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Developing Careers: One Day at a Time

Public Relations Society of America- St. Louis hosted a Career Development Day, Friday Feb. 28. It was a great experience for those that went from our PRSSA chapter. They got to hear from many professionals from around the St. Louis area. First, we got to hear from the hiring pros and then we got to ask the “newbies” how they got their jobs and their tips on how to keep them.

The hiring pros gave tips on how to impress them, and how “newbies” got their jobs. Some of them contradicted each other, which reinforces the importance of knowing the company’s culture. For example, the woman from Monsanto hated hand-written cards because they take so long to receive. But the man from The Standing Partnership would not hire anyone who did not send a hand-written card.

The keynote speaker was Staci Harvatin, Director of marketing at Cantor & Burger. She gave a great presentation on being your own personal brand; how to keep it, manage it, and what to do if unfavorable things are found on Google about you. It was extremely interesting. Separating your social media platforms is an excellent tip she shared. A way to do this is by only connecting with friends and family on Facebook and keeping your Twitter professional. This a great way to show how organized you are to potential employers because if you are in charge of a company’s social media you will need to know how to keep them separate.

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After the keynote professionals broke into round tables and students were

able to have time with professionals from many sectors of public relations. Every

student was given three professionals to meet and you sat with them for 30 minutes. This was plenty of time to ask as many questions as you wanted. Nick McLaren, public relations manager at Barnes-Jewish hospital, gave us great insight on how hard it can be to even be interviewed for a job.

He said, “For the last open position we had 500 applicants. One hundred made it through our applicant tracking system, my HR person read them and gave me 30, from there I picked five to interview.”

Having a resume without spelling errors is important, as well as making sure you include the adjectives of the type of person they are looking for. Do not lie, but make sure you use the words that they use to describe yourself, if it is accurate.

I would recommend every communications student to attend next years’ event. The information they presented was a great way to stay up to date on what is new in PR, and to just start learning for those of us that are just getting started.

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