



## IPRS 37th AGM New Year, New Council



(L-R): Secretariat Manager, Anusha; Council Members James Suresh, Anne Tan, Robert Conceicao, Ng Wei Joo, K. Bhavani, Verdayne Nuris, Daphne Liew, Lim Siew Wee & Adrian Heng

IPRS' 37th Annual General Meeting saw new faces as Council Members, with current President K. Bhavani re-elected to a sixth term for Council Year 2007-2009.

Held at the Suntec NUSS Guild House on 28 March, Ms Bhavani reported that the Institute made a record profit of \$72,549 for the year and saw profitable growth, mainly derived from its training programs. She reiterated plans to offer more areas of advancement for Diploma students. For example, the alliances with the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) and Singapore Institute of Management (SIM) have given the Institute's diploma students an alternative to further their studies by offering a one year advanced standing.

Another matter raised was the formation of the Young PR Council discussed at the preceding AGM. The principle for the formation of the council is to engage young

practitioners to contribute to the profession and nurture new talent.

To escalate the Young PR Council (now numbering 10 members) towards future success, activities such as networking events are currently under way.

Looking forward to 2007, upcoming events highlighted includes a business mission to Hong Kong and plans for a conference on new media.

Ms Bhavani also reported that IPRS was approached to bid for the Global Alliance and IPRA conferences to be held in Singapore. IPRS' biggest gala event, Prism Awards, will be held in early 2008.

Following the AGM, members retreated to chin wags over complimentary drinks at the bar. A nice beginning to a new council year! ☺

By Lee Mei See

### The New IPRS Council 2007 - 2009

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Ms K Bhavani  
Director, Corporate Communications  
Ministry of Information,  
Communications & the Arts

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Senior Manager, Communications  
3P Network Dept  
PUB

Mr Robert Conceicao  
Managing Director  
Epiphany PR & Marketing

Ms Verdayne Nuris  
Nuris & Associates LLP

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Head, Global Communications  
RGM International Pte Ltd

Mr Ben Wightman  
Marcom Manager  
SAP Asia Pte Ltd

Mr Adrian Heng  
Regional Client Director  
MVA Communications Pte Ltd

Ms Mavia Kusk  
General Manager, External Affairs  
Shell Eastern Petroleum Pte Ltd

#### Advisor, Legal

Mr Tay Kuan Yan  
General Manager  
The Hoffman Agency Asia Pacific  
Pte Ltd

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## NEWLY ACCREDITED MEMBERS

**Congratulations to our 13 Newly Accredited Members who received their accreditation certificates at the recent IPRS 37th AGM on 28 March. They join a current pool of 57 accredited IPRS members.**



**Adrian Heng**  
Regional Client Director  
MRA Communications

**Beverly Tan**  
Public Relations/Business Development Manager  
Bayer (SEA) Pte Ltd

**Caroline Loke**  
Head of Social Investments  
Shell Eastern Petroleum

**Edward Dixon**  
Managing Director  
Porter Novelli

**Gerald De Cotta**  
Director, Corporate Communications  
Singapore Business Federation

**Ian Brown**  
Director of Public Relations  
NCS Group

**Julie Lee**  
Area Communications Manager  
Dow Chemical Pacific (Singapore)

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Managing Director  
Fulford Public Relations

**Louise Nicholson**  
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Baldwin Boyle Shand

**Ng Wei Joo**  
Vice President, Corporate Communications  
CapitalLand Ltd

**Stephenie Vasko**  
Regional Head - Asia  
Carma International

**Tan Peck Hwa**  
Director, Asia Business Channels

**Verdayne Nunis**  
Nunis & Associates LLP



## The Public Relations and Mass Communication Educators

If you are in the dark on the next step in furthering your education in the field of Public Relations and Mass Communication, let us shine some light on your path. Listed below are a few of the education institutes that offer courses in Public Relations, Mass Communication and Media.

**The Institute of Public Relations of Singapore** is the only provider of intensive courses in Public Relations. The aim is to provide solid foundation of conceptual knowledge as well as skill sets for public relations practitioners who wish to upgrade their skills, and for those aspiring to join the communications industry. Lecturers are drawn from experienced and qualified practitioners in public relations and related industries, as well as academic staff from institutions of higher learning.

**Courses currently offered by the Institute are:**

- 1) Introduction to Public Relations (3-day course)
- 2) Professional Certificate in Public Relations and Mass Communication (Part-Time) (3-month course)
- 3) Diploma in Public Relations and Mass Communication (Part-Time) (9-month course)

For more information contact Ms Lee Mei See (DID): 6236 2903 Email: [melsee@lprs.org.sg](mailto:melsee@lprs.org.sg) or visit [www.lprs.org.sg](http://www.lprs.org.sg)

*Other institutes which offer Mass Communication and PR-related courses are:*

**Marketing Institute of Singapore**  
Graduate Diploma in Marketing Communications

For more information visit  
<http://www.mis.edu.sg/education/programmes/graduatediplomas/>

**Singapore Institute of Management**  
Bachelor of Communication (Mass Communication)  
awarded by RMIT University (IPRS Diploma Students get 1-year advance standing)

For more information visit <http://www1.sim.edu.sg/bamc.html>

**Ngee Ann Polytechnic**  
Diploma in Mass Communication (MCM) (Full-Time)

Internship period for students is between March to August and September to February.

For more information visit [http://www.ngeeann.edu.sg/fms/abt\\_mcm.htm](http://www.ngeeann.edu.sg/fms/abt_mcm.htm)

**Singapore Polytechnic**  
Diploma in Media & Communication (DMC) (Full-Time)

Internship period for students is between February to April.

For more information visit <http://www.sp.edu.sg>

**Republic Polytechnic**  
Diploma in Communication & Information Design (Full-Time)

For more information visit <http://www.rp.sg/courses/cc/coid/index.asp>

**Temasek Polytechnic**  
Diploma in Communications & Media Management (Full-Time)

For more information visit <http://www.tp.edu.sg>

**Nanyang Technological University**  
Undergraduate & Graduate Programmes  
Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information

For more information visit <http://www.ntu.edu.sg/sci>

**National University of Singapore**  
Communications & New Media Programme

For more information visit <http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/cnm/>



## LEADING CHANGE IN PR 2.0

### PR in a world transformed by the Social Web phenomenon and Web 2.0 technologies



We need no more evidence that the world of Public Relations has irrevocably changed with the emergence of the Social Web phenomenon and the increasing penetration of Web 2.0 technologies.

Unfortunately, in Singapore (and perhaps elsewhere too, for that matter) there is still a chasm between what we believe in and what we actually do about it. In an informal poll I conducted early this year amongst more than 50 PR agency folks (from junior staff to MDs), this belief-action gap was most startling. All but one agreed that blogs will have a profound impact on the future of business communications, yet only 34% of them blog and less than 5% are even aware of their company's and clients' corporate blogging policies. And we haven't even begun to scratch the surface of Social Media.

Today, we are ceding control to the advertising and online marketing folks who are first to jump in with very tactical communications strategies that ignore the importance of sustained trust and relationship-building. In doing so, they jeopardise the reputation of the companies that they represent, leaving PR to deal with a clutter of distrust and cynicism online.

**"The Social Web is possibly the best thing that has ever happened to PR, and while opportunities abound, there is also much uncertainty. It is absolutely vital then, that we see the path ahead as a journey to lead, and not a walk in the dark."**

There are two reasons why PR is still behind the curve compared to advertising and online marketing, in the social media landscape:

1. Digital Divide 2.0 – even within PR agencies, a huge gap exists between those with a sound understanding of PR 2.0, and those who don't.

2. There is an even larger gap between knowledge and action,

stemming from two main factors – fear of venturing into the unknown; and the lack of precedence to prove and promise substantial return on investment. PR measurement is important, but relationships are not a numbers game.

#### ***How do we bridge these gaps?***

What can you do, as an agency head or account team leader, to develop PR 2.0-savvy agency teams? I recommend five ways:

#### ***1. Dedicate resources***

Just last month, I met with John Bell, the MD and Executive Creative Director of 360° Digital Influence at Ogilvy PR Worldwide. He was in Asia for a meeting



with the company's regional Digital Influence teams. He also spent some time connecting with influential bloggers in the region. This speaks volumes of the emphasis that Ogilvy PR is placing on developing digital expertise all over the world. According to him, Ogilvy PR has "a global team who is expert in digital influence or digital PR, and they make training and evangelism via client engagements part of their jobs."

## 2. Encourage everyone to be digital

John adds that while Ogilvy has a dedicated digital team, "the end game [must] be that everyone in the agency becomes digital."

He has this piece of practical advice for every PR practitioner – "PR pros have to take this seriously. The business will forever be changed; maybe not tomorrow but soon. Every PR pro should have a RSS feed reader set up, a del.icio.us account and either a blog or at least a profile in a social network like LinkedIn or MySpace. Reading blogs and watching video blogs are a great start. Once the aggregator or feed reader is set up, this becomes a lot easier."

## 3. Constantly clarify understanding

We must constantly clarify our understanding of PR 2.0. Many have rushed through their learning on the subject without true comprehension. They consider it an additional set of skills or tools to be acquired, without understanding that PR 2.0 is a complete paradigm shift. They fail to realise that it's not just all about the technology; and it's not just the Media that has changed. We have changed.

As a result of poor understanding, many remain focused on mere tactics. Their entire worldview of Social Media strategy comprises almost completely of reaching out to bloggers, and uploading award-winning TVCs on YouTube!

## 4. Create safe places to experiment

The Social Web can be a brutal place. Make a mistake like Edelman's Walmart fiasco and everyone jumps on you. Say something wrong on your blog and you may be ripped to shreds. No wonder fear is the main hindrance to implementing PR 2.0 strategies.

**'Fear is a primary obstacle to innovation of "Social Media" PR strategies, and the understanding of how things work in the Social Web will dramatically reduce that fear.'**

To overcome this fear, you should create safe places where members of your team (or your clients) can experiment. An internal company blog hosted on an intranet is an excellent way to do it. Instead of having meetings in the next couple of months, use the blog (where appropriate) to make company announcements and discuss internal issues. Have members of the team respond and establish dialogue over pertinent topics.

Better yet, if you can afford the time and resources, create scenarios and have members of your team role-play online "PR situations". Coach your team members by providing advice on the effectiveness of their actions online. Clarify their understanding of how Netizens really respond in differing situations. Set targets, appoint "Social Media" coaches, and create an intensive training ground for the 360-degree complexities of online conversations.

Fear is a primary obstacle to innovation of "Social Media" PR strategies, and the understanding of how things work in the Social Web will dramatically reduce that fear.

## 5. Hire your audience

The younger tech-savvy crowd of today are possibly the only ones who truly wonder why we even use the term "new media". They are born into Friendster, learned how to blog as a subject in school and probably never actually owned a physical photo album because Flickr manages all their photos.

Instead of looking only for "traditional" PR experience in your next hire, consider hiring those who already live and breathe Social Media. They may not know how to write a press release, but they write in "conversations", and you never know when their blog entry may just change the world!

The Social Web is possibly the best thing that has ever happened to PR, and while opportunities abound, there is also much uncertainty. It is absolutely vital then, that we see the path ahead as a journey to lead, and not a walk in the dark. ☺



### HONORING THE BEST IN JOURNALISM

MediaCorp honored the best in print and broadcast journalism at their second News Award Ceremony on 2 February 2007 at Swissotel The Stamford. A panel of local and foreign judges selected the winners. Here is the list of winners in each category:

**News Story of the Year**  
Get Real! Fifty Dollar Men, MediaCorp News

**Feature Story of the Year**  
Indonesia : On the Ring of Fire, MediaCorp News

**Story of the Year with Public Participation**  
Talkback : Advanced Medical Directive, MediaCorp Radio and  
Frontline : Midnight Cat Killers, MediaCorp News

**Journalist of the Year**  
Derrick Augustine Paulo, MediaCorp Press

**Young Journalist of the Year**  
Jasmine Yin, MediaCorp Press



iPRS spoke to Derrick Augustine Paulo, MediaCorp's Journalist of the Year.

1. You were recently recognised as MediaCorp's 'Journalist of the Year'. What were your thoughts when you first heard the news? Where were you then?

I was at Caldecott Hill when I met someone on the organising committee for the MediaCorp Awards Night. This was a day before the awards were to be given out, and this person who shall remain unnamed, told me, 'Congrats'. I knew I had been nominated, so I sort of knew what that meant. The first thing I asked was, 'Oh gosh, I don't have to give a speech, do I?' No such luck. About the award, I believe it's certainly as much a vote of confidence for TODAY as it may be for me.

2. When did your passion for journalism begin? Did you always want to be a journalist?

The "crossroads" moment came when I had to decide what to study in the university. It was between law and communication studies, and the rest, as they say, is history. Basically, I've always been interested in current affairs and you could say I was weaned since my primary school days on the daily news. Back then, it was always the sports pages first. Actually, that's still the case, but don't tell my editor. Anyway, in the end, it was not too hard to decide. Had I known about the pay, though ...

3. What do you think makes a good news story?

Obviously, there are many elements that make a good news story. I'll just highlight two aspects I think are important. A good news story is one that is written without fear or favour, and one that sets the reader thinking about the subject matter even after he or she is done reading it.

4. Can you recall the most embarrassing moment in your career as a journalist - and your proudest?

My colleagues still remind me of the time when another newspaper ran a photo of us reporters interviewing President S.R. Nathan when he threw his hat into the ring for the Elected Presidency a second time. It was a candid moment of the President patting me on the arm with a big smile as he responded to my question. I instantly became the President's favourite journalist - according to my colleagues, of course. As for my proudest moment, I hope it hasn't come yet. After all, it's been only less than five years on the job.

### New Editor at Harper's Singapore

Ad Asia reports that Kate Birch, former Deputy Editor of *Simply Her* has been appointed the new Editor at *Harper's BAZAAR* Singapore. Harper's BAZAAR is under the ACP Magazine and Hearst Magazine umbrella. Prior to this Birch worked in other UK magazines in Dubai and was the editor of *Emirates Woman*.

# PERSONALITY PROFILE

## VERDAYNE NUNIS Nunis & Associates LLP



### 1. What's the biggest challenge or the most rewarding experience of your PR career to date?

I had eight exciting years in PR before moving on to a marketing role for seven years in an IT MNC. My most rewarding experience was when I was in the marketing role. I was involved in setting priorities that had business impact, that involved dealing with senior management and enabling them to see the benefits of PR. There was a general consensus in the company that advertising wasn't sufficiently targeted, so it was a great opportunity to demonstrate the power of PR in a marketing organisation.

This involved setting goals for the PR team internally and the agencies that I worked with across the region, putting processes and measurements in place that ensured that there was a well-oiled and responsive PR machinery supporting both reactive and proactive PR initiatives. I also developed a measurement framework to help management see how much progress we were making in PR by focusing on issues that were important to them and presenting the information in terms that they understood. This in turn ensured that I always had their buy-in.

I can safely say that much of what we achieved in branding and awareness as a company was achieved through PR. Over the years, many of the company's customers have testified to the fact that they got to know about it through reading about us.

### 2. What are some of the common misconceptions about PR?

The most common misconception is that PR is about media publicity. While that is an obvious outcome of it, strategic public relations should be defined more broadly, to include engagement with your audiences. If you think about it, your company's audience is really the customers and shareholders. The media are key influencers. This helps to focus the PR effort on what's important and newsworthy. How many times have you been approached to do a story for its news sake, rather than for what it means to an organisation's customers? Helping your clients or spokespersons prioritise this ensures that you bring better, more relevant stories to the media as this quickly addresses the "why should I care?" aspect of the story.

Another example is where PR strategies are deployed for stakeholder relations where the outcome is not about media publicity, but about building mutually beneficial engagements among third party organisations. The scope of PR should also expand to include direct communications with a target audience. What do you do when there isn't a relevant

media to address your target market? This is where direct communications may play a greater role. The blogging phenomenon is another example of this and is clearly in the domain of public relations, more so than advertising. These developments automatically extend the role of PR to one that is more strategically important to the organisation and to management.

### 3. When choosing a candidate for a PR position, do you choose experience over qualifications?

It depends for what level the person is being hired for. If it's a regional role, then experience is critical. Naturally, experience is a lot more valuable than paper qualifications, but I have met many talented fresh graduates who are able to bring fresh perspectives and energy to the job.

Agencies are a great place to start. It's a humbling experience, and understanding the creative process is something that stays with you for the rest of your life. This is really lacking in most in-house PR environments. It's also an easier transition to move from agency to in-house.

As a hiring manager, I have learnt that it is more important to hire people for the right attitude than for their knowledge. It is also a manager's responsibility to train, and empower an individual in the team to be the best that they can be. Sometimes this means helping them see beyond what they can imagine for themselves.

### 4. Is there one thing that you are most proud of in your PR career?

I am very proud of the teams that I have built and trained in the past. Many of them have gone on to have very successful PR careers and continue to see me as a mentor.


### 5. What advice would you give to PR practitioners who face difficult (demanding and unreasonable) clients and journalists?


Always stay calm and find a positive or humorous side to difficult situations. Firstly, it relaxes you, and secondly, it may also help you to come up with a better idea on how to solve the problem. Thirdly, it demonstrates your can-do attitude and further builds credibility with the client or journalist. 🌟


## INDUSTRY BUZZ


PR agency Markthink Communications will be launching a news information and distribution portal called Press N Release in early April for media and investment professionals.

Press N Release will also offer integrated marketing communications services and targets the media and brands/business sectors. Organisations will be able to post their press releases on the daily updated portal, where media professionals can pick up information in various categories. 

Former senior account executive Johnson Ong and Raena Ahara Cheong from Fulford PR and Batey Consulting respectively have formed a new PR agency to promote music and concerts all across Asia. Big Kid Production and Communication was formed in January 2007 and aims to bring high quality international acts to Singapore and the region. In addition, Big Kid will offer communication and media relations services in the areas of fashion, F&B and entertainment. 

H & K - Farah Abdul Rahim, ex-CNA broadcast journalist and Eddie Toh, ex-BT veteran, have joined Hill & Knowlton. 

Upstream Marketing and Communications Inc announced a strong business start to 2007 with more than a dozen new client mandates. New clients to Upstream's regional roster include Bayer Levitra, Burger King, China Telecom, Kijji (division of eBay), and Yellow Pages. China Telecom have also retained Upstream Singapore to announce its expansion into Singapore. 

The Right Angle Group, made of The Right Angle Media (producer of TV programmes & corporate videos), and The Right Angle Communications (strategic and crisis communications training arm) has dissolved after more than 10 years of operation. The Right Angle Media will continue its operations under Adrian Ong. Viswa Sudasivam has moved out to manage the newly named Strategic Moves Pte Ltd as its CEO, still focusing on strategic and crisis communications training and consultancy. 

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE	PROGRAMME
<b>May 2007</b>	
22 May	<b>Workshop</b> Face the Media like a PRO by Kathy O'Brien
23 - 25 May	<b>Workshop</b> Introduction to Public Relations
28 May	<b>Course</b> Professional Certificate in Public Relations
<b>June 2007</b>	
25 & 26 June	<b>Workshop</b> Effective Newsletter Writing by Valerie Valberg
<b>July 2007</b>	
9 July	<b>Course</b> Diploma in PR & Mass Communication
<b>August 2007</b>	
14 & 15 August	<b>Workshop</b> Who Says Writing A Speech is Tough? by Thomas Wee

### THE IPRS COUNCIL 2007/2009

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<b>Hon. Treasurer</b>	Daphne Liew
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Lim Siew Wee	Mavis Kuek
Michael Rose	
Robert Conzelao	<b>Legal Advisor</b>
Verdayne Nunis	Tay Kuan Yan

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**Managing Editor** Kai Tamin-Goh

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