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# The Circle of Influence

Wednesday, April 12, 2006

Here's John's recap of the weekend:

The American University PRSSA regional event on April 7 and 8 was a great opportunity to hear directly from PR practitioners about their experiences, strategies and hints for entering and being successful in the PR field. I was amazed at the large number of practitioners who devoted their day to mentoring and lending a helpful ear to students. Approximately 30 PR experts spoke to the students in a variety of settings.

On Friday, participants had the pleasure of attending a tour of one of three PR firms in the area. I, along with Influence PR member Liz, attended Hill & Knowlton. Because I have not had any PR firm experience, I was glad to learn about the structure and environment of one of D.C.'s largest and most prestigious firms. I spoke to Nathan Drevna, an account executive who specializes in automotive media relations. He has only been out of college for about three years and has only had one previous job. He explained that his level is where most new workers start out. Nathan emphasized that a college student should not necessarily focus on what their major is (he has a degree in German and English), but rather to become a well-rounded individual who has plenty of internship experience before starting their first job.

Saturday provided about 16 different and varied breakout sessions. My particular favorite was one led by the Ami Neiberger-Miller, the director of communications for Sister Cities International. This session focused on the challenges and fulfillments of doing PR for a non-profit organization. Ami, who also started her own PR firm out of her home, has a unique arrangement with Sister Cities where she only works on site three days a week. She spoke about what a day might be like for her, but she commented that there is no "typical" day. She usually starts at 8:30 in the morning and ends around 5:30 P.M.

## About

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## About Me

**Name:**The Influencer

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The main tidbit I took away from the conference is that PR practitioners come in all forms. We are a unique group of people because PR is such a diverse field. Since public relations is an umbrella term, with the possibility of working in a firm, non-profit, corporate or governmental setting, we must not limit ourselves to thinking about the practice as one-dimensional. There is more than one way one to achieve your desired PR results. PR is part science, but mostly a creative art form and so we must remember to keep thinking outside of the box.

posted by The Influential One at [11:13 AM](#)

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