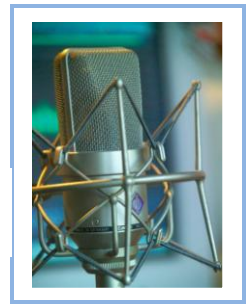


An Insider's Look at PR



Keys to Success for Young Professionals

By: *BeckyLynn Plemons & Brendan Collett*

PURPOSE:

Real-world experience and practice has given public relations professionals a wealth of knowledge. Prospective public relations majors can learn valuable information about the field through talking with these professionals and tapping into their knowledge. The goal of the interviews conducted with successful public relations professionals was to obtain a genuine image of the public relations industry and how a student can take this industry by storm. Specific objectives discussed that explore this topic are:

- **Determine specific actions to be taken and tools to be utilized by students who want to stand out from the crowd and succeed in the public relations industry.**
- **Gain an understanding of what to expect when entering the public relations field, including its challenges and rewards.**

METHODOLOGY:

The research to answer these objectives was implemented through conducting interviews with two of Tampa Bay's successful public relations professionals. The 11:58 interview of Stephanie Agliano, director of community relations for Tampa Electric, took place on February 16, 2009. The 18:32 interview of Lisa Brock, president of Brock Communications, was conducted on February 26, 2009. Each interview had the same interview guide comprised of seven questions aimed to target and answer the aforementioned objectives. Each interview, steered by these questions, led to the results discussed below. To record the conversations and support the findings, each interview was recorded using a laptop, Cubase recording software, a USB Audio Interface and a condenser microphone. The interviews were subsequently edited using Sony Acid Pro music editing software.

RESULTS:

How to Prepare:

Students cannot be fully prepared for the public relations world by school alone. It is important for students to get involved with student organizations and seek out internship experiences to gain a true understanding of public relations and hone the talents required for success. According to the respondents, success in the public relations field requires

competence in writing, research, self-motivation and leadership skills. Writing and extensive research are fundamental to ensure effectiveness and credibility of a campaign or message.

- “I’ll get a graduate out of here who gets straight A’s in writing and they will not be able to write.”-- Brock.
- “When you get out of school you think, ‘Well, I thought I knew it all.’ But until you get into the real life situation and say, ‘Wow, in theory that sounded great, but let me tell you it really doesn’t work. Everybody’s not as reasonable as I thought they were going to be.’”-- Agliano.

According to one respondent, a strong self-motivation also gives students the drive to succeed. A self-motivated student will begin to get involved and start networking early, which both respondents agree will help them stand out from the crowd.

- “If you build your network while you’re in college, then that means you’re ahead of everybody else by the time you graduate. The best experience is learned from trial and error out in the field.”-- Brock.
- “If I can urge anything, it’s network, network. It’s about people out there that believe in you, that believe in the youth of tomorrow.”-- Agliano.

What to Expect:

Once students have begun to work in public relations, they will find that the image of public relations is not always pleasant. As recent graduates try to emerge and make a name for themselves, they will come across prejudices and false impressions that could discredit them and their work. Both respondents believe public relations faces numerous false predispositions and negative stereotypes.

- “Everybody thinks you’re a party group. You do nothing but go to lunches, drink martinis, go to parties.”-- Agliano.
- “We don’t sleep with our clients, we don’t party with our clients... we don’t wear club attire to work... we don’t talk like we’re gangsters. It’s absolutely appalling that our profession is represented that way... because of ‘Entourage’ and shows like that.”-- Brock.

Additionally, one respondent mentions the economy and rapidly changing technology as another major challenge to the public relations field, while the other respondent emphasized the challenges of balancing personal life.

- “Technology is challenging because it’s changing so quickly. When something comes up, we get on it and we learn it just like clients are learning things such as Twitter and Facebook and things like that... But for right now, the economy is superseding any technological advances.”-- Brock.

- “This job calls for a lot of evening functions and weekends. You need to have that balance and you need to make sure that you do stay in touch with your friends and family.”-- Agliano.

In public relations, every day usually entails something different. Both respondents agreed that the demands are rigorous in that schedules change and multiple campaigns or clients are worked with on a daily basis. However, both respondents also agreed the varying projects and duties are a perk to the job. One respondent believes the best aspect of public relations is getting to know a lot of people throughout the varying projects. The diversity within the public relations field can also stimulate intellectual growth.

- “You really have to be a people person and you have to care to listen and really hear what the customers are saying.”-- Agliano.
- “One of the things I love about public relations is that there really is no typical day. I have a pretty high intellectual curiosity so I can go from a not-for-profit to a super hard business issue in a millisecond.”-- Brock.

CONCLUSION:

Today, more than ever, graduates entering the field are not typically on par with the more seasoned professionals when it comes to writing, research and other essential aspects of public relations. It is also believed that the millennial generation is being influenced into believing false, preconceived notions about the work involved in public relations.

There are several things a student can do while still in school to help them grow professionally, such as getting involved with student groups and local organizations, networking and practicing writing skills through volunteering or through the school paper among other things. Many students are unaware of these or not quite sure how to go about them.

The creation of a campaign to help educate and inform public relations students about the practices of the field, and how to start now, would not only be beneficial to the student but also to the profession itself. This campaign would work as a supplement to the information and theory already being learned and implemented in classes. A successful campaign would have the potential to create well rounded and prepared graduates of the public relations program at any university.

APPENDIX:

Transcription of Interview with Stephanie Agliano

Stephanie: Stephanie Agliano, Director of Community Relations for Tampa Electric.

Brendan: How did you get started in the industry?

Stephanie: Well, advertising is my major. I went to school to study advertising. When I came home from school I was fortunate enough to get a job with a small advertising agency. But at that time they really did a lot of farming out; we really didn't have an in-house staff, but we farmed out our designing work, farmed out different aspects which you would see in a traditional advertising agency. Then, I had the opportunity...I knew that I wanted to stay in advertising and I was very fortunate that I had parents that were very patient. So while I was living at home I had the opportunity to have an interview with Tampa Electric, but the interview was for a phone representative. Now I knew that they had an in-house communications department, so my thoughts were get in and then worry about that later. Get in and then learn about the phone, talk to the customers who are calling, get to know about the company, and then worry about it from there. So I really started as a phone rep with Tampa Electric.

Becky: What's the typical day like for you? Is there a basic routine that you follow or is every day different?

Stephanie: You know, that is what is so great about this job. Every day is different, no matter what. You think you've got your set meetings, constituent issues, questions; we do a lot of work with government officials. I try to do every day to start the day off is rule number one: look through the newspapers to see if your company is anywhere, cause you definitely want to make sure you're ahead of the game. And actually, in-house I think our company does a very good job of making sure we understand or know what stories may come up the next day or so. So from there you have your typical meetings, but you know depending on the issue, depending if there was an outage somewhere you might get a call from a government office, or a customer saying "What's going on? Why is my power out?" that type of thing. But really the days are different; that's what makes it a lot of fun and very challenging.

Brendan: What kinds of projects are you currently involved with at Tampa Electric?

Stephanie: Well, we are just starting to kick up a project with City of Tampa: the Citizens Green Task Force Committee. And we're really excited about that. And we'll be teamed up with some people from the city, people from Tampa Electric Company, and also citizens that have a diverse interest in the community come together and take a look at conservation, renewable programs and how we can help strengthen this area when it comes to those efforts.

Becky: What do you enjoy most about your work and what are the more challenging aspects?

Stephanie: The best thing about my job is the people I meet. I go to a lot of events, I'm the face for the company and so are my regional manager groups. And you really have to be a people person and you have to care to listen and really hear what the customers are saying. Because a lot of times they might be telling you one thing, but there's maybe another reason why they're really calling or what they're upset about. The best part is just getting to know a lot of people. Now the downside is if you are a people person and you love to be out, this job calls for a lot of evening functions, weekends. So easily you can be lost into a big...a lot of social things that are a lot of fun, but you know what in the end it is work. You need to have that balance and you need to make sure that you do stay in touch with your friends and family. And I get a lot of calls from my friends saying, "Where have you been? We haven't really seen you. Can we have dinner with you?" so there is a good and a bad side, but it's a great field to be in.

Brendan: Do you think that quality of the work is the same for all PR fields?

Stephanie: I think it depends on the P.R. background. I will tell you that I'm a big believer in this. Whether it's in a position that I am, from a community or government standpoint. Whether it's somebody that's in the field of media relations, guess what. The bottom line is creating those relationships. Whether you are creating those relationships with the people, the neighborhood people, the government people. Where in the media it's creating relationships with your reporters, your editorial board. It's all about relationships, no matter what. And it's important that when you go through this job that you are seen as a credible person, they may not like to hear what you have to say but always make sure you are credible. And that they understand that "Hey, I may not like to hear it, but I know she's going to tell me the way it is." So a lot of people I guess do it differently, but the key thing is healthy relationships I think. My position, and I would imagine a lot of other people in the field might feel the same way.

Becky: What are some common misconceptions about P.R. that you encounter frequently?

Stephanie: Everybody thinks you're a party group. You do nothing but go to lunches, drink martinis, go to parties. You know, when you have neighborhood meetings when customers are upset and you have to be there and you got to go to an event and guess what, you're the last one to sit at the table. Because if somebody shows up or if there's a key business suit or government official that's kind of wandering, somebody from the organization and you're sponsoring the event, forgot the seat, you give it up. You say, "Hey take mine." You go sit somewhere else, o.k. You work a room, so it's not fun. If you're doing it right you're actually working. If I'm going to a dinner that night, I make sure who's there. Who do I need to see? Is there someone I need to see that I haven't been able to get in touch with? It's work. But I think a lot of people think that it's a lot of good times. Now if you like people you're going to have a fun time or a good time, but it is work.

Brendan: What are some things you wish you were educated about before you entered the P.R. field, maybe back in school?

Stephanie: That's a good question. Well, I guess when you get out of school you think, "Well, I thought I knew it all." And the good thing is, is that you don't have to know it all coming out of school. So keep an open mind. A lot of this, training, you've got a lot of great basics. I think a lot of rules and good things to follow. But until you get into the real life situation and say, "Wow, in theory that sounded great, but let me tell you it really doesn't work. Everybody's not as reasonable as I thought they were going to be." Or something like that. So I guess...so I mentor. That's one of the things I do now a lot is mentor not only people at work but other people in the field. Always remember, there's not a one way correct way to do something. And isn't that wonderful. Anything can work, and to be smart enough to know how to make something work and what doesn't work, and that type of thing. But other than that...I was just very fortunate. I know it's a tough career to get into, but I was fortunate enough to have parents that were patient enough. I lived at home until I was able to really get settled into a career.

Becky: Is there any other additional piece of advice that you would give to someone trying to get into the industry.

Stephanie: The best advice I can give anyone is research your companies. Remember, it's not about getting in and having to be in that department as soon as you get in there. I took advantage of a phone rep position because I knew I needed to know about the customer, ultimately, who's calling in, learn the customer records, learn about all the different programs of the company. And I think the best advice is that if you get in and do what you do the best, so it will get you to the next level, that's what you need to do. I didn't just arrive here, now boom director of communications. I've been with the company for 24 years. I was with communications for 13 and a half years before I had the opportunity of becoming a manager. Then from a manager, after several years of that, to a director's position. So I know everybody wants something tomorrow, but listen to yourself. You'll know when you're ready. You know, timing is everything and make sure you get the most out of what you're doing. And if you're in a position say "Wow, well you know what? Before I leave here, what am I going to make sure I learn so that it follows with me to the next job?"

Brendan: As far as stepping stones from college to a career, do you have any specific recommendations for P.R. students nowadays?

Stephanie: You know what, networking. I will tell you, we'll go back to the basics here. If somebody said "Well how did you get into Tampa Electric?" It was because of roots here in the community and people that cared enough about my parents, and to say "Hey, let's give her a chance." So if I can urge anything it's network, network. It's about people out there that believe in you, that believe in the youth of tomorrow. You know, the way that I see it, at my age in my career, I've had a great career, but it's time now for me to start educating and grooming the youth of tomorrow to take over. And that's the exciting thing, for people to start believing in the people and you all coming out of college. That's a great thing. That's the future. You know, I want to believe and I always try to connect people. So find your connectors. Find the people that you get to know so they say, "You know what, that's a pretty sharp kid. I'm going to keep that person in mind or let me pass that resume. I know that Tampa Chamber has a wonderful group called Immerge. You cannot be older than 35 to be in that group and they've got about 400-600 members. Those are your futures of

tomorrow. So start networking, making sure that you start your connections now and those relationships.

Brendan: Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to take the time to talk to us!

Stephanie: Oh you're welcome! Well good luck and thank you!

Transcription of Interview with Lisa Brock

Lisa: Lisa Brock, the president of Brock Communications

Brendan: How did you get started in the industry?

Lisa: Well, when you've been working as long in the industry as I have, it's hard to really encapsulate how you got started. But it all started because I was a campus leader at Florida State University. And I was pre-recruited by several Fortune 500 companies, so I spent half of my life in the corporate America. And I started my own firm about 14 years ago...I'm really bad at math, it could have been 13.

Becky: What's the typical day like for you?

Lisa: That's one of the things I love about public relations, is that there really is no typical day. There's no typical day. Yesterday, we helped an NFL football player through his being cut, so that's what we did yesterday. Today, we're playing catch-up because yesterday a lot of work got put on hold. Tomorrow we'll be doing some new business meetings, so every day is different and that's one of the things I love about it.

Brendan: Even though every day is different, is there a basic routine that you follow when you come in? Do you check your email to make sure there's no problem or crises that need to be handled immediately?

Lisa: If it's a crisis, they call me. It wouldn't be done by email. There's somewhat of a routine. I don't hold meetings on Mondays or Fridays. Monday is a planning day and Friday is a catch-up day. Tuesdays and Wednesdays and Thursdays are meeting days, so I'm either out or I'm in. But there's not truly a daily routine. We're hooked to electronic devices 24/7, so whether we're here or not we have access to email and the telephone. I think my week is more routine than my day is routine.

Becky: Do you find it difficult to jump back and forth between different projects?

Lisa: No, I don't. Some people do, but for me I have a pretty high intellectual curiosity. So I can go from a not-for-profit to a super hard business issue in a millisecond. I think when you're young it's harder because you don't have control of all the various segments of P.R. or even marketing, because our firm also does marketing. But it's not hard for me at all.

Brendan: What do you enjoy most about your work and on the flip side what are the most challenging aspects?

Lisa: Right now the economy is the most challenging aspect. But technology is also challenging because it's changing so quickly. The news business as an entity is changing so quickly. And staying on top of it, because we play an A-Game. We're not an average firm. We don't come and sit there and go, "Oh yeah, what's a podcast?" When something comes up, we get on it and we learn it just like clients are learning things such as Twitter and

Facebook and things like that. Social, more viral, kinds of tools. But for right now, the economy is superseding any technological advances.

Brendan: And as far as technological advances, how do you learn them? Outside of school, what is your routine for learning them?

Lisa: You use it. I happen to be an adjunct professor at the University of Tampa and I Twitter with my students so that they can learn it and I can learn it. My team taught me Facebook, and to my children's horror I might add. So I learn from them and they learn from me. I mean, obviously because they're so young they're getting mentoring, but I'm picking up new ideas, new tools and I learn as I go. There's not a class...well there probably is, but I'm not taking it. I don't learn the best that way. I learn hands-on and experientially. So that's the best way for me to learn.

Becky: What are some common misconceptions about P.R. that you frequently encounter?

Lisa: That we go to lunch and parties all the time. And I'm appalled by it. I think, particularly, your generation, the millennials, because of "Entourage" and shows like that. We don't sleep with our clients; we don't party with our clients. It's absolutely appalling that our profession is represented that way. And I can't stand it. We don't wear club attire to work. We don't talk like we're gangsters.

Brendan: What are some things that you wished you were educated about before entering the P.R. field back in college or post-secondary education?

Lisa: Everything! My degree is in criminology and women's studies. I don't have a public relations degree, so I learned everything on the ground. I had some very good training, because as I say, I came up in corporate life. In corporations, the one's I worked for, Procter and Gamble, Young and Rubicam, Anheuser Busch, have extremely high standards. Because I didn't know it, I had to teach myself at night. I read books and I had very good mentoring. I learned the importance of writing as a persuasive tool. I learned to research, and that's before we had the Internet when you guys can just sit at your desk and just Google stuff all day long. So I learned really, really good fundamental skills. And I taught myself. I think you have to always be in search of your own plane of knowledge. I never depended on a boss to teach me. I learned a lot from my bosses, but I was more self-motivated and more self-directed than most my bosses.

Brendan: So you were in the communications part of corporate America?

Lisa: I was hired by Procter and Gamble right out of college. The first woman and the first non-business hire. They hired me because I was a student leader and had exhibited, when I look back now, a lot of leadership. At the time I thought I was just filling up time. But I went into their executive management training program, where you see all the disciplines of marketing. And then they place you at Procter and Gamble. They wanted to place me in sales and I didn't want to do sales. But I was very good at it, so I did it until I almost made myself physically sick because I hated my job so much. I decided that I was going to leave the company because the company...they felt like they knew me better than I knew me. I didn't believe that that was true. I loved the experience. I had a wonderful...the best boss

that I ever had. Procter and Gamble believes that their success is built on your success. So it was a wonderful opportunity, but I didn't want to be in sales. It was that simple.

Becky: Coming from a criminology background, what made you decide to say, "Ok, well these people are interested in me, maybe I should give this a try?"

Lisa: Uh...desperation, hunger. It wasn't a conscious choice. I did not have a family to fall back on. I was born to a fifteen year old mother in the Appalachian Mountains, who had a string of kids and no education. So I was on my own, and I was really fearful of not being able to take care of myself. But I should have never been afraid if I'd known then what I know now. I was pre-recruited by several companies and I had offers from Procter and Gamble, IBM, Xerox, American Hospital, and Eli Lilly. And that's really the secret, is to learn about leadership in college because by the time you graduate you will supersede all of your competition. I already knew how to run corporations. I ran all kinds of small businesses through campus. Student government, my sorority, homecoming committees, things like that where I was in charge of budgets that were quite large at the time. I didn't realize I was getting all this good experience, I thought I was just busy.

Brendan: You just touched on a lot of this stuff, but are there any specific things that college students can do to get an edge on the P.R. industry and before we enter the P.R. field in the professional world?

Lisa: Yeah, I could give you a list of things. Number one: look around your class because that is who you are competing with. You have to be sharper than they are. That means more internships and better skills. You need to learn to write. You need to learn to research. And you need to learn in a self-motivated way. I don't want to have to explain to you to read something. If I give you an article, the implication is that you need to read it and you need to understand it. And if you don't, you need to come and ask me questions. If I give you a book on AP Style and I tell you that this is what we write, I expect you to be self-motivated in learning it, if you are not taught in college. And no one is taught that in college. And I expect you to be responsible about the way you view your career. I'm not in charge of it, you are. I find today's kids are different than others. I've been hiring people for 20 years, and this generation is lazy, they have a sense of entitlement, they don't want to go all the way to the end of the detail. They are happy to look at the first paragraph. And it's very, very frustrating. And the thing is, we have to meet in the middle because we are hiring and you all need jobs. So I don't expect you to have my same standards because you've been raised on technology. But I don't expect most of what I see with young people today. You got to step up your game.

Becky: You mentioned that you've been hiring for 20 years. If you had a position open today, what would you be looking for in a college graduate?

Lisa: Well, we hire college graduates. And the reason I do that is that I want them to learn things the right way. I don't hire somebody who has already been at work for a few years, because they usually have bad skills, poor skills. I look for someone who is willing to pay their dues, because that's part of the deal. People don't stay with me long; they will stay here three to five years. They learn here and then they usually go on to bigger and better jobs. We're a small business, so there are advantages and disadvantages. The advantage here is that

you really get mentoring. The disadvantages is that you don't...you're not going to be getting paid what a corporation will pay you. And you're not going to have the benefits that corporations will give you. But you'll go on to get those things for sure when you leave here. I look for someone who understands and appreciates writing skills and research skills. It's very important. I'm not looking for the person who is a fan. We do a lot of sports here, and if you love sports that's great. But if you want to chase athletes, that's not great. We don't get autographs or take pictures with clients. We're professionals and that's a different standard than what most young people understand the standard to be. I look for somebody who has a sixth sense about them. And that means they see through things. They're slightly...they don't believe everything they've heard. They prove things, they look at multiple sources. They are people that appear very friendly and warm, but not overly friendly and warm. And they are collective in their appearance. That means, well groomed and pulled together. No tattoos, no facial piercings. Not here. If you have them, they better be hidden.

Brendan: What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of working for a firm instead of a corporation specifically?

Lisa: I think it depends on what you want. First of all you have to understand the difference between a job and a career position. We don't have jobs here, these are career positions. You'll work a lot of hours sometimes and you'll get perks and benefits because of that. And then sometimes you won't work. I mean, during Christmas we hardly work at all. And it's not on the vacation schedule, but if we're not busy I'm the boss and I'll say, "Hey, we're going home. We're taking this week off." So I think those are some benefits of small firms that would never happen in corporate life. But I think the bigger question that students need to ask themselves is where they see themselves -- what is your goal? I tell my students at UT, you should only take a job for one of two reasons. One is that you have a great mentor that's really going to teach you something. Or two, that you have an unbelievable opportunity in terms of a resume entry. I didn't realize it when I went to work for Procter and Gamble, but that set my career up. I mean everybody told me that it would, but I was just like, "Well ok...that sounds good." I wasn't as smart as a lot of people gave me credit for but I did listen to a lot of people who were smarter than me. So it just depends on what you want out of it. I loved working in a big environment but some people they don't like that, and today I would never tolerate it. I would never work in that situation. So you are going to change, too. When you're a young graduate, you have one point of view of the world. Then when you're my age, you have a totally different point of view. And it will change and ebb and flow. So you have to ask yourself, what is it that you're looking for. What kind of culture, what sort of boss. You know, again, I never cared about money. I've made a lot of it and it doesn't matter if you make "X" amount or \$200,000 more amount. For a person like me, I'm intrinsically motivated. I like to do good work and things like that. It's much more important than money. But money comes, money comes.

Becky: Coming into the job market now with the economy the way it is, there are fewer jobs being offered. What additional advice would you give a student who might not have all that experience trying to compete for the same job with someone more experienced in this field, and who may be more qualified?

Lisa: Well first of all, everything starts today. You can't say, "Well, by the time I'm a senior I'm going to start interning." Start today. And if you don't know of an internship, think of

something you'd enjoy doing and go to that company or that person and ask them if you could intern. Work for free, basically. Because interning starts to build your network. If you build your network while you're in college, then that means you're ahead of everybody else by the time you graduate. Your network is obvious: it's your professors, it's people that you meet in the business world, it's your dean, it's people you might come across in service clubs like PRSA, or something like that. So you have to not only build the network, but you have to nurture the network. You have to, and this is very hard for young people today. I've raised five kids and two of them are still in college. If you're the leader type in school today, it's not cool, because people don't want to be told what to do. They don't want to be led. But I say, resist the temptation to be like everybody else, because everybody else will not get the good jobs when they graduate. The leaders will get the jobs. When I was in school it was very cool to be the leader. I came up in the 70's. Women were really on the cusp of being treated equally. I never cared what people thought about me. I still don't. I want to be respected and that's much more important than being liked. Today, kids want to be liked. They could care less about being respected. But I will tell you, the kids who resist the temptation to be like everybody else are the kids that will be making the money and getting the jobs. That's a fact. You can't succeed in business unless you are able to resist temptation. That's the way it is.

Brendan: Do you have any final thoughts?

Lisa: Learn how to write. Kids today do not know how to write and it's fundamental to what we do. It's absolutely fundamental. I'll get a graduate out of here who gets straight A's in writing and they will not be able to write. You really can't work here for the long-term if don't know how to write. I have to train everybody, because kids don't know how to write. But it's very, very important. If you can write well, you have a heads up in terms of competition. And we don't... when students come in, we don't know you from Adam. And you have to have a very powerful combination of the way you appear, the way your resume looks, and whatever network you're able to bring in the door with you. Knowing that students rarely have very strong networks, because I will sit here and give you ten things to do and you will walk right out of this office and not do them. That's the way it is. So the kid who listens and does the ten things, they are at a huge advantage. If I give a lecture to 200 kids at USF and I say, "Y'all call me if you have any problems," two students will call me. Two. Those two will succeed; everybody else is going to have the average jobs. Because the person who ends up in a situation like I'm in, they are not the kind of person who has to be told what to do. They do it on their own.

Brendan: Thank you very much for giving us your time. We really appreciate it.

Lisa: You're welcome!

Becky: Thank you very much. We really learned a lot and we appreciate your taking time with us.

Lisa: No problem!

Conversations with Interviewees:

Stephanie Agliano

Stephanie Agliano was called on February 11, 2009 at 4:30 p.m. and was asked if she would be interested in participating in an interview for a public relations research class. She was informed that the interview would be recorded and uploaded to a blog. She complied and requested that interview call her at a later date to schedule the interview.

Ms. Agliano was called again on February 16, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. and agreed to be interviewed later that afternoon.

Lisa Brock

From: **Brendan Collett** <btcollet@mail.usf.edu>

Date: Mon, Feb 23, 2009 at 4:03 PM

To: lisabrock@brockcomm.com

Lisa,

My name is Brendan Collett and I am a public relations student at the University of South Florida.

For my PR Research class here at USF we have been assigned a project that includes interviewing a PR practitioner. If you would be willing to participate in this interview, which will not take more than 15 minutes, that would be greatly appreciated. Your expertise in the field and the fact that you are the principal of a local PR firm make you an excellent source of valuable information for our interview.

We can do the interview over the phone, on the internet via Skype, or in person.

Any help that you could offer would be wonderful!

Thanks in advance!

Brendan Collett

btcollet@mail.usf.edu

(813) 215-4129

From: **Lisa Brock** <lisabrock@brockcomm.com>

Date: Mon, Feb 23, 2009 at 8:19 PM

To: Brendan Collett <btcollet@mail.usf.edu>

Brendan-

I will be available in person. I think that is the most effective way. Send me three options that work for you. I will also be speaking at the PRSA convention this Saturday at USF so you could do it there too. Just let me know what is best for you. I have done this many times for USF students so I am aware of the assignment.

Thanks for reaching out!

Lisa

From: **Brendan Collett** <btcollet@mail.usf.edu>
Date: Wed, Feb 25, 2009 at 10:04 PM
To: Lisa Brock <lisabrock@brockcomm.com>

My group member and I are free from 3:00 p.m. til 5:00 p.m. tommorow. Friday we are available after 5:00 p.m. Monday around 4:30 p.m. or 5:00 p.m. would be good as well. When on Saturday will you be speaking? Maybe we could meet up in the morning sometime either on campus or at your office to do the interview. Just let me know.

Also, we have to record the interview for the project. Is this ok?

Thank you so very much for your help!

--Brendan

From: **Lisa Brock** <lisabrock@brockcomm.com>
Date: Wed, Feb 25, 2009 at 10:23 PM
To: Brendan Collett <btcollet@mail.usf.edu>

Yes, you may record the interview - no problem. How about 3 tomorrow? My address is 3413 W. Fletcher AVenue

From: **Brendan Collett** <btcollet@mail.usf.edu>
Date: Wed, Feb 25, 2009 at 11:03 PM
To: Lisa Brock <lisabrock@brockcomm.com>

3 p.m. tomorrow would be great! See you then!

From: **Lisa Brock** <lisabrock@brockcomm.com>
Date: Wed, Feb 25, 2009 at 11:05 PM
To: Brendan Collett <btcollet@mail.usf.edu>

Perfect. See you then!

From: **Brendan Collett** <btcollet@mail.usf.edu>
Date: Thu, Feb 26, 2009 at 7:00 PM
To: Lisa Brock <lisabrock@brockcomm.com>

Lisa,

I wanted to express my gratitude for today's interview again. The information you gave us will help both inside and outside the classroom. I'm glad that we got to meet and I hope to keep in touch!

Thanks again and good luck with your lecture tomorrow!

Brendan Collett

brendancollett@hotmail.com
(813) 215-4219

From: **Lisa Brock** <lisabrock@brockcomm.com>
Date: Thu, Feb 26, 2009 at 10:20 PM
To: Brendan Collett <btcollet@mail.usf.edu>

My pleasure - it's always fun to sit with students!!

Interview Guide

1. How did you get started in the industry?
2. What is a typical day like for you? Is there a basic routine that you follow?
3. What kind of projects are you currently involved with?
4. What do you enjoy most about your work and what are the more challenging aspects?
5. What are some common misconceptions about public relations that you encounter frequently?
6. What are some things you wish you were educated about before entering the public relations field?
7. What additional piece of advice would you give to someone coming into the public relations industry?
8. How should students prepare for the transition from college to a career?