



REFINING AN IMAGE

An education-based effort is aiding the Corn Refiners Assoc. amid criticism
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GMAC taps CJP to boost consumer-facing identity

BY TONYA GARCIA

DETROIT: GMAC Financial Services has hired New York-based CJP Communications to aid outreach as it transitions into a more consumer-facing bank holding company. GMAC was founded as a wholly owned subsidiary of GM in 1919 to provide vehicle financing. It expanded those offerings and in December was approved to become a bank holding company.

Because the relationship is so new, details of the work have yet to be determined. However, now that GMAC is in the process of becoming a bank holding company, its PR efforts will increasingly focus on its online banking unit, GMAC Bank, and other consumer businesses, according to Toni Simonetti, VP of global communications at GMAC.

"As a bank holding company, it opens up new possibilities," she said. "We have stated plans to grow the role

of GMAC Bank. As a bank holding company, we will support our traditional business areas and then, secondarily, we can grow our consumer bank activities."

The company will also continue to promote its traditional businesses, which include auto and real estate financing, insurance, and financing for auto dealers.

CJP was selected after a competitive two-month review that involved about six firms, both large and small. It began work February 19.

"We have an in-house capability, so we weren't looking for a firm to which we could delegate, [but rather] support and increase level of activity," Simonetti said.

GMAC has about 40 communications staff members. It has been building its communications capabilities since GM sold 51% of its stake in the company to investors, led by Cerberus Capital Management in

Continued on back cover

Philips and Omnicom firms partner to form 'One Voice'

BY AARTI SHAH

NEW YORK: Philips has teamed with Omnicom to form "One Voice," a network of firms that will provide communications support.

Ketchum, Fleishman-Hillard, CPR Worldwide, and Kream Gavin Anderson will form One Voice and begin work July 1. The team will provide global support on Philips' three business sectors: healthcare, lighting, and consumer products, according to Geert van Kuyck, CMO for Royal Philips Electronics.

Another source within Omnicom said contract negotiations are still

underway but the final figure would amount to a "sizable" account.

From now through July 1, Philips will transition its communications function from its current firms, MS&L and Text 100, to One Voice. Philips worked with both MS&L and Text 100 for several years. Both agencies were invited to repitch, according to Philips. Neither firm could be reached by press time.

"Philips strongly believes in a periodic re-selection process to maintain a healthy and market-focused approach to our communications," van Kuyck said via e-mail. ■

Kayak.com begins AOR search

BY NICOLE ZERILLO

NORWALK, CT: Kayak.com, a media company and travel search Web site, has put out an RFP seeking an AOR. It will include corporate communications for parent company Kayak.com, which also operates TravelSearch.com, Sidestep.com, and TravelPost.com, as well as brand work for travel Web site Kayak.com.

The RFP cites several challenges for the company, including limited resources for the internal PR team. However, the overall theme is an emphasis on driving more traffic to its Web site and raising brand awareness. The budget includes a monthly retainer of \$10,000.

The incumbent on the account, Edelman, was not invited to pitch and declined to comment.

The search for a new agency was prompted by Kayak.com's decision to head in a new direction, explained VP of communications Kellie Pelletier, who is leading the search.

The company also expects the new agency to help it expand its



Winning agency is expected to boost Web site traffic and brand awareness

media relations focus from consumer travel to "consumer tech and tech writers/bloggers," and to expand into social media.

"In the past, we've only dabbled in social media," Pelletier said. "We're ready for an agency with more consumer technology experience to come in and shake up what we're doing."

Among those firms responding to the RFP are Weber Shandwick, Text 100, and Lewis PR, the agencies confirmed. WS helped launch Kayak.com in 2004, and more recently, it was tasked with assisting the company's launch of TravelPost.com.

Proposals were due from the agencies on Friday, March 6. Work on the account is expected to begin April 1. ■



PRWEEK AWARDS 2009

A recap of the winners at our tenth annual celebration of the industry's best **INSERT**

MARKET FOCUS

Power from the inside
Though always vital, a strong internal comms program has proven even more crucial to companies undergoing major changes

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"In order to be a leader, you need to be able to educate people"

— Chris Curran, Cigna

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MEDIA ANALYSIS

'Rocky' ending
The closure of 'Rocky Mountain News' is a reminder to all PR professionals that they must alter their media relations strategy

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Social media skills go to head of the class

► Real-life proficiency in this area is becoming increasingly vital to PR students and their professors, finds *Tanya Lewis*

Sarah Reigstad, a student at the University of Minnesota School of Journalism and Mass Communication, recently deployed the social media skills she learned in class to help jump-start her career. Eva Keiser, adjunct professor at the school and SVP at Risdall McKinney PR, says Reigstad has an administrative job with local restaurant group Parasole Holdings. After learning of Reigstad's social media studies, its marketing team asked her to show them how Facebook and Twitter could aid promotional efforts.

"Students can mentor [older] people," says Keiser. "It gives them a good advantage in the workplace."

As demand for such skills grows, it's increasingly important to teach social media in PR classes. Keiser has integrated it by requiring students to interact with her through various sites, including Twitter. For example, she posts reading assignments there and requires students to post things for her.

Keiser says an in-depth social media class is also offered now, but that social media will be integrated into all classes going forward.

Karen Russell, associate professor at the University of Georgia's Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, notes that social media is currently integrated into all classes. She notes that professors must become immersed in social media before incorporating it into their curricula. Russell posts assignments and links to required reading on a dedicated delicious.com page. All students must have a Twitter account, while her PR administration class has its own blog where students post book reviews.

"Blogging book reviews may not seem like... a [big] deal, but one author commented on one student's review," she adds. "They're learn-

"Students have to study [social media] and they also have to do it"

Robert French, instructor, Auburn Univ., Dept. of Communication and Journalism

ing how easy it is to find something and how to interact with people on the Internet."

All of Russell's students are also required to use PROpenMic.org, a social network with more than 3,600 members worldwide for students, professors, and PR pros. The site was created by Robert French, instructor in Auburn University's Department of Communication and Journalism.

French, who started teaching online activities as early as 2000, prefers the term "emerging digital media" to "social media." All his students use PROpenMic.org and all have individual blogs on PRblogs.org, another site French created on the Ning.com platform.

His students also use Twitter to find and follow people who are pertinent to what he's teaching. Research class students, for example, follow PR researchers such as Katie Paine.

Since 2007, Grady College and Porter Novelli have sponsored "Connect," a PR and social media conference, and the college also hosted Edelman's 2008 digital boot camp. Russell organizes "Connect," and students covered last year's conference using Twitter, videos, and podcast interviews. They even created a blog (Ugaconnect.wordpress.com).

Russell also invites guest lecturers, such as Bert DuMars, VP of e-business and interactive marketing at Newell Rubbermaid, into the

Technique Tips

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use social media to interact with students Establish social networks for classes Teach social media applications of traditional PR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miss chances to learn from experts Rely on textbooks; assign supplemental books as well Teach social media without using it yourself

class. Keiser agrees that students should have exposure to different perspectives on using social media. Guest lecturers in Keiser's classes have included pros from Weber Shandwick and Best Buy, as well as Julio Ojeda-Zapata, reporter and author of *Twitter Means Business: How Microblogging Can Help or Hurt Your Company*. French also hosts guest experts, including David Meerman Scott, author of *The New Rules of Marketing & PR*.

French, Keiser, and Russell all use supplemental texts, such as Scott's book and *Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies*, by Charlene Li.

"Students have to study it and they also have to do it," French says. "They're... doing things in the digital realm, but really they're writing and creating collateral. [It's] not so much a big change as it is using new and emerging strategies and tactics that employers [will] want." ■

Sometimes one copy just isn't enough



12 SALARY SURVEY

With this recession in full swing, there are many PR professionals who are looking for new opportunities. We're looking at a lot of those people who are looking for new opportunities and what they're doing to get them. We're looking at the number of job offers they're getting and the number of job offers they're turning down. We're looking at the number of job offers they're getting and the number of job offers they're turning down.

THE RESPONDENTS

Number of people taking the survey: 1,600
Gender: 57% male, 43% female
Work setting: 48% work for a PR agency, 26% work for a corporation, 19% work for a nonprofit, 7% work for a government agency, 5% work for an educational institution, and 2% work for a consulting firm.

63% of respondents would be willing to take a pay cut or salary freeze to ensure job security for the next year

WILLINGNESS TO RELOCATE

Willing to relocate for a job opportunity: 47%
Not willing to relocate for a job opportunity: 53%

NON-PR JOB OPPORTUNITIES

How many respondents are currently working in a non-PR job? 76%
How many respondents are currently working in a PR job? 24%

13 SALARY SURVEY

Only those in the survey who have been in the industry for 10 years or more are eligible for the survey. The survey shows that the median annual salary for PR professionals is \$47,000, which is a 1% increase from last year. The survey also shows that the median annual salary for PR professionals is \$47,000, which is a 1% increase from last year.

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