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MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2008

Freelance PR Part 1

In my never-ending quest to find out what I *really* want to do with my life, I came across a new avenue of public relations-- Freelancing.

After interning at an agency this past semester, I realized that perhaps agency work isn't quite the route I want to take upon graduating from college next year. I realized that I love to write, and often prefer working solo. I reached out through our Twitter to find other PR practitioners out there who have done some freelance work. Luckily, many people responded!

This is the first post in what will be a series of posts featuring different PR freelancers.

This week, I interviewed Robin Bernstein of Write Time Communications, a company that provides PR services to clients on a freelancing basis.

Ms. Bernstein would describe freelance PR as, "providing public relations services (writing, publicity, event planning, etc) to an organization or individual (the client) on a contract basis."

She mentions that freelancers are paid by the project, by the hour, or via a monthly retainer.

Bernstein also notes that many PR freelancers prefer to be called "independents" because the term freelancer sometimes refers to people who freelance, in addition to having a full-time job. For Bernstein, being an independent is a full-time and permanent job.

After holding positions at Ogilvy PR and Edelman, she opened Write Time Communication in 1991.



When asked why she chose to take the leap from the corporate world to being her own boss, Bernstein says, "I love the independence, variety and ability to work from home. After a decade in the corporate





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world, I got tired of playing politics. Also, the higher I rose the ranks, the more I had to delegate what I loved doing most, which was writing."

Bernstein obtains clients in many different ways. She cites referrals, word-of-mouth, staying active in professional organizations, and attending networking events all as vital ways to obtain clients. She mentions that she will occasionally send out emails or make cold calls. Lately, she has found, as many of us PR practitioners are finding that social media is helping her to gain new clients.

Although Ms. Bernstein loves the freedom of freelancing, she admits that she doesn't like the the difficulty in controlling the work flow. "Sometimes it's so busy I'm working 24/7. Other times I'm sitting around saying, "OK, where is everyone?" she said.

To stay active in the business, Bernstein advises other freelancers to remember to continue networking, both physically, and virtually. She says, "Get out to meetings, luncheons, dinners. Use the phone and email. And stay active online in social media networks such as Twitter and LinkedIn."

POSTED BY JESSICA LAWLOR AT 6:00 AM 
LABELS: [FREELANCE PR](#), [JESSICA LAWLOR](#)

6 COMMENTS:

[zakmo](#) said...



What's Ms. Bernstein's Twitter handle? As a young freelance PR pro, I'd love to connect with her there.

ZM

DECEMBER 16, 2008 4:40 AM

[Robin Bernstein](#) said...



Hi Zakmo,

My Twitter ID is @RobinBernstein. Readers can feel free to connect with me there.

Robin

DECEMBER 16, 2008 9:24 AM

[Darika](#) said...

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Hey Jessica

Yes, working freelance can be a fantastic experience. But you mention you are just about to graduate?

I'd still say nothing beats the experience you get working in an agency. I'd recommend you spend at least 18 months with an agency job before deciding to go it alone unless, as a freelance, you'd be thinking of taking short to mid-term contracts with a range of agencies?

DECEMBER 16, 2008 1:50 PM

Jordanna said...

I love being an "independent"/freelance publicist. I recently graduated from FIT and started my own PR firm in Bklyn, and I also lend my services to other PR agencies too, and am definitely looking for new clients. I look forward to twittering you :)

DECEMBER 16, 2008 3:16 PM

Arielle said...



Ms. Bernstein,

If you act as an "independent", what contractual agreement, if any, do you hold your clients to? I am independent and I work per project but do not have a current contractual hold on any of my clients for payment of services.

JANUARY 15, 2009 5:18 PM

Robin Bernstein said...



Hi Arielle:

I prepare a letter of agreement, which I ask my clients to sign (usually via email reply). This signifies their agreement to the terms of the project. It outlines the scope of the job, my responsibilities, the fee & terms of payment. You avoid a lot of potential disputes with a well-written letter of agreement. Just a few paragraphs--nothing legalese.

For long-term clients, where I'm working on ongoing projects, I don't do a letter for each job. Often I'll sign some sort of annual contract.

Bottom line, especially for new clients: Get it in writing. You're a communicator after all, so start showcasing your skills with your most important audience--your clients.

Hope this helps.

Writing (28)

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Robin

JANUARY 18, 2009 11:53 AM

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