



## PRISM AWARDS 2008

The PRISM Awards is around the corner! Come March 2008, the Awards will celebrate its 10th Anniversary with grandeur. Presented biennially, the Awards are presented to encourage creativity, originality and the best application of PR and communications. This time round, participants will have 20 categories to choose from to submit their projects. The PRISM Awards 2008 Committee has introduced five interesting new categories to create more opportunities for participation. They are:

**- Corporate Awards: Three new categories:**

**1. The Outstanding Campaign by a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)**

For projects or campaigns that are organised by an NGO (welfare organisations or charities) such as fund-raising events and public education programs, or campaigns that aimed at fostering a greater understanding of issues affecting society and at influencing public behavior.

**2. Outstanding Corporate Reputation Campaign - International**

Entries must include projects by Singapore-based companies in three or more overseas markets.

**3. Outstanding Corporate Reputation Campaign - Asia Pacific Region**

This Award is to recognise high international standards in corporate reputation management and hence, provide a benchmark for corporate excellence. Any organization outside Singapore which has carried out projects or campaigns within the Asia Pacific (excluding the United States) can submit their projects/campaigns.

**- Special/Individual Awards: Two new categories:**

**1. Outstanding PR Mentor**

This Award is for a PR professional who has greatly distinguished himself/herself in developing and cultivating PR talent and professionalism.

**2. Outstanding PR Champion**

This Award is for a CEO or top executive who is PR-savvy and recognises PR as a valuable asset to the progress of his organisation. The nominee must have consistently supported PR activities and committed resources towards improving corporate reputation.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to make your organisation shine at the upcoming PRISM Awards in March 2008. Send in your application/nominations and stand a chance of being recognised as a leader in the industry.

**Closing date for entries: 10 December 2007.**  
(For early bird pricing, submit by 26 November 2007).

Nomination Kits and Entry Forms can be obtained from the IPRS website [www.iprs.org.sg](http://www.iprs.org.sg).

For further details, please call the Secretariat at +65 65341841.

**Moments from PRISM 2006**



The barracudas performing at PRISM 2006



VIPs with Guest of Honour (third from left) Dr. Balaji Sadasivan, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Information Communications and the Arts (MICA)



PRISM 2008's Young PR Professional

**IPRS e-News and Views** Lookout for the IPRS e-news and views in October at [www.iprs.org.sg](http://www.iprs.org.sg). The monthly e-newsletter will update readers on the current issues in the industry and upcoming IPRS events. Readers can post comments and suggestions and it will be published in the following issues.

**The New IPRS Council  
2007 - 2008**

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Director, Corporate Communications  
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Mr Adrian Heng  
Regional Client Director  
MRIA Communications Pte Ltd

Ms Maria Kuek  
General Manager, External Affairs  
Shell Eastern Petroleum Pte Ltd

**Advisor, Legal**

Mr Tay Kuan Yan  
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## MY ENCOUNTER WITH PAUL HOLMES

- Regional International Public Relations Association Conference in Bali by K.Bhavani



Paul Holmes of Holmes Report

When I was invited to the Regional IPRA Conference in Bali to present a paper on accreditation, I accepted the invitation without much hesitation. I knew what I wanted to speak about. It was to share Singapore's experience in promoting accreditation to PR practitioners.

Before I left for Bali, I did not pay much attention to the conference programme as I was too busy clearing my work before the trip. It was therefore a pleasant surprise that I was together with Mr. Paul Holmes - the man who produces the Holmes report.

The theme of our panel discussion was "Ethics in PR". Mr. Holmes delivered a presentation on business ethics which included ethical practice in the PR profession. I did a presentation on "Managing Growth and Professionalism through Accreditation".

The real fun began after our presentations. Questions came fast and furious from the audience. There were several questions on accreditation. Some wanted to introduce the scheme in their home country and asked how they could promote it to employers. All agreed that PR practitioners must be given proper recognition and seek accreditation to raise the status of the profession.



Delegates at the Conference

Mr. Holmes, however, felt otherwise. He said that accreditation was not necessary and saw it as a barrier to the PR profession. He countered that there should be a free flow of talent into the PR profession. While I agreed that the profession should attract talent, I felt that the industry needed to achieve a level of professionalism through proper training and development.

Mr. Holmes pointed out that few people in the United States applied for accreditation. He admitted that he was not accredited and did not intend so. Coincidentally, it was the US which introduced the Accreditation Scheme to the PR profession in 1964.

Mr. Holmes added that the profession needed people with strategic business skills. My take was that the Western countries had reached a level of maturity where there was a good understanding of the PR profession. In developing countries, however, there were many misconceptions about the PR profession. Anyone could join the profession

and claim that he or she was a PR professional. Even journalists were jumping on the bandwagon mainly in media relations. The term PR Officer was used loosely in some countries.

Many bosses still saw PR only as a tactical function and did not realize its strategic value or contribution to business. Participants from Indonesia supported this view. They could not accept the view that accreditation was not necessary. A Filipino participant also said accreditation was important to give due recognition to the profession. The Ugandan participant wanted to learn from the Singapore experience. Even some American participants confided that though Mr. Holmes had strong views on the subject, the benefits of accreditation could not be discounted.

Nevertheless, Mr Holmes and I shook hands and laughed it off at the end of the panel discussion. We posed for a picture together with our Indonesia host, Mrs Elizabeth Ananto. I guess we silently agreed to disagree. ☺



IPRS President K. Bhavani amongst the panelist

The IPRA Regional Conference in Bali attracted about 200 participants from 21 countries. The IPRA's current President and future Presidents until 2010 were present at this event. The Bali conference was well organised by two ladies - Mrs Elizabeth Ananto the President-elect for IPRA in 2010 and Ms Millicent Danker from Perception Management, Malaysia.

With the theme of "Building Bridges through Dialogue", it was a stimulating session where diverse views were expressed and shared.

The IPRA World Congress, "Public Relations: Build a Harmonious Society in Globalization Era" will be held in Beijing from 13 - 15 November 2008. Mark this event in your calendar!

## FAPRO: MALAYSIA TAKES OVER FROM SINGAPORE AFTER NINE YEARS



IPRS President handing over the FAPRO chair to IPRM President

On 2 August 2007, K Bhavani, President of IPRS, handed over the Federation of Asean Public Relations Organisation (FAPRO) Chair back to Malaysia, after nine exciting years. The hand-over ceremony held on 2 November at Kuala Lumpur, was witnessed by IPRM's Royal Patron, Duli Yang Teramat Mulia Raja Muda Perak, Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah and many veterans of Malaysia's PR industry.

Since 1998, Singapore has chaired FAPRO after taking over the helm from Thailand. In the 1990s, FAPRO was relatively quiet as there were two main obstacles. Firstly, over the years, FAPRO was unable to engage all ASEAN member countries as some countries did not have a recognizable PR institution or association to spearhead efforts in

championing the PR profession and practice in the country. Secondly, there was a lack of funding for FAPRO's activities. Since 2003, Singapore has actively tried to initiate activities to bring about greater participation in FAPRO. That year, FAPRO was revived when Singapore wrote to the ASEAN Secretary to confirm its status as a recognized NGO under ASEAN.

In addition, in late 2003, Singapore organised a regional PR conference where many renowned PR leaders from all over the world were invited to share insights on PR's development. This Conference attracted delegates from Malaysia, Indonesia, China and India. In 2004, the pioneers of FAPRO, were invited to share historical and background information to the new leadership.

"The ASEAN member countries need to come together to strengthen the PR practice and profession in the region. We need to pool our resources so that we can grow as a region. As a close to Singapore's chairmanship, and a start to many more new initiatives to strengthen PR in the region, IPRS will be including a "Regional Awards Category" in the upcoming PRISM Awards in March 2008. We hope that the regional recognition will encourage practitioners to work harder, and will be a step in strengthening PR in the ASEAN region," said Ms.K.Bhavani, President, IPRS and Immediate Past Chair, FAPRO.

Singapore is happy to handover the FAPRO Chair to Malaysia which is a very active and enthusiastic member of FAPRO. IPRS will fully support and cooperate on the upcoming initiatives under Malaysia's leadership. ☺

By Anusha Sadhnani



Mr. Forbes addressing his audience

By Adrian Heng, Council Member

## A Steve Forbes' Sunday Lunch Talk

For the first time, the Singapore Press Club hosted an eminent speaker's lunch talk on a Sunday. Yet, the turnout on 9th September at the Raffles Hotel was impressive, with 250 people in attendance, including the American Ambassador and the Indian High Commissioner to Singapore, along with journalists, IPRS members and guests of Citibank. The reason for this Sunday date was to hear one of the world's financial 'gurus', Steve Forbes, Editor-in-Chief of Forbes and President and CEO of Forbes Inc.

An engaging speaker, Steve Forbes, peppered his talk with humour and conviction. Touching on the instability in today's markets, especially in the US, he pointed his finger directly at the US Federal Reserve for the uncertainty. He felt the Federal Reserve's over-supply of liquidity three years ago had resulted in the commodity and fund markets being "on steroids" and banks being over-generous and agreeable to suspect loans especially in the housing market. We see the impact of this on the sub-prime rate now.

Stating that the US economy will slow down this year, Steve foresees that it will, however, pick up again by spring next year. He urged the Chairman of the Federal Reserve to stop advising banks to be over-cautious, but to instead focus on the removal of excess liquidity in the markets. Insisting that the size of the current monetary crisis was not important, but that the uncertainty was, Steve believed that the Federal Reserve could correct the situation fairly quickly if it undertook the right steps.

Commenting on the significance of the upcoming US Presidential elections and its impact on the world economy, Steve predicted that it will be a contest between New York Senator and Democratic

candidate Hillary Clinton and the former New York Mayor and Republican candidate Rudy Giuliani. Given that Steve Forbes is an unabashed Republican who has stated his strong support for Rudy Giuliani, it was no surprise that he warned that should the Democrats win, the US might take a protectionist stand on global trade.

Steve's argument was that even though former US President Bill Clinton, a Democrat, was an advocate of open trade and was very successful in pushing through free trade initiatives while he was in office, Hillary Clinton would have a much harder time this time around, as the Democrats control both the Houses as compared to when the Republicans controlled the Houses during Bill Clinton's time.

Steve further speculated that Michael Bloomberg might throw his hat in for the Presidential race as an independent which would make the race more interesting. Steve urged the audience mark in their calendars 5th February 2008, where 20 state primaries will most likely determine the fate of who the final 2 candidates for the US Presidential race would be. ①

## STOMP: A New Direction

Relatively new to the media scene, Serene Siew spent six years as a teacher before she made a switch to journalism and joined Singapore Press Holdings/ STOMP as a Content Producer in May 2006. Since September 2007, Serene has been the Editor of Straits Times Online Mobile Print (STOMP), which was launched in June 2006. STOMP is the interactive portal set up by the 162-year-old Straits Times to interact with its readers.

### 1. How does it feel to be the new editor of STOMP?

It's very challenging, of course. I am excited by what I am doing. I have been with STOMP since its launch day. I am proud to be associated with the website. I feel that my enthusiasm and commitment will help me in the times ahead.

### 2. What's the most important aspect of managing an online media?

One has to always be vigilant about news and contributions. STOMP's Singapore Seen feature, which is made up of citizen-generated content, has a lot of potential for growth. Social change has been effected as a result of these posts, as agencies act on the feedback and posts sent in by citizens. It is therefore imperative to be always on the lookout for such stories.

### 3. In your opinion, how much has STOMP evolved since its beginnings?

STOMP has only been in existence for 15 months. During this period it has expanded tremendously. Currently we have 18 features. Another feature, called RealLife.sg, will be launched in October. STOMP has evolved to become a Singapore website, run by Singaporeans, for the "hyper-local" Singaporean reader.

### 4. If there is one thing you'd like to change about STOMP, what would it be?

I would make it "language neutral" as far as possible.

### 5. The challenges faced by an online media editor would be.....

Unlike print, once the stories are filed and have gone into print, an editor's job is done. Online, operations and interaction go on for 24 hours, 7 days a week. Thus, an online media editor literally has to be on call 24/7.

### 6. What are your plans for STOMP?

To make it grow bigger and better, of course! ②



# The PR 2.0 Moment!

When the PR 2.0 Engaging Stakeholders in the New Media Landscape was suggested as a conference two months ago, it seemed like it was almost too ambitious and impossible to achieve. But in the end IPRS not only achieved an overwhelming response with more than 80 delegates attending, but also produced an excellent line-up of speakers and topics which was well received by the delegates.



Institute of Public Relations of Singapore  
**PUBLIC RELATIONS 2.0**  
Engaging Stakeholders in the New Media Landscape  
1 & 2 August 2007  
Suntec Convention Centre  
SINGAPORE

Ogilvy APAC President, Chris Graves speaks on 360 Degree Digital Influence

K.Srinivasan on using social media for brand enhancement

Dr.Christopher Chia of MDA (left) and Dr.Tan Geok Leng of IDA

Engaging Stakeholders through new media (From Left) Arun Mahizhnan (Institute of Policy Studies), Jennifer Lewis (STOMP), Boay Yam Kong (Member of Parliament), Tan Kin Lian (NTUC Income), K.Srinivasan (Prime Point PR)

Held at the Suntec Convention Centre on 1st August, the one-day Conference was chaired by IPRS Honorary Secretary, Kathy O'Brien. The Conference began with an opening note by Dr.Christopher Chia, Chief Executive Officer of the Media Development Authority followed by a presentation by Dr.Tan Geok Leng, Chief Technology Officer of the Infocomm Development Authority on "Technology Trends in the New Media environment".

**The conference saw speakers including:**

- Mitch Joel, President of an award-winning Marketing Agency in Canada, Twist Image, who shared his views on social media in a very visual presentation.
- K.Srinivasan, the podcasting moderator of many Yahoo! Groups and Chairman of Prime Point PR India, who spoke on how a brand should be enhanced using social media

- John Kerr, Director of Edelman Singapore, who presented on crisis and reputation management
- Dr.Jim Macnamara, Group Research Director of Carma Asia Pacific, who guided delegates through measuring PR efforts
- Christopher Graves, President of Ogilvy Asia Pacific, who spoke on "360 Degrees Digital Influence: Engaging Stakeholders".

STOMP was the official online media for the Conference which was supported by Singtel, Starhub, Carma Asia Pacific and the Singapore Press Club.

The day ended with a post-Conference social nite at a leading nightspot, the PUMP ROOM, at Clarke Quay.



The Post Conference Social at the PUMP ROOM, Clarke Quay

IPRS Honorary Secretary, Kathy O'Brien, picking a winner

Lucky Winner Wendy Aw with IPRS President

Dr.Jim Macnamara with a lucky draw winner



## Social Media And Six Pixels of Separation

Public Relations continues to evolve. It is now about to head - full-boar - into uncharted territory. How we, as Marketing and Communications Professionals, handle this challenge will be a deciding factor as to how our industry evolves even further. Mitch Joel was a speaker at the IPRS PR 2.0 Conference.

**Yes... I'm that serious about the implications of Web 2.0 and Social Media in how we work with our clients and connect them more effectively with their consumers.**

**The crux of the Web 2.0 movement is based around two tenants:**

1. Applications built on platforms like Ajax which enable average consumers to populate, manipulate, and create their own online environments.
2. Consumers' new-found interest in creating, publishing and commenting on content.

In a nutshell, we've evolved beyond the command and control model of message creation and dissemination and move towards a "conversation." The word "conversation" is tossed around the Web 2.0 and Social Media world like a football on Superbowl Sunday (pardon the North American reference). The concept was derived (as far as I can tell) from the excellent book, *The Cluetrain Manifesto*, written by Rick Levine, Christopher Locke, Doc Searls and David Weinberger in December 2000 (you can actually read the entire book for free online here: [www.cluetrain.com](http://www.cluetrain.com)). Doc Searls said, "markets are conversations." And while the past seven years have been spent dissecting and poking Searls for more insights, my personal take, and it's relevance to Public Relations and Communications in 2007, is this: people no longer want a message pushed to them. They want a conversation. They want open dialogue and they demand feedback.

As you can well imagine, this creates a tectonic shift in how we look at the Public Relations business model. We're now forced to join in these dynamic conversations, because if we do not engage them, they will carry on without us.

Too quickly, professionals in our space are throwing out lines like "the consumer is in control," because they can blog, podcast and connect the world with whatever ails them (or makes them happy).

Here's the good news: the consumer is not in control. Corporations still control their products and services. They still control pricing and distribution channels, and they still establish the core brand values, goals and beliefs. Consumers still control, whether or not they are buying, whatever it is that you are selling and, most importantly, whether or not they will tell others about you. One of the hottest books in CRM (Customer Relationship Management) space is *The*

Ultimate Question by loyalty expert, Fred Reichheld. According to Reichheld, the Ultimate Question is: How likely is it that you would recommend this company to a friend or colleague? Markets are "conversations" and Reichheld's question is that much more relevant because the only change that has occurred is that consumers now have the ability to speak direct to the mass public as corporations do.

Consumers are no longer quiet because they don't have the budget to run their own Public Relations or Communications campaign. Through the digital channel and with tools like blogging and podcasting at their disposal, they are more empowered than ever before and can "scream" as loud as anyone else and with a minimal financial outlay.

This is good news.

The new world of Communications enables us to really understand our consumers. It empowers them (and us) to collaborate on projects and messages. It also gives us an opportunity to leverage the wisdom of the "crowds".

The challenge, for all of us, is to embrace this change and admire the art of it all. Instead, we tend to stare at this new painting the world calls "Web 2.0 and Social Media" with our heads slightly tilted to the right while thinking, "I don't get it... how is this art?" Throughout civilisation, people have criticised every new form of communication.

Don't fall into this trap.

I'll leave you with this quote from *Newsweek Magazine*. It was pulled from an article on Facebook - the online social network and the article was titled, "Why I Live It...", by Kurt Soler in August, 2007:

"You've heard criticism that Facebook makes us robotic, but history shows we've always feared new communication tools. In 360 B.C., Plato criticized writing, saying that it would induce forgetfulness; 2,200 years later, the telephone was seen as invasive and unnecessary. Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook's creator) is no more, or less, than the next Samuel Morse or Alexander Graham Bell. We all want to interact as best we can, and Facebook allows us to do that."

*The writer, Mitch Joel is President of Twist Image - an award-winning Digital Marketing agency based in Montreal, Quebec. Joel is a Board Member for the Interactive Advertising Bureau of Canada and is active with the Canadian Marketing Association and the National Advertising Benevolent Society. He is presently writing his first book, Six Pixels of Separation - How Marketing Connects in a Connected World. You can follow his Blog and Podcast, Six Pixels of Separation over here: [www.twistimage.com/blog](http://www.twistimage.com/blog).*

## The Young PR Council - Six Months in Action!

Once again, the IPRS' Young PR Council has successfully managed to engage young practitioners to come together and network. This time at the Arena, in Clarke Quay over finger food and drinks on 7th August. The response was overwhelming and saw more younger practitioners joining. The Council which was set-up to reach out to young practitioners, bring them together and share ideas, seems to be heading in the right direction six months into the job.

The Young PR Council Members are Ben Wightman (SAP Asia Pte.Ltd), Sharon Vu (Meritus Mandarin), Farah Abdul Rahim (Hill & Knowlton), Cho Pei Lin (Asia PR Werkz) Betty Fong (SGX), Nicole Neo (Capitaland), Rita Chia (Weber Shandwick) and Fiona So (Esplanade).

Let's see what the Young PR Council's President, Ben Wightman, Marcom Manager of SAP Asia Pte.Ltd, and his Committee Members have to say about how things are progressing and where the Council is headed.



Ben presenting the lucky prize!

**Ben Wightman,**  
IPRS Young PR Council President

### *What's been going on so far?*

The Young PR Council was formed within the IPRS Council about six months ago. After months of planning, we launched the group with our first networking event in May at a hip new venue at Clarke Quay called Barfly. The resounding success of this first event led us to stage our next networking session just two months later at another even newer Clarke Quay venue, Arena.

### *How do you think the Young PR's are responding to your initiatives? Do you see new faces at the networking sessions?*

About 100 young PR practitioners have turned up for our first two networking events. This is a clear indication that we're filling in a need in the market. We see new faces at every event, many whom have been brought along by attendees from previous events, who want them to share in the fun and quality networking. Our database of young PR professionals has grown - just through the power of word of mouth and viral marketing.

### *What is the purpose of getting young PR practitioners together?*

Those new to the industry need an opportunity

to network and to learn about industry best practices in as "outside of the office" setting. Our events have given these young professionals the chance to share common concerns and questions in a relaxed atmosphere.

### *Do you think that some employers might have concerns that their staffs might be meeting with "competitors"?*

Not at all. In fact, the networking events are a valuable opportunity for their employees to get to know key players in the industry and potential partners.

### *How do you plan to move forward from networking?*

Now that we have a critical mass of members, we're looking to expand the types of activities beyond just pure networking. We're looking at sessions with local journalists, as well as mentorship opportunities with senior IPRS members. If there is interest, we may also explore using new online social media for networking and best practice sharing.

### *Do you actually "ban" the wiser PR folks from attending?*

Of course not! However, our activities are planned for young professionals, even if a few "young at heart" sometimes do pop by! In addition, our definition of "young" is fairly broad ... under 35 or less than five years in the industry.

*In a rating of 1-5, how successful has the Young PR Council been in achieving it's objectives? I'd give us a 4 ... Pretty darn good but, of course, there's still room for improvement!*

### *What are your short-term plans for next year?*

We're still in a rapid growth phase at the moment. I expect that to continue into next year. Membership will continue to grow and, as we attract more capable leaders, we'll be able to offer more services. Like IPRS itself, the Young PR Council is nothing without a strong team who are willing to volunteer their time to make a difference. We hope to see more such individuals ready to lead the group to the next level.

### *What do you think of young PR practitioners these days?*

One of the greatest challenge facing the PR industry in Singapore is the lack of good talent. I hear this from agency MDs and corporate PR heads all the time. The same was the case when I was living in both London and San Francisco. To ensure that the development of the profession is not hindered, it is crucial that young talent be nurtured. That was one of the key reasons why I helped to form a similar organisation in San Francisco with the Public Relations Society of America and agreed to take the lead in Singapore as a member of the IPRS Council. My vision is for the IPRS Young PR Council to continue driving the development, best practice sharing and networking among young PR professionals

in Singapore long after I'm no longer able to claim membership myself ... which isn't too far away!



**Cho Pei Lin**  
Director, Asia PR Werkz  
Member, Young PR Council

"The Young PR initiative is very exciting as it provides a platform for the gathering of young professionals in the industry and allows for relevant net-working opportunities. From the events, many came forward to propose other initiatives the Young PR Council should undertake and we are definitely excited about the enthusiasm shown by participants. As a Council Member, I have assisted in organising the events held thus far and to communicate to participants the role and objectives of the Council."



**Rita Chia**  
Senior Consultant,  
Weber Shandwick  
Member, Young PR Council

"I think that the Young PR Council is a great idea. When I was just starting out in PR, I was always looking for different avenues to gain a better understanding of the PR industry. I believe many young practitioners feel the same way too. The Council, although it has been just formed, has been able to do that with its networking evenings.

I attend the Council meetings to offer suggestions as to how to attract more young practitioners to the Council's activities, as well as to brainstorm on different ideas to help young practitioners gain a deeper insight into the PR industry."



**Sharon Vu**  
Marketing Communications  
Manager, Meritus Mandarin  
Member, Young PR Council

"Young PR networking sessions are meant to build stronger bonds and foster closer relationships among young PR. As ambassadors of our respective organizations we need to build contacts for learning and understanding. This is important especially in a fast evolving media climate. The Young Council was formed to promote this." 🌟



Young PR Council Member, Sharon Vu (fourth from left) with young PR's at the Arena, Clarke Quay

# IPRS Graduation cum Networking Nite

## August 2007



Diploma 01/06 and  
02/06 Class

IPRS Graduation Ceremony

It was a proud moment for 48 IPRS students as they celebrated their graduation at the IPRS Graduation Ceremony on 17 August. Held at the YWCA, three batches of graduands (Diploma 02/06, Certificate 01/07 and the IPRS-MINDEF Class 07) were congratulated and presented with their certificates by IPRS Vice President, Ng Wei Joo and Education Chairperson, James Suresh. Many of the students were accompanied by their family members and friends.

IPRS congratulates all the graduates and the following top students who walked away with book prizes sponsored by GollinHarris and Singtel on their achievement.

Here is what our top students had to say:



James & Donovan Chao

**Donovan Chao**  
Army Officer,  
Ministry of Defense  
**Top Student: IPRS-MINDEF**  
**Certificate in Public**  
**Relations and Mass**  
**Communications 2007**  
**(Intake 1)**

I'm an Army Officer currently serving in the Officer Cadet School. I'm a graduate in BBA with major in Marketing and Logistics.

I signed up for the IPRS-MINDEF Certificate in PR and Mass Communications course due to my interest in Human Resource (HR) and marketing where PR skills are important.

Being in the Government sector, I've realised the importance of building good relations with counterparts and the public. Therefore, equipping myself with a basic knowledge of PR will assist me in my work.

This course has given me a better and clearer insight into PR. It has helped me increase the quality of my work and enhanced my working environment. It has equipped me with the tools and techniques of employee communications and community relations which are essential in my workplace.

IPRS has provided a very good platform for PR practitioners. Through the relatively short duration of the course, I now have a greater awareness and better knowledge of PR. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my lecturers, Ms K Bhavani, Mr Robert Conceicao and Mr James Suresh for their guidance and sharing.



Stephanie Chow

**Stephanie Chow,**  
**top Student:**  
**Diploma in Public**  
**Relations and**  
**Communications 2006**  
**(Intake 2)**

Being a Human Resource (HR) practitioner with the Civil Service, a Public Relations (PR) diploma was not the first thing that came

to mind when I started sourcing for courses to keep abreast with the advances in managing Singapore's workforce. In this 'paper-chasing' society of ours, the choice and range of courses were mind-boggling - and so were some of the price tags.

I first heard about IPRS's Diploma in PR and Communications course from a good friend, Sue Lin, who had just joined a PR agency. Sue had wanted to quickly learn more about the industry and to pick up some relevant qualifications. The thought of being classmates again with this old pal of mine after 10 years sounded like fun. Since I had yet to find another course that interested me, I readily agreed to her suggestion to take the class together.

It turned out to be an eye-opening experience. I have always been interested in the communications industry, but this course has really shown me the wide-ranging impact that communications has on our modern society. While some of the topics taught, like media relations, may be more specific to the PR field, other topics like corporate communications cut across all industries. And learning to keep in mind guidelines on key messages, target audience etc. can really enhance any piece of day-to-day communications (even a simple email to the boss!).

Overall, I am glad I took up this course as it has allowed me to gain a greater awareness of and valuable insights into the intricacies of the PR and media industry. While my inclination is still towards HR in the foreseeable future, perhaps there may yet be a way to blend the people-centric HR and info-centric PR into a fusion career. Time will tell.



Yumie Chia

**Yumie Chia Pei Jin,**  
**Auditor turned Marketer,**  
**Top Student: Professional**  
**Certificate in Public**  
**Relations 2007**  
**(Intake 1)**

What is PR? If you have accidentally offended your supplier or unknowingly angered your fellow colleagues, you might hear your Boss telling you, "You should improve your PR skills!" In the big working world outside the comparatively narrow professional field of Public Relations, PR skills are very often taken in layman terms as our "soft skills" and the ability to relate well to anyone whom you might have contact with such as customers, suppliers, colleagues, superiors and even competitors.

A professional PR practitioner needs to communicate and relate well to different stakeholders. Hence, it is natural to assume that PR practitioners are eloquent, savvy speakers and fluent writers.

The PR practitioner is also often taken as an organisation's "savior", especially in times of crisis. "The 'savior' will know the right thing to say at the right time."

Such expectations seem to hover over the heads of PR practitioners who are unfortunately expected to be the "superman" who will know what to say, what to do.....

I am not sure how many true "saviors" or "supermen" there are out there, but I definitely aspire to be a savvy "near-superman". I am currently working for a local SME as a Regional Business Finance Manager. As our company is small, I handle almost everything from backend strategic planning

and financial analysis to front-end marketing and customers/principals liaison. There is no PR department in our small organisational setup and I am not exactly functioning as an official PR personnel. Then again, are the skills learnt in the "Professional Certificate in Public Relations" course not directly applicable in our daily working life? Of course they are!

Personal grooming, presentation skills, better writing skills, sharp analytical skills to handle crisis, meticulous thinking skills in the organisation of events, media communication and corporate branding skills which are interlinked to marketing skills.....there are a million ways you can fit the soft skill sets into daily life application.

Hence, for everyone out there who aspires to be a well-rounded, multi-talented "superman", PR soft skills is a necessity that must be developed and "unlearned". And remember...a PR course is not just for the ones working in the "PR field".



Clara Yap

**Clara Yap**  
**Senior Executive Officer,**  
**PR and Operations,**  
**Best Denki**  
**Top Student: Diploma in**  
**Public Relations and**  
**Communications 2006 -**  
**(Intake 1)**

I am currently working in Best Denki as a Senior Executive Officer in the Public Relations and Operations Department. My company

recommended me for the course because they wanted me to handle PR functions in my work. Previously, I was in the Operations Department. I took the course in 2006 together and joined the 01/2006 intake.

I have learnt many things during the course, such as Media Relations - how to write a press release, media monitoring and so forth. Before I took the course, I did not know much about the job of a PR practitioner. After the course, I have a much better understanding of what a PR practitioner's job entails. My new job assignment requires me to deal with the media and customers. After having undergone the course, I feel more confident when dealing with the various publics.

I feel that PR has a tremendous impact on an organisation. It helps shape an organisation's corporate image, reputation and it also helps to build goodwill.

I found the course interesting, practical and useful. I would apply the skills that I had acquired from the course in my day-to-day work. I would also recommend the course to my friends and others in my company.

As for my plans for the future, if given a chance, I would like to perform more PR functions such as corporate communications or venture into other new areas. I would also like to further studies in PR.

IPRS has been doing a good job in helping to develop PR skills for the industry. IPRS could do more by offering a variety of PR courses (including short courses), catered to people with different needs.

Once again, thank you IPRS for giving me this opportunity! ☺

## INDUSTRY BUZZ

Kai Tamir-Goh, IPRS Accredited Board member, is now with Singapore Polytechnic (SP) as its Director of Corporate Communications. She joined SP, Singapore's first polytechnic, in August of this year. Kai has over 20 years experience in public relations, including 13 years at Weber Shandwick and 1 year at Hill & Knowlton. ☺

Newslink 2.0, Singapore's first online archive news information service allows you to access the whole archive of SPH newspapers in three languages as far back as 1989. Gain access to advertisement searches, image access, PDF versions of the Straits Times, reports, interviews, statistical graphs and 11 influential newspapers which include The Straits Times, The Business Times, The New Paper, Computer Times and Berita Harian. For more, visit <http://newslink.asia1.com.sg>. ☺

Sharon Wu has been appointed as Marketing Communications Manager with Meritus Mandarin Singapore on 28 September 2007. Sharon was formerly a Radio Producer-Presenter with Class

95FM and Group Communications Executive with MediaCorp. After MediaCorp, she pursued her career in hospitality as Marketing Communications Manager of M Hotel Singapore. She was responsible for the branding, publicity and advertising & promotions of M Hotel Singapore, part of Millennium and Copthorne group where she got the hotel well featured locally and regionally. With her experience and network in the media communications, Sharon will play a key role in lifting the Meritus brand to a higher level. ☺

Daphne Liew has set up NBS Consulting Pte Ltd, a full service corporate communications outfit. As a management and public relations consultant for over 20 years, she will focus the firm on strategic communications, corporate positioning, investor relations and M&A communications. ☺

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Call the IPRS at 6534 1841 or email [admin@iprs.org.sg](mailto:admin@iprs.org.sg) for more information.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### DATE PROGRAMME

#### October 2007

8 October	Course	Diploma in PR and Mass Communication
24 October	Lunch Talk	Maximising Sponsorship ROI
24 October	Networking	Young PR 'Nite'
29 October	Workshop	Effective Presentations

#### November 2007

2 November	Lunch	IPRS-Press Club Deepavali Lunch
14 November	Lunch Talk	Blogging for Business : An Open Conversation on Approach, Value and Ethics
TBA	Workshop	Internal Communications

#### December 2007

TBA		IPRS X'MAS Party (Members Nite)
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### THE IPRS COUNCIL 2007/2009

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<b>Writer</b>	Shanthini Singam

### THE SECRETARIAT

43B South Bridge Road, Singapore 058677  
Tel: 6534 1841 Fax: 6534 4691  
Email: [admin@iprs.org.sg](mailto:admin@iprs.org.sg)  
Website: [www.iprs.org.sg](http://www.iprs.org.sg)