

# Talking Points

News from SPRA

June 2011

## SPRA Announces New Membership Levels

To better serve our members, SPRA has created and implemented new membership levels!

### Professional Membership

One year: \$70/yr.  
 Two year: \$125

### Student

One year: \$40/yr.  
 Two year: \$65

### Non-Profit Organization Employee or Independent Consultant

One year: \$50/yr.  
 Two year: \$85

### \*Corporate/Business Member

One year: \$250/yr.  
 Two year: \$450

### \*\*Corporate/Business Member (UNLIMITED)

One year: \$350/yr.  
 Two year: \$650

\*This category includes 2 free CAPPIE entry fees per year, Member discount rates for up to 4 company employees per event and recognition in the CAPPIE Awards Gala Program

\*\*This category includes 2 free CAPPIE entry fees per year, Member discount rates for an UNLIMITED number of company employees per event and recognition in the CAPPIE Awards Gala Program.

For membership packet information, click [here](#).

## Social media promotion requires planning

Campaigns should be organized, engaging, meaningful and fun

By: **Debi Hammond**



Thinking about launching a social media program? Start with a plan.

We've all heard the saying, "if you fail to plan, you plan to fail." Yet that is exactly what most companies do when it comes to social media: They fail to plan.

You wouldn't launch an advertising campaign without planning. And you certainly wouldn't launch a public relations program without planning. Yet somehow many businesses, especially small businesses, launch social media programs without a plan. So, before you ask your intern or simply the person on your staff with the most free time, to start posting, blogging and tweeting on your behalf, follow these guidelines to get your program off to a successful start.

**Hire a professional:** You wouldn't put your advertising budget into the hands of an intern, so why would you put your brand there? With social media, your brand voice is on display for all of the world to see, so be sure your 'voice' is a true reflection of your brand and in the hands of a true communications professional.

**Develop an integrated plan:** How will your social media program enhance and integrate with your current marketing efforts? For a program to be successful, it must augment your overall marketing program in a meaningful and strategic way.

**Create a content calendar:** Whether you post, tweet or comment every day or a few times a week, you need to have meaningful content to share. Social media should be organic, authentic and real-time, but as a company, you should also have an arsenal of information and content to share - after all, that is why people follow and "friend" you.

(continued next column)

## CAPPIE Awards Celebrate the Year's Best in PR



CAPPIES at the Citizen Hotel

Attendees at this year's CAPPIE Awards, held on St. Patrick's Day at the Citizen Hotel, may not have found a pot of gold, but several nominees did take home a Gold CAPPIE!

Mark S. Allen, the evening's emcee, graciously pulled double duty as a bouncer by escorting a guitar-carrying, bead-adorned, shorts & TEVA sandals-wearing fan of his ("hey, you're that dude!) back downstairs after the guy had followed him and our CAPPIE Co-Chair Hans Greenawalt (Local Marketing Specialist, IKEA) up to the awards gala.

As for work honored, people commented that there were a lot of references to food in the entries: "Something on a Stick," Halldin PR; "Pinkberry Yogurt Social Media Campaign," 3fold Communications; "Do you Know How Many Calories are in a Deep Fried Twinkie?" Randle Communications; Alcohol Tax Increase Political PR Program, Perry Communications, Enotria Restaurant & Wine Bar, Mallory & Associates, etc...Me Communications's win for work on the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness & Sports was much needed by the time we handed out their awards.

As the evening completed, there was an overall feeling of celebration for the tremendous accomplishments achieved in 2010 by the dedicated public relations professionals. SPRA proudly continues to host the annual awards ceremony to showcase the broad array of talents and visions represented in our professional community.

### SPRA's 2010 CAPPIE Results:

#### SPRA Volunteer of the Year

Stephanie Becker, ProProse Social Marketing Solutions

#### PR Professional of the Year

Jennifer Sweeney, California Travel & Tourism Commission

#### Lifetime Achievement Award

Mitch Zak, Randle Communications

Overall, the night's big winners were: 3fold Communications (3 golds, 1 silver), the City of Elk Grove (4 silvers, 1 bronze), Edelman (2 golds, 2 silver & 2 bronze), Me Communications (1 gold, 1 silver, 2 bronze), Merlot Marketing (2 golds, 1 silver & 3 bronze) and Perry Communications Group (2 gold, 1 silver, 1 bronze).

Merlot Marketing and Mallory & Associates were the Gold winners for their Overall Continuing and Short-term Public Relations Campaigns. Perry Communications Group took home the top prize in the Political Public Relations Program category. The California Energy Commission, 3fold Communications and Merlot Marketing took gold in the New Media categories, while the CSUS COMS 158 Fall 2010 group earned the gold for student entries.

A full gallery of photos from the event can be found [here](#).

## Social media promotion requires planning...cont'd

**Engage:** Engagement does not mean unleashing an aggressive flow of advertising and promotions to your community. Promotional offers are great and help people engage with your brand, but you also want to provide something more: levity, personality, creative content, meaningful messages, helpful tips, information, insight and education. Engagement online is just like engagement offline - there isn't a concrete list of topics to cover because when it comes to conversation, you simply have to go where it takes you.

**Share:** Share pictures, personality, helpful tips, discounts, articles, expertise, etc. The social environment is a place to create more personal and meaningful relationships with your customers, employees, and yes, friends and family. So don't be afraid to share more of yourself, your brand and your business.

Social media is a great marketing opportunity, particularly for small businesses with limited budgets because a lot of the tools are free. But your social media program shouldn't be considered a "free-for-all," especially when it comes to your business or brand. Have a plan and plan to succeed.

*Debi Hammond is founder and chief executive officer of Sacramento-based Merlot Marketing Inc., an integrated branding, advertising, PR, social media and interactive agency. Reach her at [debi@merlotmarketing.com](mailto:debi@merlotmarketing.com)*

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