Monday 6 February: PR and Media Relations

SPEAKER PROFILES

Vivi McDuell
Senior Account Executive at Hill & Knowlton Strategies

Vivi works as part of the Financial & Professional Services team and describes her role as creative, strategic and rewarding. She enjoys developing alternative and creative ways to get clients' messages out to consumers and key influencers via the media, although one of the most challenging aspects can be managing the balancing act between client and journalist. Vivi says that her time at Royal Holloway helped her to develop valuable time management skills: “juggling different classes and pieces of work is not dissimilar from having different clients and juggling those. In addition, the core skills of writing and presentation that I learnt at RHUL are instilled in everything I do on a regular basis in my job.”

A piece of advice: “Get work experience and internships at PR agencies and in-house if you can. Read around your subject, be curious about what is going on in the PR/Comms world and in the news in general!”

Twitter: @vivimcduell

BA Spanish with International Relations, Royal Holloway, 2014

Chris Scott
Corporate Communications Manager at London Sport

Working in this aspect of work, Chris finds that you get access to a complete breadth of business from strategy to operations. He says that the most challenging thing about his job is “there isn’t much downtime. Hand in hand with the diversity of the work is the reality that you’re never going to be entirely in control of your workload.” However, his fast-paced and wide-ranging role means “it’s never boring”

A piece of advice: “The most important thing you can do is to make sure you’re absorbing as much information as possible from the outside world. Getting a feel for how businesses talk to the outside world will be the most important weapon in your armoury.”

Twitter: @cscottaus

BA English and Theatre Studies, Royal Holloway, 2008
Ben Goldsmith

Head of PR and Content at Balderton Capital

Ben has been leading communications and online content for Balderton Capital since April 2015. He describes his job as being “all about people”. Previously he was the first Head of Content at Level39 technology accelerator and before that, he was a freelance digital communications professional, working with clients such as Enterprise Nation, HubTV and Club Workspace.

He is also a regular presenter, writer and contributor of video content for The Memo, and previously for Tech City News.

Ben says that his involvement in student journalism at Royal Holloway definitely prepared him for his future roles.

A piece of advice: “Be logical, specialise in something you enjoy, and read the FT every day.”

Twitter: @bengoldsmith90

BA English, Royal Holloway, 2011

Rana Haddad Grant

Press Officer for Beauty, Little Liberty & Home, Liberty Ltd

Rana describes her role as “challenging, rewarding and varied”. She has to interact with all departments internally from the buyers to marketing and events, finance, VM, graphics, retail teams and so on. It’s a really creative role, requiring her to communicate a lot externally, as well as internally, which she really enjoys. Seeing the results in the form of features and press coverage following a pitch or relationship building with press is really satisfying, as well as seeing a great turnout at press events! The challenging part is being able to juggle various projects at one time and manage her team’s workload, whilst keeping everyone happy, especially the buyers who she works extremely closely with. Rana says that apart from her Marketing degree, the most important thing university taught her was “interacting and working with the other students, as well as being part of the netball team, which was great for team work!”.

A piece of advice: “Be conscientious, enthusiastic, motivated and creative, willing to work extra hours and put in the extra mile. You need to have thick skin too. Network, PR yourself and your results, offer your support where it’s needed. Get lots of experience and intern in order to get where you aspire to be.”

Twitter: @Liberty_Rana

BSc Management with Marketing, Royal Holloway, 2007
Sarah Honeycombe

Public Relations Officer, Royal Holloway

Sarah says the best thing about her job is that she “gets paid to read academic work and summarise it in a way that the press and public will enjoy. It’s a complete privilege!”. The role is not without its challenges though, since the turnaround times can be very tight and Sarah admits that “going between theoretical physics and classics, to English, to constitutional law all in one day can get exhausting”. Looking back at her time as a student at Royal Holloway, she believes that there are a huge number of opportunities for students to prepare for their future careers. From student media, to student governance, sports, societies, and part-time jobs, there’s really no excuse to not have done something extra. For Sarah, just having something to talk about when she went to interviews was invaluable.

A piece of advice: “Have something to say. Get something to write on your CV. Whatever you do doesn’t have to be in PR, (though it’s helpful if it is) but you’ll find that any job/volunteering/sport/travelling gives you transferrable skills and makes it look like you weren’t just coasting through your degree.”

BA History, Royal Holloway, 2011