student-run firms play an important role in fulfilling this mission statement. Student-run firms will continue to serve as an essential piece of the Society and supply clients with excellent service and students with exceptional experience.

This handbook is provided as a resource to ensure that you have an optimal firm experience. While there are various developmental stages for Student-run firms, please refer to this handbook for all stages as it is comprised of templates and examples from firms across the country. It contains the information needed to establish and maintain a successful firm and will enable you to achieve standards of professionalism, structure and connections that will help your firm receive or maintain National Affiliation.

Nationally Affiliated firms represent the most distinguished and successful Student-run firms in the Society. Achieving this status will give your firm access to PRSSA's client referral system, the ability to apply for the Student-run Firm Awards and the potential to participate in new opportunities such as CreateAThon. I encourage every school to take the steps to apply for National Affiliation status and I commend those that have already accomplished this. The full application for National Affiliation and information on the awards are listed near the end of this handbook and may also be found on the PRSSA website.

If your Chapter would like additional copies of this manual, you may download it at www.prssa.prsa.org. If you prefer to have copies mailed to you, contact Executive Director Jeneen Garcia at (212) 460-1474 or jeneen.garcia@prsa.org.

As vice president of professional development, I am here to serve as your representative and guide. I want to help you work through struggles while praising your accomplishments. I would love to discuss what I can do to help your firm this year on your own road to success. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me for questions or concerns. I am excited to serve your firm this year!

Best Wishes,

Ashleigh Kathryn

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2018–2019 Vice President of Professional Development

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# 2018–2019 Student-run Firm Handbook

# What Is a Student-run Firm?

A PRSSA Student-run Firm is an operational public relations firm managed by PRSSA members. Firms allow you to gain hands-on experience with business-to-client relationships.

- The advantages of participating in a firm include the following:
- Building client relationships and meeting professionals.
- Learning how to lead and work as a team.
- Creating résumé/portfolio material.
- Getting hands-on public relations experience.
- Developing PRSSA Chapter unity.
- Learning to balance tasks and handle numerous duties.
- Applying theories learned in the classroom.

Beginning a Student-run Firm may seem daunting. As you consider how to start, remember that successful businesses did not begin perfectly, but with determination. For Student-run firms, your hard work cannot be underestimated.

When launching a Student-run firm, keep the following principles in mind:

- Plan ahead. Build governing documents and policy forms before launching a firm. You can always go back and edit these but planning out the structure ahead of time will set your firm up for success.
- Start small. While you might have plenty of interest in the firm, it is much easier to manage and learn from mistakes with a small group of clients and employees.
- Research and choose your advisers carefully. These advisers should serve as mentors and resources for your firm. They are there to help guide the firm to success but should not be responsible for leadership obligations. You are also allowed to renew your adviser, if needed.
- When working with clients, confirm everything in writing. Maintaining contracts is an important way to align the firm's and client's goals and expectations.
- Know what public relations is and help your clients understand it too. Public relations isn't necessarily putting up fliers, passing out coupons or making a Twitter account. Be strategic so your firm gets as much out of the relationship as your client does.
- Set a professional atmosphere so your employees will take the firm seriously. It's easier to maintain a professional setting than to try to regain one after it has been lost.
- Build relationships with faculty members and your local PRSA Chapter to have as resources and partners in future opportunities.

# Build Your Team

When choosing executives, always pick committed individuals who will pull through in both the tough times and good. With these people, you can effectively manage a firm.

Though Student-run firms are organized within a PRSSA Chapter, they require their own student administrators to support their initiatives. Firms must have effective leaders to ensure stability and longevity. A small Student-run Firm may choose to have only a firm director, an assistant firm director and an account executive or two; whereas, a larger firm may have a full board of officers. The positions and titles should accommodate the needs and numbers of your firm staff. Remember to make sure your structure meets the standards set forth for National Affiliation if your firm wishes to apply for the designation (see section on National Affiliation).

PRSSA recommends the following positions (with multiple members holding the position, if appropriate):

- Firm Director
- Assistant Firm Director or Vice President
- Department Director
- Account Executive
- Public Relations Director
- Administrative Assistant
- Finance Director
- Staff Member

Depending on the size and structure of your firm, you may require more, fewer or some combination of these positions. National Affiliation standards recommend you have at least one firm director and two assistant directors.

### Firm Director

The Firm Director is responsible for managing the firm's operations and serves on the Chapter's PRSSA Executive Board to maintain communication between firm and Chapter. The Firm Director should have regularly scheduled meetings with staff and weekly meetings with officers. Be sure to include time for questions from the account executives. Duties may include the following:

- Select account executives with the help of the Assistant Firm Director or Vice President.
- Maintain on-going contact with the firm, Faculty and Professional Advisers.
- Conduct leadership and general firm meetings.
- Maintain files of all activities.
- Oversee and approve client recruitment.
- Evaluate and motivate firm members.
- Establish communication between the firm and the rest of the Chapter.
- Maintain contact with clients and account executives to ensure satisfactory progress.
- Offer commitment and professionalism to the firm and its activities.

### Assistant Firm Director or Vice President
The Assistant Firm Director (or Vice President) plays an important role in helping the director oversee the firm's leadership and relationships. Duties may include the following:
- Assist director on all projects and activity planning.
- Supervise all accounts and maintain file of activities.
- Recruit and maintain clientele.
- Assist, advise and evaluate executives during meetings and report to firm director (or president).
- Perform director's duties in his or her absence.

### Department Director
A Department Director is responsible to ensure the quality level of all firm projects and oversee students in the department. If the agency is large, then it is wise to categorize students by the work they produce and then assign them to projects as they come, rather than assigning them to participate on a certain client team. Duties may include the following:
- Assign students to client projects based on experience and expertise.
- Provide constructive criticism and mentor students in the department.
- Maintain regular communication with Account Executives
- Regular meet with students to review work.
- Provide final approval on projects prior to delivery to the client.

### Account Executive
Account Executives are often the main client contact. The account executive must be professional, responsible and ethical because he or she represents the firm. National Affiliation standards recommend a firm should have at least two account executives. Account executives should report consistently to the firm's executive board through written and oral reports. This ensures that the client is well-served and that all associates are participating. Duties may include the following:
- Develop goals and objectives with his/her account members.
- Obtain client permission to implement tactics.
- Motivate account members with phone calls and email reminders.
- Maintain regular communication with the client.
- Complete a detailed weekly activities report.
- Maintain a continuous and complete file of activities and completed projects.

### Administrative Assistant
An Administrative Assistant records the firm's meeting minutes and assists with client relations, thank you letters and firm social events. Duties may include the following:
- Record attendance at all meetings.
- Create email list server for all members to receive minutes and other notifications.
- Assist officers with various firm activities.

### Public Relations Director
The Public Relations Director builds relationships and support for the firm among its key

audiences. Duties may include the following:
- Create a publicity committee to promote the firm and motivate others to join.
- Develop fliers, letterhead, letters and newsletter for the firm.
- Disseminate news to local media about upcoming and successful client events.
- Assist president to creatively recognize achievements for firm members.
- Research and implement volunteer events and donation opportunities for the firm.

### Finance Director
The Finance Director keeps accurate, updated expense records and ensures adequate funds are available for campaigns. He or she is strongly encouraged to work with an Adviser to reduce liability. Duties may include the following:
- Assist president in preparing annual plans, budgets, proposals and histories.
- Ensure appropriate resources are available for account executives.
- Research, design and implement fundraising.

### Staff Members
Fill these positions with PRSSA members first, then solicit the service of student freelancers, consultants or accountants. Staff members are responsible for maximizing their own experience, under the direction of the account executives. Duties may include the following:
- Submit regular report forms to account executives.
- Actively participate in account activities.

### Officer Training
You must train your team in the firm's operations and procedures. This is best to do in the beginning of each term or rotation of firm leadership to maintain consistency. Training can be as simple as holding officer meetings, providing a handbook or hosting a retreat. Your Advisers may assist. This does not have to be limited to one meeting or event. Leaders should be actively considering predecessors and grooming potential candidates throughout the term. This will aid in a smooth transition. The firm should also send at least one individual to the PRSSA National Conference each year to attend the workshop specifically for Student-run firms, as well as professional development sessions and networking opportunities. Public relations skills that can be practiced in your firm include:
- Research — Focus groups, surveying, evaluation techniques, interviewing
- Business — Budgeting, proposals, presentations, management function
- Media relations — News releases, press kits, media pitching, radio and television spots
- Design — Publicity (newsletters, brochures), photography, special, desktop publishing
- Writing — Feature stories, op-ed pieces, speech writing, strategic plans
- Web development — Copy design, graphics design, forms handling
- Event planning — Fundraising, campaign planning, goal setting, multi-tasking
- Social Media- Analytics, content design, visual optimization, engagement

### Good Management Practices
Management involves planning, setting goals and making decisions. Officers are responsible for the business and influence its success. Management encompasses the following:
- Planning — Setting the goals and strategies for your firm.

- Organizing — Deciding on tasks, delegating, scheduling, etc.
- Staffing — Hiring, training and terminating (if necessary) employees.
- Directing — Supervising and motivating employees.
- Controlling — Evaluating how you are achieving your goals and reacting accordingly.

### Recruiting members

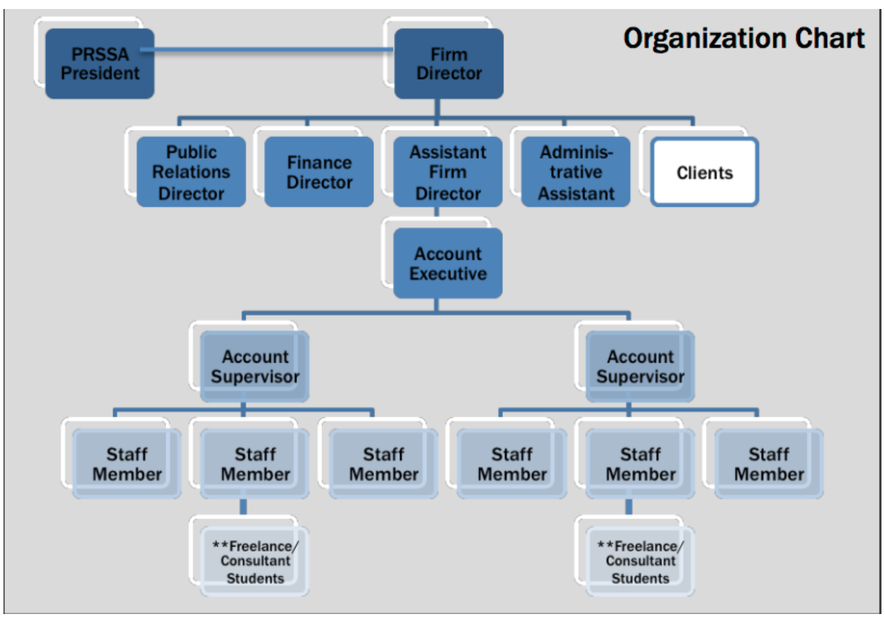
Seek publicity to recruit new members. Modes of publicizing include the following:

- Create a Firm newsletter or regular spot in the Chapter newsletter.
- Send a press release or pitch to the school newspaper.
- Develop fliers to post around campus or give out at special events.
- Start a publicity committee or offer the firm as a class for credit.
- Invite public relations students to an opening social, such as a barbecue.
- Create awards for students who demonstrate an outstanding effort in the firm.
- Announce the firm in public relations and business classes.
- Feature a link to the firm website on the Chapter website.

## Structure

### Organization Chart

Firms should have a documented structure similar to a professional firm's to guide all organizational activities. The structure should accommodate each firm's resources and circumstances. The following is a sample organization chart for a student-run firm.




****A student who provides short-term specialty advice on a campaign or project.**

### Name

Whether you choose a name that is simple, urbane or associated with your college, make sure it will grow with your firm. Involve all firm members in brainstorming and choosing. A good firm name is easy to remember, distinctive, professional and indicates your business.

### Logo and Tagline

The logo and tagline should be carefully developed symbols of the business. See examples from Brigham Young University, University of Oregon, Louisiana State University, University of Alabama and Universidad de San Martín de Porres.

## Mission Statement

A mission statement clarifies the firm's goals, sets expectations for members and shows clients you are organized and focused. Good mission statements are brief and memorable.

The following is an example mission statement from Edelman:

- *"To provide public relations counsel and strategic communications services that enables our clients to build strong relationships and to influence attitudes and behaviors in a complex world.*
- *"We undertake our mission through convergence by integrating specialist knowledge of practices and industries, local market understanding, proprietary methodology and breakthrough creativity."*
- *"We are dedicated to building long-term, rewarding partnerships that add value to our clients and our people."*
- *"Our clients are leaders in their fields who are initiating change and seeking new solutions."*

### Vision

One of your first and most important decisions is when responsibility for the firm will transition to new leaders. To make this decision, firm leaders should review the National Affiliation standards and envision how the firm will operate after it has met each standard. Set semester and year-long goals and let the goals dictate when leadership changes.

### Goals

Have an organized strategic plan with research, action, communication and evaluation sections (see RACE, p. 11). Periodically re-evaluate goals with your Faculty and Professional Advisers. Goals help indicate if your firm is valuable to staff and clients. They provide a focus for officers, whose goals and projects should complement. The following are example goals:

- Increase firm [membership or clients] by [quantity] during [semester, year, etc.].
- Create a firm portfolio or sample press kit by [date].

- Increase awareness of our firm by [percent] compared to last year's awareness survey.
- Gain National Affiliation by [semester, year, etc.].

### Objectives

Objectives for a new firm may include establishing strong leadership, obtaining clients, developing a strong network and increasing membership. When setting objectives, consider the demands on the firm and how the firm can benefit current and future members.

### Policies

Specific policies are necessary for crisis and problem resolution. All members should receive a copy of the firm policies. Consider including the following:

Conduct

- Behavior policy and dress code
- Customer relations policy
- Conflicts of interest policy
- Confidentiality policy
- PRSA/PRSSA Code of Ethics
- Dispute resolution policy
- Travel and automobile usage policy
- Community participation policy

Personnel Responsibilities

- Employment agreements
- Orientation and training
- Hiring and firing policy
- Personnel records policy
- Pay and reimbursement policies
- Equal Employment Opportunity policy
- Suggestion policy
- Employee relations policy

## Firm Operations

### Firm Activities

- Officers should conduct regular meetings with all staff.
- Account executives should meet regularly with account staff.
- Hold workshops to help members learn about topics not discussed in classes.
- Hold regularly scheduled client meetings or calls and distribute minutes.
- Complete all client services as promised and submit regular client reports.
- Allow clients to evaluate the firm annually.

### As The Firm Grows

- Grow your brand as a professional organization through social media. Visualize your work for potential clients.
- Offer a brochure or connect through social media with local businesses, restaurants and shops.
- Develop and practice a presentation to give to potential clients.
- Establish billing rates and methods.
- Apply for National Affiliation when requirements are met.

### Interviewing Potential Firm Members

- Sincerely welcome every applicant. Be enthusiastic and friendly.
- Share your commitment to the firm and the benefits of participating.
- Ask about the applicants' experience, expectations and commitments.

### Business Pitfalls

You can avoid many of the following pitfalls by planning ahead and seeking help:

- Incomplete records
- No marketing strategy
- Poor management
- Miscommunication
- Hiring the wrong people
- Poor customer service
- Unwilling to ask for help
- Client dissatisfaction

### Proper Records

Records are the most important management tool you possess and ensure future members' success. Keep your records simple. Track the following information:

- Inventory
- Client contacts
- Petty cash and payroll
- Suppliers
- Employee data
- Mileage
- Telephone calls
- Accounts payable and invoices

### Recruiting Clients

Research possible clients that need the type of work you want to do. If your campus is not near a large community, look within your school for possible clients.

- Visit campus organizations.
- Promote at campus events.
- Distribute brochures and fliers.
- Contact new local businesses.
- Announce the firm at a PRSA meeting.
- Contact previous employers.
- Advertise in a PRSA Chapter newsletter.
- Volunteer or fundraise for a nonprofit (see Pro-

Once you have a list of potential clients, send a personalized letter to each introducing the firm. Follow up with a call to arrange a meeting to present a proposal and contract.

## Managing Contracts and Campaigns

### Contracts

Contracts are vital to your Student-run firm. A contract aligns your expectations and abilities with those of the client and provides documentation of the conditions of your work. See the sample contract at the end of this handbook. Your contract should include the following:

- Client's list of anticipated projects including priorities and tentative schedule.
- Conditions of accepting new projects not listed on original contract.
- Times like finals and holiday breaks that will affect productivity of firm members.
- Minimum amount of work or projects to deter inactive clients (when necessary).
- Billing information and conditions, including out-of-pocket expenses.
- Conditions for termination and canceled projects.
- Conditions of keeping samples of printed or published work as portfolio samples.

### Campaigns

A successful public relations campaign starts with understanding your client's needs. Campaign planning includes the following:

- Research your client, the opportunity or problem and your audiences.
- Determine objectives with a focus on impact and output.
- Plan your theme, actions, media targets and what constitutes effective communication.
- Evaluate the impact and output of your objectives.

### First Client Meeting

Prepare for client meetings by writing an agenda. Be sure to ask the following:

- What are the client's needs?
- What are the client's goals?
- What are our goals?
- What do their competitors offer?
- What is their budget?
- Do their needs match your services?
- What have they done in the past?
- Does the client understand the contract?
- Who is the client contact?
- What is the timeframe?

Discuss and agree upon your evaluation of "good public relations." How do you want to evaluate the outcome? Manage the client's expectations up front, before any work begins.

### Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a creative group problem-solving technique. Members may suggest any solution to a problem. The following tips will help you run a group brainstorming session:

- Define your problem clearly.
- Define the criteria of success.
- Stay focused.
- Don't stay on any idea too long.
- Encourage everyone to contribute.
- Let people have fun brainstorming.
- Do not allow criticism. It stifles creativity.
- Appoint one person to take notes.

### RACE Formula

When planning a campaign, you should systematically use the Research, Action, Communication and Evaluation model, or a similar system, to meet the clients' needs. The RACE model has the following 10 defined components:

- Objectives and goals
- Strategy
- Activity
- Evaluation
- Executive timeline
- Problem or opportunity statement
- Situation Analysis and Primary Focus
- Budget

# Developing a Business Network

Effective business networking provides you and your firm with relationships that could become business. Remember that networking should be based in a genuine interest in helping others. Friends and supporters are just as important in business as they are in your personal life. They will educate and guide you. Your network should include the following people:

- Community leaders
- Business owners
- Campus administration
- PRSSA alumni and PRSA members
- Champions for PRSSA
- College/University faculty and staff

## Pro-Bono Professional Development

When starting your firm, finding clients willing to pay for your services may be difficult. Pro-bono work is a great way to build your firm portfolio and attract larger clients. Additionally, pro-bono work unites firm members around a meaningful cause and assists your firm's reputation. Even if your firm is well-established, pro-bono work is a great way to implement new campaigns, explore another sector of public relations and discover causes you are passionate about.

Pro-bono work is done for free. You may consider working for local nonprofits. By presenting strategies to increase their donor or volunteer base, you will add to your portfolio, execute a successful campaign and earn an invaluable client recommendation. Before you begin pro-bono work, be sure the client understands that your work extends beyond casual volunteer duties.

When choosing a client to assist, consider what you want to accomplish. Perform a strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) analysis for the organization to guide your campaign planning. If you are already familiar with the organization's needs, they will be more confident in your counsel. Discuss your ideas for them and if they consent, you have your first client.

Use the guidelines found in this handbook for your pro-bono client, as for any other client. Remember that your initial clients are your best advocates when securing new business.

## Strong Support System

Every firm needs a strong support system so secure advisers as soon as possible. National Affiliation requires firms to have at minimum a Faculty Adviser and Professional Adviser. Other advisers may include the following:

- Community leaders
- Other business professionals
- Alumni
- Champions for PRSSA
- PRSA Chapter members
- Other faculty

While advisers' first responsibility is to uphold the firm's quality, they should attend meetings and counsel the firm leaders on clients, recruitment, projects, finances, contracts and evaluations. The adviser should be familiar with clients and staff.

### Connecting with Your Chapter

While a student-run firm and a PRSSA Chapter are separate operations, a strong and mutually beneficial connection should be maintained between both groups. Ideally, an overlap should exist between Chapter members and firm members. To improve your firm's connection with your local PRSSA Chapter, consider implementing the following:

- Invite all Chapter members to attend a firm status meeting or workshop.
- Provide firm updates and announcements at E-Board meetings.
- Foster collaboration on National initiatives.
- Encourage Chapter members to support the firm by sharing its goals, such as gaining
- National Affiliation.
- Encourage/require firm's attendance at PRSSA meetings/events.
- Schedule a retreat or bonding experience.

These are not required of the firm but will help to ensure a successful relationship. This relationship will also be reviewed in any application for National-Afiiliation, so it is crucial to foster a good connection early on.

## Finances

A firm's finances can be handled internally or by a financial manager but either way, recordkeeping is vital. Records to maintain include the following:

- Inventory Log
- Accounts Receivable and Payable
- Payroll Log
- Telephone Log
- Mileage, Travel & Entertainment Log
- Weekly Income/Sales Journal

A paper recordkeeping system may work for a small firm but eventually you may need computer software. A large firm may need to hire a fiscal manager to handle invoices, receipts, time cards and taxes. To avoid ethical problems, require signatures from your firm director and Faculty Adviser and release funds to only one designated person.

### Billing

Determine if and how much you are going to charge clients. Many Student-run firms don't charge until they gain experience. Check if your school's campus regulations allow you to charge. Clients will pay for quality work. Your fees may vary if the client is a nonprofit or depending on the experience of firm members. You may want to base your hourly rate on what local interns earn. The firm officers, counseled by advisers, should make billing decisions.

To gain experience with billing, consider “fake billing.” Prepare an invoice clearly marked “NO CHARGE.” Include all information that would be listed on an actual invoice.

All fees must be stated in the contract. When setting prices, consider your operation costs, what the competition is charging and research into market standards. The following are three common methods of charging clients for firm services:

- Retainer Fee — A fixed fee for unlimited services over a period of time.
- Special Project Fee — A fee charged per service or product provided.
- Hourly Billing — A fee charged per hour worked. Your contract should include a predetermined monthly minimum and maximum. The firm is responsible to deliver its services within that range. Include a list of accomplished tasks in the invoice.

The financial manager is responsible for keeping an accurate budget and financial record. You also need to determine how firm income will be used. Often, it should be used to expand and improve the firm, rather than being directed for general Chapter use.

### Proposal

The firm and client should agree on a proposal before any work is performed. The proposal should list the services you’ll provide, supplies needed, reimbursable costs and client fees. If additional services are requested, draft a separate contract to prevent misunderstandings.

### Corporate Sponsorship

Many times, companies looking to benefit their communities will donate funds to hire you for a nonprofit. Be sure to examine the criteria and terms when applying for these grants.

### Transitioning from Pro-Bono to Billing System

As mentioned previously, Pro-Bono clients provide some of the best opportunities for your firm. However, these clients may not want to easily transition into a billing system. To ease this process, make sure that your firm is providing quality and competitive work. Ask your advisers, alumni, PRSSA Chapter to review portfolios for your clients. Another great way to pitch a billing system is to evaluate the client’s portfolio and compare your service fees with local agencies.

If your firm has multiple clients that have agreed to pay for services, do not be afraid to release a Pro-Bono client. If your firm is not as developed, work with the client on other possible payments such as in-kind donations or sponsorships until both parties are ready for that transition.

## Evaluation

An effective evaluation process measures the firm’s performance and identifies areas of improvement. The evaluation should answer the firm’s goals and provide insight for future firm members. Maintaining thorough, accurate records of evaluations is vital. Each firm member should keep a portfolio of all projects for use as an evaluation and employment tool. Clients should complete an evaluation at the end of each semester or project. This feedback will show how the firm could improve and can be used in recruiting future clients.

The Faculty Adviser or firm director should conduct a three-minute interview with each member yearly, though a firm may benefit from having account executives conduct more frequent reviews. This interview should not be extensive but should mimic a professional annual review, focusing on client benefits and results, rather than methods or tactics.

Reports should accommodate the firm's needs. Consistency is vital to ensure the client is well served and all associates are participating. The following are suggested reports a firm should maintain, and samples can be found at the end of this handbook:

- Account Executive Sign-off and Weekly Activity Reports
- General Membership Application, Staff Evaluation and Portfolio
- Client Pitch Letter, Proposal and Contract
- Client Final Report and Evaluation Questionnaire

Your annual report should include a brief description of the year's projects and may include as an addendum, copies of the firm's products. The PRSSA National Annual Report, on www.prssa.org, can be used as a sample.

# Conclusion

### Recognition and Evaluation

As the academic year comes to a close, recognize and evaluate the individuals who contributed to your firm's success. Hold a final meeting or social to review the firm's accomplishments. Spotlight each account or project and display some of the work. Give awards such as outstanding account coordinator, team or new member. Consider giving all participants a certificate. This motivates members and shows their contribution is valued. Apply for Student-run Firm Award for "Best Campaign" or "Best Tactic," or enter PRSSA's Dr. F.H. Teahan Chapter Awards Program in the "Chapter Firm" category, which adds to your credentials and validates your firm's excellence to clients, potential employers and peers.

### Appreciation

Thank the clients that provided you work opportunities and the Advisers who helped the firm grow. Send letters of appreciation or consider having a client appreciation social. Maintain contact with clients over the summer months (summer conditions may be part of the contract). Clients need to know when vacations or finals will terminate or temporarily delay work on their projects. Include these dates and times in your firm-client contract.

# Questions and Answers

**What is a good way for new firms to find new clients?** This is a great place to utilize your Chapter's relationship with your sponsor PRSA Chapter. They can help with networking for potential clients or may even use your firm themselves. You can also search for opportunities within your school with other departments, clubs or organizations. Also, don't be afraid to go to local fairs, markets or events. You never know what you could find.

**What if an account group is struggling to communicate with its client?** This can be avoided by having your client sign a communications agreement that outlines points of contact, especially in case of emergency. Choose one point person for the account, usually the account executive, to contact the client and execute this. If the client is difficult to reach by email, proceed to directly calling the client, respectfully. If this is not successful, try to mail a physical letter to the client. If this does not work, assess if it would be appropriate to meet the client in person to schedule a future point of contact. Also, reach out to your advisers throughout this process to assess what actions to take.

**How do firm members become familiar with the client?** Staff should research the client and prepare questions for the first meeting. Visit the company if appropriate and if it is a nonprofit, volunteer to help. You may also consider inviting the client to a reception held by the firm.

**What should we do if our firm has too many or too few members?** If there are too many members, try to secure more clients or set higher participation criteria. If there are too few members, reduce your number of accounts/projects by not renewing contracts. Recruit new members by pitching your firm to introductory courses in your department. Also, reach out to new departments that could be beneficial in supplying members such as a Business or Financial department. Another possibility is to establish the firm as a class for students to commit at least for one semester.

**What if our members lose interest in our Student-run firm?** Try securing an exciting account that offers a more diverse experience. Remind students that they can expand their portfolio, gain leadership experience and earn awards. Obtain feedback through surveys and talk to your advisers. To avoid this problem in the first place, ensure that you are utilizing all members of your firm. Don't use the same people repeatedly while leaving others out. If you have a member that is particularly good at something, pair him or her with a less experienced member for a project as a way to facilitate a relationship and encourage participation.

**How can we increase attendance at firm meetings?** Avoid this by sending out a survey before the start of the semester to secure the most beneficial time to host a meeting. Then incorporate something fun like a quiz or prizes at all general meetings. Consider making this an on-going competition that will require members' attendance and participation. Increase efforts to build relationships with younger/newer members to build inclusiveness.

If you are starting a firm at a commuter school, explore virtual meetings via teleconferences, Skype, Facebook Live, etc. Work with the resources you have to make an effective experience.

**How can we increase membership?** Recruiting is usually easiest at the beginning of the semester. Set up an information table at events or talk to communications professors about the firm. Pitch your firm to introductory courses within your department or partner with a faculty member to offer extra-credit opportunities. However, size does not indicate success; members in a small firm may have more ownership and take on more projects.

**How do we raise awareness of the firm?** You must know how to market your firm before you can market clients. If awareness is a problem, take on fewer projects and spend more time on building the firm's name and image. Create a website or promotional materials on social media. Further, try to combine your promotional efforts with those of your PRSSA Chapter. Speak to incoming freshmen, share information during related classes and place bookmarks in textbooks prior to the start of the semester in order to keep your firm at the top of students' minds. Visualize your brand through recognizing successes or even members on social media

## Recommended Reading

The following list suggests reading that may assist you in your business dealings. To suggest an addition, contact the Vice President of Professional Development.

- "The Personal Touch" by Terrie Williams
- "The One Minute Manager" by Spencer Johnson, MD and Kenneth Blanchard, Ph.D.
- "Who Moved my Cheese?" by Spencer Johnson, MD
- "The Ultimate Question" by Fred Reichheld
- "The New Rules of Marketing and Public Relations" by David Meerman Scott
- "Pitch, Tweet or Engage on the Street" by Kara Alaimo
- "The Non-Designers Design Book" by Robin Williams
- "Declutter Your Mind: How to Stop Worrying, Relieve Anxiety, and Eliminate Negative Thinking" by S. J. Scott
- "Grit" by Angela Duckworth
- "The 10 Steps of Crisis Communication" by Jonathan Bernstein

# Student Case Studies

## Case Study One: Grand Valley State University

### Problem

Grand Valley State University's School of Communications houses the Advertising and Public Relations program (APR) which consists of 461 students. The APR program is the largest program in the School of Communications and unfortunately became lost amongst the other programs in its class. The foundation of the program was becoming weak and important stake holders were being missed in communication.

### Solution Overview

A rebranding was necessary to improve the program which would consist of building a stronger digital presence. The goal of this rebranding was to create a sense of community among the key publics; students, faculty, alumni, and industry professionals. The GrandPR team aided the APR faculty in the process of establishing their brand in multiple ways.

### Research

The rebranding began with an immense amount of primary research to fully understand what content students wanted to see from their major program. GrandPR utilized a survey provided by Qualtrics, which consisted of 29 questions and a focus group. The survey questions were divided up into sections; general social media usage, and the APR program social media presence. The questions were designed to gain insight and information on which social media platforms students favored the most. GrandPR was not only interested in APR students but also students of all majors. The results were kept anonymous and the data private to the GrandPR team. Facebook proved to be the winner as 94% of students claimed they use the platform and 69% said they would interact with it pertaining to their major. An interesting find was that 73% of students inform themselves of their major from the Grand Valley website.

The research showed that students would be most interested in content that will help prepare them for their professional endeavors, this can include internship postings, resume builders, workshops, ways to get involved, and current events. All content produced by the APR accounts should not only be interesting to the students, but should promote the benefits of the content posted. It is also essential to get faculty and professors on board of the promotion of the new APR brand and accounts.

A focus group was conducted by the GrandPR team in order to gain more insight from the students at Grand valley. The questions posed in the focus group provided answers that could be applied to the development of three important elements for building the

APR brand: awareness, attitudes, and action. Participants expressed positive opinions of the APR program's social media accounts and the content that is available. With this information, GrandPR decided to show a different perspective of the APR program by branding it as a service—a program that benefits the students. The program offers valuable information for students which should be readily available to them. The result of the focus group was that it provided GrandPR with essential information to rebrand the APR program. They decided that by using cross promotional tactics, they would be able to increase the amount of their audience that follows them on all platforms. It was also determined that featuring APR professors as a supplement to regular content would be highly beneficial to the students.

### Logo Design

It was decided that a new logo was needed to differentiate between the School of Communications and the APR program. The thought behind this logo is that ideas are what tie the professions of advertising and public relations together. All three audiences are "idea people" and that is represented by the light bulb. The new logo is used on most of the samples accompanying this report and was created by the GrandPR Creative Director.

### Social Media

Following primary research, the team created the social media platforms that the research stated were the most popular - Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Wordpress. These platforms were then used to reach all of the primary audiences; faculty/staff, APR students, alumni and parents.

Within the first 5 months, the APR Twitter increased impressions by 115.5%, and had 471 followers at the completion of the campaign. November showed the best performance on enLIGHTen, the APR Wordpress blog, which had 786 views and 685 visitors. Within the first 3 months, the APR Facebook page gained 175 likes, and ended the campaign at 223.

### Superior Awards

At GVSU, nationally recognized and award-winning programs bring well-deserved accolades to individual students and student teams in the APR program. Now more than ever, APR students are achieving the highest levels of success and celebrating their accomplishments on both local and national levels. Named after the home of the School of Communications, Lake Superior Hall, the Superior Awards have become a way to celebrate and bring light to the exceptional work being created within the APR program. The Superior Awards are not a competition, but rather recognition for superior work throughout all aspects of the APR program and involved coursework. Superior Awards are granted each spring for exemplary student work completed during the past academic year.

The APR program needed another way to connect to their stake holders, in addition to social media. To further connect industry professionals and highlight the outstanding work being done by students, GrandPR hosted the Superior Awards for the APR program for the third year during this campaign. The semester prior to this campaign, GrandPR created the Superior Award logo.

For this event, GrandPR coordinated formal event planning; requested funding, created a budget, arranged speaker gifts, decorated the venue, and arranged catering for the event. The event was deemed a success, thanks to the 14 industry professionals that judged the work, over 35 students submitted work and the 23 students and more than 12 faculty that attended the event.

### Challenges

Although there were numerous challenges in designing this plan for the APR program, the GrandPR team championed these issues and prevailed. Reaching the intended audiences posed as a challenge because there are a large amount of students coming from all different backgrounds and at different stages in their education. Thus the team needed a variety of students for a sample that were somehow tied to the program to get important and relevant information from the primary research. A greater challenge than reaching students was creating content that catered to the different types of audiences (students, faculty and local professionals) rather than different groups amongst students. Students were the biggest audience and the GrandPR team sometimes felt as if they were alienating faculty and pros because the content was so student - centered. Reaching the right audience would provide the team with the engagement that was required to gain results.

Another significant problem that was overcome was Twitter engagement. The APR accounts became proficient at creating content but often struggled on motivating the audience to engage with the posts (the average Twitter engagement rate was 2.5%). The primary objective of the benchmark focus group was to gain insight on ways that could help boost the engagement of our posts amongst students.

Lastly, requesting a budget from Grand Valley proved to be challenging but was necessary to further the operations and plan for the APR program's Superior Awards. The team had to design a detailed budget plan that would incorporate enough funds to host a successful event. After a detailed budget plan was crafted the team then had to present the budget to the financial board of Grand Valley to be approved.

### Outcomes

GrandPR created a major program that stands on its own while also incorporating itself into the GVSU School of Communications. Each of the four social media platforms that were created started at zero followers and ended up having hundreds of followers and gaining tens of thousands of impressions. The connections made between students, faculty and local professionals were demonstrated at the Superior Awards and various social media engagement. With this campaign, the Superior Awards tripled in size, and were the most successful that it had been in the four years that they have been hosted.

This campaign was a year long, and is continuing in the coming year. The team recommended revisiting this information and following the analytics of the social media platforms closely so benchmarks can be set and measured against. It is also their recommendation that a survey and focus group be done again later in the campaign to ensure that word is getting out and content is still relevant and of interest to the target audience.

## Case Study Two: Heritage Ranch Gala

### *Situation Analysis*

Heritage Ranch is a non-profit organization that provides family-style living for children experiencing personal or family crisis. The program allows youth, ages 13-17, to stay on the ranch for an extended amount of time while offering education and counseling. Creating an environment in which family, faith and community values are important, Heritage Ranch focuses on the main goal of family reunification.

In August 2016, Heritage Ranch fell victim to the historic flooding in Louisiana. The ranch experienced heavy damage, and the residents had to be relocated. Due to this unexpected tragedy, Heritage Ranch found themselves in dire need of funds to rebuild their facilities. Every year, the organization hosts a gala to raise money; however, the 2016 gala needed to raise more funds and awareness than ever before. In order to promote as well as execute the event, Heritage Ranch began collaborating with ImPRint in the summer of 2016 to provide social media management, media relations and event execution services.

### *Research*

The ImPRint Communications team began by familiarizing themselves with the Heritage Ranch program. Firm members researched the organization's mission, values and history. Additionally, the team analyzed the Heritage Ranch social media platforms to determine the voice and style used as well as average engagement and traffic on all platforms. They also researched the optimal times and days to post on each platform in order to best reach their target audience. Because none of the team members had ever developed a social media content calendar before, they also researched how to create one.

### *Planning*

Once the research was collected, the ImPRint team began planning a social media calendar containing Facebook and Twitter content for a two week social media campaign to promote the gala as well as three days worth of posts following the event. Based on research collected, the team decided to generate two posts per day: the first posted at 8 a.m. and the second posted at 7 p.m. They also planned which content should be posted each day of the week at both time slots by generating all posts (including text and additional media) prior to the start of the campaign. The team also created a schedule of when the pre-event press release and the post-event press release should be drafted, revised and sent out. Once they completed the content calendar and release schedule, both were submitted to the client for approval.

### *Execution*

On Sept. 3, 2016, the ImPRint team began posting content to social media using the posts directly from the social media content calendar. The team sent the pre-event press release to media on Sept. 5, and 225 Dine Roundup picked up the story. The gala took place on Sept. 16. The ImPRint team arrived early, assisted in setting up the venue, greeted guests, helped guests find their table, worked booths, assisted with the auction and helped clean up. In addition, the team live tweeted the event and posted updates on Facebook throughout the event. They also gathered pictures and quotes to include in the post-event press release, which was sent out Sept. 20.

### *Results*

As a result of the promotional services ImPRint provided, the Heritage Ranch Gala raised record breaking funds of over $150,000 and welcomed over 350 guests. The event gained great media coverage, including a positive story published in the Advocate using the post-event press release. The event not only helped raise money to rebuild the Heritage Ranch facilities, but the gala raised awareness about the program and those affected by the historical 2016 flood. This event as well as the funds and awareness raised were an important beginning to Heritage Ranch's recovery process. In addition, ImPRint Communications has gained a positive reputation through working with this client, and affiliates of the program have requested to work with our firm yet again. Overall, the ImPRint team gained valuable skills for writing, event planning, media relations, social media management, and communication.

# Sample Documents

The following pages contain several sample documents that may be used in your firm. Keep in mind – these are suggestions for your Student-run firm. Although we recommend using these documents as a guide, PRSSA or PRSA in no way requires that you use them.

**Weekly Activity Reports.** This report helps officers measure the successes and failures of their account projects. They also can tell officers if the account executives and individual members are doing their jobs. To fill out the report accurately, an account executive may have their account members report on a weekly basis. The University of Northern Iowa submitted this sample.

**General Membership Application.** All staff should receive this form when they join the firm. The form helps with creating account teams with balanced experience. It also allows members to rank projects they would like to work on and consider this when assigning staff and leadership positions in the firm. The University of Texas at Austin and Rowan University submitted these samples.

**Staff Evaluation Report.** Account executives complete this report to turn in to the executive board to assist in recognizing, helping or evaluating staff members on their contributions to the firm. The evaluation is for account executives. The University of Texas at Austin submitted this sample.

**Portfolio.** Each member of the firm should keep a portfolio of all the campaign and projects they work on. This can serve a dual purpose. It can be a method to evaluate work performed as well as provide that person a portfolio to use for future employment.

**Client Evaluation.** Clients complete this report to turn into the firm. This document will help the firm evaluate the services provided to clients throughout the year. The University of Florida submitted this sample.

**Client Contract.** This or a similar contract should be read and signed by the client and the firm director, as well as the assigned account executive before any firm/client project begins. Any legal questions or concerns should be addressed before a client is accepted. Make sure both parties have a copy of the contract. The University of Northern Iowa submitted this sample.

**Pitch Letter.** This is a sample pitch letter that could be given out to prospective or existing clients. The letter explains the services and capabilities of the firm. An alternative to the pitch letter may be a promotional brochure of your firm. This sample is from California State University Fullerton.

# PRSSA National Documents

**PRSA Member Code of Ethics.** All PRSSA members should practice this code to uphold ethical behavior in their student and professional practice. A copy of this should be distributed to all students and firm members. Consider reading and discussing it at the first meeting or retreat.

**National Affiliation Application.** A firm must submit this application to PRSSA Headquarters to become a Nationally Affiliated Student-run Firm, as well as re-submit it every three years to remain Nationally Affiliated.

**Student-run Firm Awards.** Each year at National Conference, two firms are presented with Best Campaign and Best Tactic awards. This document details eligibility, deadlines and application requirements for these awards.

# Weekly Activity Report
# (University of Northern Iowa)

Tracking projects and progress is an essential part of working with clients. When entering your work into this log be specific about the tasks performed and the amount of time spent on each task.

Name ______________________________________________

Account group ______________________________________

Client: ____________________________________________

Week of: __________________________________________

| Day | Hours | Description |
|---|---|---|
| Monday | | |
| Tuesday | | |
| Wednesday | | |
| Thursday | | |
| Friday | | |
| Saturday | | |
| Sunday | | |

Total Hours: ______________

Comments/ Concerns: (all comments and concerns are kept confidential)

# Fall 2010 Member Application
# (University of Texas at Austin)

Due by 5 p.m., Friday, Sept. 3
texastowerpr@gmail.com

**Information**
Name:
Email Address:
Phone Number:
Major:
Classification:
Please tell us what extracurricular activities or other time commitments you have, such as internships, jobs, and other student organizations.

Essay: Why do you want to join Texas Tower PR and what relevant past experience do you have? What do you hope to gain from joining Tower and what do you bring to the group that is unique?

Please send this application, a résumé, and your essay in separate documents to texastowerpr@gmail.com. Your documents should be labeled with your first and last name, ie "John Doe app," "John Doe resume" and "John Doe essay."

Each applicant will be interviewed on Saturday, September 4 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. Please check your email after submitting your application for your assigned interview time. Interviews will last approximately 10 minutes. Dress is business casual.

A response will be given to all applicants by Monday, September 6.

After acceptance, you will not be considered an active member of Texas Tower PR and will not be given any assignments until the following is complete:

- Paying the $10 per semester membership fee to Texas Tower PR.
- Paying the $50 annual membership fee to PRSSA.
- Signing the PRSA code of ethics.
- Submitting a bio and picture.

# PRaction General Staff Application
# (Rowan University)

Name___________________________ Class Year___________________________
Cell____________________________ Campus/Home Phone__________________
Email___________________________ Local Address_________________________
Major___________________________ Minor______________________________

1. Are you signed up for Practicum? YES NO

2. Are you available on Wednesdays from 5-6 p.m.? YES NO

3. How many hours per week can you contribute to the firm?
 1-2 3-5 5-10 10-15 15+

4. Have you worked for PRaction before?
 a. If so, what account(s) were you involved with?
 b. Positions held?
 c. Would you like to remain on this account? YES NO

5. Are you interested in being an Account Manager? You will be responsible for delegating tasks, keeping a timeline and maintaining weekly communication with the VP of Operations.
 YES NO

6. Are you interested in being an Assistant Account Manager? You will be responsible for taking notes and providing weekly updates to the VP of Operations. YES NO

7. Which account(s) are you most interested in working on? Please use numbers (1 being most interested, xx being the least interested) to indicate your preferences
____Account (description, goals, etc.)
____Account (description, goals, etc.)
____Account (description, goals, etc.)
____Account (description, goals, etc.)

8. Do you have experience with Adobe Creative Suite? YES NO

If yes, how experienced are you? 1 2 3 4 5
Inexperienced Proficient

9. Please identify any special interests or experience you have:
___layout and design ___speaking/presentations ___audio visual
___photography ___news releases ___research/SPSS
___PSAs ___brochures ___special events
___promotions ___marketing plans Other: _______________

10. List any other PRSSA activities and/or PR internship experiences you have had.

11. List membership and/or offices currently held in other organizations.

12. Please mark as the following: P=Passed, CE=Currently Enrolled, or leave space blank

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| _____Comm. Theory | _____Public Opinion | _____Intro to PR |
| _____Intro to Advertising | _____Basic PR Writing | _____Advanced PR Writing |
| _____PR/Adv. Research | _____Pub Layout/Design | _____Case Studies |
| ______PR Planning | _____Field Experience/Internship | |

**Recognition of Commitment**

Although mandatory PRaction meetings will be held on Wednesday from 5-6 p.m. we require that you spend additional time working on your assignments outside of mandatory meetings. Your group should establish a weekly meeting and you should work on your own when necessary to meet the deadlines set by the VP of Operations. It is highly recommended that you attend all meetings. If you cannot make a meeting, please send an email to PRaction@gmail.com explaining why you missed the meeting. If you miss more than three meetings, the executive board has the right to review your case and you may be terminated from the firm. By signing below you understand the commitment involved with being a member of the firm and agree to the terms of our attendance policy.

Signature________________________________ Date__________________

**PRSSA Code of Ethics and Conduct**

Pledge to the Society

I pledge:

To conduct myself professionally with truth, accuracy, fairness and responsibility to the public, fellow members and to the Society; to improve my individual competency and advance the knowledge and proficiency of the field of public relations; and to adhere to the articles of the Member Code of Ethics/Conduct by the PRSSA National Committee.

I understand and accept that there are consequences for member misconduct, up to and including membership revocation.

I understand that members in violation of the PRSSA Code of Ethics/Conduct may be further barred from PRSA Membership.

__________________________ __________________________

Signature Date

# Staff Evaluation Report
# (University of Texas at Austin)

Name:______________________________________________________________
Position:____________________________________________________________
Account: ____________________________________________________________
Date: ______________________________________________________________

Please write the number that corresponds to how you feel.
(1=Strongly Agree, 3=Neutral, 5=Strongly Disagree)

How well does this member understand the requirements and responsibilities of the job? ______

How well does member's work meet the requirements of an assigned project? ______

How consistent is this member in the quantity and quality of performance? ______

How well does this member accept assigned responsibilities? ______

How well does this member begin an assignment with minimal or no direction? ______

How effectively does this member work with co-workers and supervisors? ______

How well does this member balance multiple account duties? ______

How well does this member contribute to the overall quality of the firm? ______

How well does this member interact with the client and/or clients? ______

How well does this member evaluate his or her own work? ______

# Semester Review Process
# (University of Texas at Austin)

Associate name: ________________________ Reviewer's name: ______________
Client: _______________________________ Date: _____________________

Rank the following criteria by circling the number that applies.

**1. Associate volunteers for the work on their account.**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly Agree | | | | Strongly Disagree |

**2. Associate meets deadlines and communicates in a timely manner.**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly Agree | | | | Strongly Disagree |

**3. Associate is dependable and conscious of their responsibilities.**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly Agree | | | | Strongly Disagree |

**4. Associate maintains a friendly, positive attitude.**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly Agree | | | | Strongly Disagree |

**5. Associate is eager to learn.**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly Agree | | | | Strongly Disagree |

**6. Associate is a team player and works well with others.**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly Agree | | | | Strongly Disagree |

**7. Associate has brought creativity and new ideas to your team.**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly Agree | | | | Strongly Disagree |

Please name a specific instance in which this associate's work benefitted your team and/or your client.

What kinds of work have you seen from this associate? Examples might include press releases, social media usage, media lists, blogs, feature stories, graphic design, etc.

Which skills do you think are their strongest?

In what areas do you think their skills could be most strengthened?

## Items for a Portfolio

A portfolio is a way to demonstrate and show off your professionalism and presentations skills. It will make you stand out. It is something tangible the firm director can review during the evaluation process. Your firm portfolio should include all the work of individual members on campaigns and projects. It can be customized according to the member's strengths and job description. It should be presented in a simple and clean three ring binder. It does not have to be expensive. Information should be quality copies on solid color paper.

Sample topics can include:

- Published articles
- Broadcast writing
- Internet writing
- Press releases
- Case studies
- Publications
- Promotional material
- Plans and presentations
- Media relations
- Internal communications
- Websites

You may also choose to compile your portfolio online vs. paper. Online/new technology skills are more important than ever. Be aware of how things appear and print differently on different computers (i.e. black backgrounds with white text frames). Members should have a printable version available during the evaluation process.

# Client Evaluation Form
# (University of Florida)

The following information is used by Alpha PRoductions to measure success and to make improvements to increase productivity and satisfaction in the future for clients and students. Please complete the questionnaire as accurately and honestly as possible. We thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Client Name: ________________________________________________

How long have you worked with Alpha PRoductions: _____________

Please write the number that corresponds to how you feel.
(1=Strongly Agree, 3=Neutral, 5=Strongly Disagree)

I have received the anticipated assistance from Alpha PRoductions. ____
My team has completed all assigned work by the established deadline. ____
I feel I have an open channel of communications with my Account Executive. ____
I feel all members of the team put in an equal amount of time. ____
Alpha PRoductions members have conducted themselves in a professional manner. ____
I am happy with the work Alpha PRoductions has performed for me. ____
I would continue to work with Alpha PRoductions if there was a charge. ____
I feel I am assisting students with excellent hands-on experience. ____
I hope to continue with Alpha PRoductions next semester. ____
I would recommend Alpha PRoductions to other businesses. ____

Additional Comments:
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your help. Please give this form to your Account Executive so we can make Alpha PRoductions the best experience possible for all involved.

# Client Contract

It is important to note that this contract is merely a sample. Therefore, when compiling a contract for your PRSSA Chapters' student-run firm it is important to check the validity and legality of the contract with your Faculty Adviser.

This agreement made and entered into this__ day of ___, 201_, by and between ________, an organization organized and existing under the laws of the State of_________ (hereinafter called "Agency") and ________, a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of ________, with its principal place of business at ______ (hereinafter called "Client").

I. **Appointment.** The client hereby appoints the Agency as a public relations consultant, handling the Client's _______________. Agency accepts the appointment and agrees to perform the services specified hereunder according to the terms of this agreement.

II. **Agency Services.** Below is a sample client contract that the firm should present for their agreement and signature before work begins. Fees and all foreseen client expectations and arrangements should be included.
   A. Study and Analysis. The Agency will study Client's products, packets, policies and objectives. Based on this knowledge and its experience, Agency will communicate opportunities for public relations or publicity programs to Client.
   B. Planning and Execution. At the client's request, the Agency will plan, develop and execute public relations and publicity tactics with the understanding that before the release of any materials whatsoever, Agency will submit materials to Client for specific prior approval.

III. **Agency Cost and Compensation**
   B. Fee. Agency will be compensated for its services herein stated by billing Client at the Agency's (monthly or hourly) billing rates, plus such other charges as hereinafter stated.
   C. Outside purchases. Outside supplier costs, finished art, mechanical production, photography, printing, display materials, premiums, rights, talents and services purchased outside of the Agency, outside production costs and all other components of a public relations program will be billed at net cost to the Agency, plus the standard 17.65 percent commission. Sales tax levied by outside suppliers or purchases made by Agency for Client will be billed net.
   D. Out-of-Pocket Expenses. Postage, packing, express and other charges incurred by Agency in the shipping of copy, orders, prints and other material will be billed net. Telegraphic and teletype charges and costs of telephone service incurred for Client, and duplicating and other out-of-pocket expenses occurred for client will be billed net. Traveling and living expenses of Agency personnel servicing Client's account will be billed net.
   E. Canceled projects. Client reserves the right to cancel or reject the plans or schedules after they have been approved, but, in such an event, agrees to assume Agency's liability for expenses or costs involved in the preparation of such canceled projects,

but only on plans or schedules which have prior client approval.

F. Service Charge. Payment is due at Agency on the following date stated on the invoice. Should the invoice remain unpaid by the end of the month, following the expiration of thirty (30) days from the date of the invoice, a service charge of one and one-half percent (1.5%) per month shall be billed for each month the invoice remains unpaid.

IV. **Indemnification**

G. Material Furnished to Client by Agency. Agency agrees to assume sole legal responsibility for, and to hold Client harmless from, any damage claims asserted against Client resulting from the negligence or willful actions of Agency involving copyright infringement, violations of personal rights of privacy, misappropriation of ideas or rights, and literary piracy or plagiarism, excepting claims arising from matters from respect to which Agency has advised Client of the legal risks involved and Client, by its specific approval, has assumed the risks thereof. Client agrees to give Agency prompt notice of such claims thereof. However, Client reserves the right to participate in the defense of any such claim through its own counsel and its own expense.

H. Material Furnished to Agency by Client. Client agrees to assume sole responsibility for, and to hold Agency harmless from, any advertising or promotional materials, or commercial data, including product claims, furnished to Agency by Client, as a result of which claims or suits involving deceptive advertising, unfair competition or product disparagement may be made against the Agency. Client further agrees to indemnify Agency with respect to claims which arise from the use of consumption of Client's products in market testing or general public usage.

V. **Termination.** This agreement shall continue until terminated by either party upon ninety (90) days written notice. During such 90-day period, the rights, duties and responsibilities of Agency shall continue. Upon such termination, Client agrees to relieve Agency of all previously authorized contractual obligations and to compensate Agency for all work performed but not otherwise compensated.

VI. **Failure of Supplier to perform.** Agency will endeavor, to the best of its knowledge and ability, to guard against any loss to Client through failure of suppliers to properly excuse their commitments, but Agency shall not be responsible for any such failure.

VII. **Construction.** This agreement shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of ________.

VIII. **Waiver.** No waiver by either party of the breach of any provision of this agreement shall be deemed to be a waiver or any preceding or succeeding breach of the same nature.

IX. **All notices hereunder shall be in writing and shall be served by registered mail, duly addressed as follows:**

If to Agency: ______________________________________________

If to Client: ____________________________________________________

X. **Costs and attorney fees.** If any action is necessary to enforce any of the terms and conditions of this agreement, the prevailing party shall be entitled to receive from the other party all costs and fees, including reasonable attorney's fees and prevailing legal interest rate on all debts from the date of default.

XI. **Claims, Disputes, and Other Matters.** All claims, disputes, and other matters in question arising out of or relating to this agreement or the breach thereof (accepting claims under paragraph IV) shall be decided by arbitration in _____________, in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association then obtaining unless the parties mutually agree otherwise. This agreement to arbitrate shall be specifically enforceable under the prevailing arbitration law. The award rendered by the Arbitrator shall be final and judgment may be entered thereon in accordance with applicable law in any court having jurisdiction thereof. Notice of the demand for arbitration shall be filed in writing with the other party to the agreement and with the American Arbitration Association. The demand for arbitration shall be made within two years after the claim, dispute, or other matter in question has arisen.

This agreement constitutes the entire understanding between the parties. All previous representations and undertakings, whether oral or written, have been merged herein. Witness, the due execution hereof the day and year first above mentioned.

| | |
|---|---|
| Attest | Agency Name |
| _______________________ | By______________________ |
| Attest | Client Name |
| _______________________ | By______________________ |

# Client Contract
# (University of Northern Iowa)

Client: ______________________________ Account Executive: ___________________________
Contract Period Start: _____________ End: ______________
PRide, UNI's student-run Public Relations firm, agrees to perform the services specified below in accordance with the terms of this agreement

I. Tasks/services: List below the projects you are currently requesting PRide to work on. (If any project has to be completed by a specified deadline, specify mm/dd/yy behind that project. If no deadline is given project due date is up to the discretion of the firm).
II. PRide is not responsible for the distribution of materials or personal Fundraising on behalf of the client. (Ex. Posters, solicitation of businesses) unless arrangements are made between [you] the client and firm staff. Initial ________.
III. Planning and Execution: PRide's services are here to offer Public Relations support to our clients. Before the release of any material(s) created and/or service(s) provided by PRide staff all project(s) must first be approved by [you] the client. Initial________.

**Firm president must approve all project(s) beyond those requested in this contract. Initial___**

IV. Expenses: The client is solely responsible for the purchase or reimbursement of outside or out-of-pocket expenses relating to the service(s) requested. (Ex. Printing costs, binders, postage, and mileage). PRide understands that [you] the client will always be consulted before or give pre-approval for any financial transactions made. Initial ______.
V. Contract length/Termination: This contract is binding for the length/period stated above. [You] the client has the right to terminate this contract if unsatisfied with the services provided before the contract period is over. Before this happens [you] the client is expected to consult with the firm president and Faculty Adviser along with the completion of an evaluation explaining reasons for termination.
VI. PRide also has the right to terminate this contract before the contract length/ period is over if the client is not cooperative and willing to participate in activities needed to complete the project(s) requested. Initial _______.

**End of contract period: Clients will be asked to evaluate (via survey) the services and satisfaction of the project(s) provided by PRide. Initial _______.**

VII. Fees: Instead of fixed/hourly fees, PRide accepts donations appropriate for work done.

*Thank you for choosing PRide. We look forward to working with you!*

**Signatures constitute the entire understanding of this contract between all parties.**
**Client: ____________________________________________________**
**Account Executive: ________________________________________**
**Firm President Approval: ___________________________________**

# Pitch Letter
# (California State University Fullerton)

TITAN PR Group
800 N. State College Blvd.
Fullerton, CA 92831-3599

Date:

[Staff Members Name]
[Organization]
[Organizations Address]

Dear [Organizations Representative],
My name is Aria Fadakar and I am a student at California State University, Fullerton and the Director of Titan PR Group. I am reaching out to you because Titan PR Group is looking for new clients to assist with their public relations needs.

Titan PR Group, a division of the Public Relations Student Society of America at CSUF, is a student-run public relations firm. We understand that with a troubled economy, finding a team to coordinate your public relations needs may not only be challenging, but costly. We at Titan PR Group offer our clients services free of charge; your only expense would include such things as printing and copying fees that take place during the projects execution.

Our services include, but are not limited to:
- Writing news/press releases
- Internal Communications
- Developing flyers/brochures
- Coordinating special events
- Organizing promotions

Our goal is to serve our clients while offering students a chance to gain real life public relations experience. We currently maintain [#] executives and [##] staff members who are ready to work for you.

May we set up an interview to see if our services would fit your needs? You may reach us anytime at TitanPRGroup@gmail.com or you may also call my cell phone at (xxx) xxx-xxxx. Thank you for your time.

XX
Director
Titan PR Group

### PRSA Member Code of Ethics

Members of a Student-run Firm should adhere to the Code of Professional Standards for the Practice of Public Relations. These articles have been adopted by the PRSA to promote and maintain high standards of public service and ethical conduct among its members.

- A member shall conduct his/her professional life in accord with the public interest.
- A member shall exemplify high standards of honesty and integrity whole carrying out dual obligations to a client or employer and to the democratic process.
- A member shall deal fairly with public, past or present clients or employers, and fellow practitioners, giving due respect to the ideal of free inquiry and to the opinions of others.
- A member shall adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth, avoid extravagant claims or unfair comparisons and give credit for borrowed ideas and words.
- A member shall not knowingly disseminate false or misleading information and shall act promptly to correct erroneous communications for which he or she is responsible.
- A member shall not engage in any practice that has the purpose of corrupting the integrity of channels of communication or the process of government.
- A member shall be prepared to identify publicly the name of the client or employer on whose behalf any public communication is made.
- A member shall not use any individual or organization professing to serve or represent an announced cause, or professing to be independent or unbiased, but actually serving another or undisclosed interest.
- A member shall not guarantee the achievement of specified results beyond the member's direct control.
- A member shall not represent conflicting or competing interests without the expressed consent of those concerned, given after a full disclosure of the facts.
- A member shall not place himself or herself in a position where the member's personal interest is or may be in conflict with an obligation to an employer or client, or others, without full disclosure of such interests to all involved.
- A member shall not accept fees, commissions, gifts or any other consideration from anyone except clients or employers for who services are performed without full disclosure of such interests to all involved.
- A member shall scrupulously safeguard the confidences and privacy rights of present, former and prospective clients or employers.
- A member shall not intentionally damage the professional reputation or practice of another practitioner.
- If a member has evidence that another member has been guilty of unethical, illegal, or unfair practices, including those in violation of this Code, the member shall represent the information promptly to the proper authorities of the Society for action in accordance with the procedure set forth in Article XII of the bylaws.
- A member called as a witness in a proceeding for the enforcement of this Code shall be bound to appear, unless excused for sufficient reasons by the judicial panel.
- A member shall, as soon as possible, sever relations with any organization or individual if such relationship requires conduct contrary to the articles of this Code.

## National Affiliation Application

*"Credibility Through Unity"*

Though there are more than 100 Student-run firms around the country operated by PRSSA Chapters, only those among the upper echelons are PRSSA Nationally Affiliated. Firms with this designation have successfully gone through an application process to ensure the firm is soundly based in three areas: a solid PRSSA/PRSA connection, a high level of professionalism and an effective structure.

Earning this recognition has many benefits, including the prestige of working for a firm that represents the best of the Society and inclusion in a future client referral system. Only firms that are Nationally Affiliated will be listed on the PRSSA National website for such requests. This type of referral system will provide greater opportunities for service and meaningful work for students. Lastly, only firms that have earned National Affiliation may apply for the PRSSA Student-run Firm Awards.

To become Nationally Affiliated, a firm must abide by the standards listed below. PRSSA Headquarters does not charge an Affiliation application fee or any sort commission or fees once a firm is Affiliated.

In September 2009, National Affiliation requirements were updated to reflect the increasing number of student-run firms appearing on the Chapter level. Current Affiliated firms do not need to re-apply before the end of their three-year affiliation.

### Application Requirements

To be considered for National Affiliation, firms must submit the following:

- A client list with a brief description of each organization. The description should include what type of organization the client is, the services provided to the organization and how many staff members are working on the account.
- At least one case study detailing a public relations program implemented by the firm. Case studies should highlight the firm's best work and have four parts: research, planning, execution and results. Two pages or less per case study.
- A letter of support from the Chapter's Faculty or Professional Adviser. Two pages or less.
- A brief history of the firm describing when it was founded, how it has evolved and the mission of the firm. One page or less.
- A letter from the firm director. Four pages or less.

### The Firm Director Letter

Describe situations or challenges the firm has faced and overcome, and explain how your firm demonstrates the following principles:

Connection

- How is the firm connected to PRSSA?
- How is the firm connected to PRSA?

- What support does the firm receive from professionals and professors?

Professionalism
- What is expected of staff members?
- How does the firm interact with clients?
- What are some recent examples of client results you are proud of?
- What emphasis does the firm place on ethics?

Structure
- What is the structure of the firm?
- How many staff members do you have at each level?
- Describe the billing process

National Affiliation certification lasts three years, after which the firm must re-apply. Previous National Affiliation does not guarantee future National Affiliation, though it will be taken into consideration.

Deadlines to submit application:

## Fall 2018: November 15
## Spring 2019: March 15.

PRSSA Headquarters, the PRSSA National President, Immediate Past President and vice president of professional development will review the application and issue a decision before the end of the term.

If you have questions, contact PRSSA Headquarters or the PRSSA vice president of professional development. To submit your application, please mail your content to PRSSA Headquarters at the address below or email your application to PRSSA Manager of Student Programs Jessica Espinal at jessica.espinal@prsa.org. If you are sending your application via mail, please mail to PRSSA National Affiliation, 120 Wall Street, 21st Fl., New York, NY 10005-4024 and send an email to jessica.espinal@prsa.org so Headquarters will expect its arrival.

### Definitions
The following is a set of terms that will be used throughout the document. Review them briefly to understand the standards listed below.
- Nationally Affiliated — Firms that have reached a new level of professionalism and status among PRSSA Student-run firms by meeting specific, official standards.
- Core values — The three basic principles of PRSSA Student-run firms: connection, professionalism and structure.
- Standards — A practical and measurable requirement a firm must meet to become a PRSSA Nationally Affiliated Student-run Firm. Each of the core values is broken into standards.
- Firm executive board — The firm director, two assistants and adviser.
- Firm adviser — A professional or faculty member who guides the practice and

administration of the firm. He or she may be the current PRSSA Chapter Faculty Adviser of Professional Adviser; however, we highly recommended that the adviser be a separate public relations professional who will focus solely on the success of the firm.
- Active PRSA member — To be an active PRSA member, an individual must have current paid dues and periodically participate in PRSA activities. The number of times the firm adviser participates to be called "active" is a personal decision of the firm adviser.

## Recommended Firm Standards

Although firms vary in size and scope, the standards below were designed to help each firm move toward greater professionalism and competency. These standards are minimum requirements and firms are encouraged to exceed them as they are able.
Below are listed the standards that make up each core value of National Affiliation, as well as examples of how a firm can meet these standards. To become Nationally Affiliated, a firm must show that it meets each standard but it does not need to meet the specific examples listed here. For instance, a firm must show that it is PRSSA Centered to become Nationally Affiliated but it does not specifically have to send one member to Conference each year.

## Connection

*Standard: PRSSA Centered*
Examples of how a firm demonstrates this standard:
- All members of the firm's leadership are PRSSA members.
- It is highly recommended that the staff members should be involved with the PRSSA Chapter, however it is not required.
- The firm sends at least one individual to the PRSSA National Conference each year.
- Every three years, the firm re-applies to be a PRSSA Nationally Affiliated Student-run Firm by completing the application and sending it to PRSSA Headquarters.

*Standard: PRSA Connected*
Examples of how a firm demonstrates this standard:
- The firm adviser is an active PRSA member.
- The firm adviser meets with each individual firm members at least once a year to provide direction and counsel regarding the student's professional goals.
- The firm's executive board meets with it's a PRSA Chapter executive board annually to report on the firm's work. This meeting, in-person or through conferencing, should be attended by a PRSA Chapter executive board member and at least two other PRSA members, as well as a member of the firm's executive board and at least two other account executives. The most important part of the meeting occurs as PRSA provides feedback to the firm.

*Standard: Professional and Faculty Support*
Examples of how a firm demonstrates this standard:
Public relations practitioners and faculty members are actively supporting the firm through counseling the firm's management, reviewing the firm's work or providing clients to work with.

*Standard: Accountable*
Examples of how a firm demonstrates this standard:

- Account executives report consistently to the firm's executive board through written and oral reports. The nature and design of these reports may vary according to each firm's needs. However, the key is to report consistently. This ensures that the client is well served and that all associates are participating (see more under "Outcome-driven").
- Once a year, the adviser to the firm should conduct at least one three-minute interview with each member. This interview does not have to be long and extensive but it should be similar to an annual review process conducted in business with employees. While some firms may want their account executives to conduct these interviews, it is important for the firm members to have at least one short interview — even if it is three-minutes — with the firm director.
- The firm requests that all clients complete some type of questionnaire and return it to the firm at the end of the semester. Each firm may create their own questionnaire that will provide them with the information they need to improve. This will provide feedback to the firm and an opportunity to showcase to future clients those things the firm did well.

*Standard: Outcome-driven*
Examples of how a firm demonstrates this standard:

- In all written and oral reports, the focus is on the impact made with the client. As time passes, technology will advance causing the means of communication to continually change. For that reason, the review process is designed to measure results rather than methods, strategies or tactics. Students must know how they are affecting real change.
- Program planning systematically uses the research, action, communication and evaluation (RACE) model or a similar system, in meeting the clients' needs.

*Standard: Ethically-based*
Examples of how a firm demonstrates this standard:

- The firm has a written commitment to follow the PRSA Code of Ethics.
- All members receive basic instruction and sign a commitment to follow the code and behave ethically at all times.
- Any member who is found to be dishonest in his or her reporting to supervisors or clients will be dismissed from the firm.

*Standard: Geared toward professional practice*
Examples of how a firm demonstrates this standard:

- The firm's executive board provides clear, written expectations and deadlines for the account associates at the beginning of each school semester or term.
- Account associates sign the written expectations at the beginning of each semester or term, certifying their understanding of the firm's expectations.
- The account executives communicate the deadlines they set with their clients to the firm's executive board each semester or term.
- The executive board maintains a database of all the account deadlines and projects.

This way, the board can serve the accounts in helping them keep their commitments to the clients.
- Professional conduct dominates the firm's atmosphere; this includes being on time for all meetings with clients and professionals.

### Structure

*Standard: Organized and structured*

Examples of how a firm demonstrates this standard:
- The firm has a documented mission statement to guide all organizational activities.
- The firm has a well-organized and written structure similar to a professional agency (i.e. account executives, account associates, etc.).
- The structure includes, at the minimum, a firm director and two assistant directors. Other positions may include treasurer, public relations director or any other position as needed by the individual firm.
- The firm serves at least three clients, with three students working together to meet each client's needs. This is a minimum standard, but the firm must ensure that at least three students are assigned to each client.
- The firm uses a set of contracts and a defined system of billing for all clients.
- The written structure of the organization has been approved in writing by the adviser and included in the PRSSA three-year review process.

### Student-Run Firm Awards

The PRSSA Student-run Firm Awards recognize the top public relations work done by Nationally Affiliated Student-run Firms during the academic year. To be eligible, a campaign or tactic must have been implemented at least in part between June 2016 and May 2017. Entries tend to have better chances of winning near their completion, when evaluation against initial objectives can be measured. For a Student-run firm to be eligible, it must have current National Affiliation status. If your firm is not yet affiliated but you wish to apply for this award, become eligible by applying for National Affiliation by June 1, 2017 and being approved before the award application deadline.

To apply for a PRSSA Student-run Firm Award for Best Campaign or Best Tactic, submit the following:
- **Three-page Summary.** This concise summary is the most important part of your entry and should give the judges a thorough view of the complete campaign or tactic. For best campaign, the summary should cover research, planning, execution and evaluation and may include a situation analysis, research, goals, objectives, strategies, tactics and results. For best tactic, judges will evaluate your entry in four key areas — planning/content, creativity/quality, results and technical excellence (where applicable). Your summary should describe your measurable objectives, target audiences, budget and any other information specific to the tactic. Qualitative and quantitative results should show how you met the stated measurable objectives and how the entry impacted the success of a broader program.
- **Samples.** If you are applying for best campaign, submit samples of work created to

support the overall objectives of the campaign. Samples may include research data, collateral materials, schedules, photographs and videos. If you are applying for best tactic, enclose a sample of the tactic. If a tactic or campaign element is online or video, include screen shots or printouts in addition to links or video files. Do not assume judges will have computer access.

- **100-word Description.** Include a 100-word description of your program. The description will be used to explain your entry if it receives the Best Campaign award.
- **Application Form.** Your application form can be downloaded online at www.prssa.org and must be typed.

Entries must be letter-size, with at least a 10-point font and 1” margins. Entries will be accepted in PDF format, with accompanying files labeled and well organized in a zip folder. Hard-copy entries may be bound no larger than 10.5” x 12” and binders should be no more than 3” wide.

Submit your entry via email to jessica.espinal@prsa.org or by mail to the address below.
PRSSA Student-run Firm Awards, 120 Wall Street, 21st Fl., New York, NY 10005-4024

All entries must be received by Sept. 8, 2017, not just postmarked. Winners will be announced at the PRSSA 2017 National Conference and receive a certificate.

Advancing the Profession
and the Future Professional.

120 Wall Street, 21st FL
New York, NY 10005-4024