



PRSA Chicago January Career Contributions Winner

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Alex is a senior at DePaul University majoring in public relations with a minor in marketing, and intern at Sikich LLP in their corporate practice. She is the president of DePaul's PRSSA chapter, a member of Order of Omega Honor Society, and a communications volunteer with the American Red Cross of Chicago. Upon graduation, Alex plans to specialize in crisis communications.

Taking the "Work" Out of Network

A Young Professionals Guide to PRSA Networking

As a young professional, jumping feet first into a PRSA event featuring prominent figures in Chicago PR seems daunting. With a bit of preparation, however, and a whole lot of guts, overcoming your nerves is possible.

- Step One: Bring a Wingman
 - New experiences are much less nerve-wracking if you have someone there who has your back. As luck would have it, a few days before the event I discovered my boss would be attending as well. Even though we didn't interact for much of the night, it was comforting to know she with me in case I suddenly found myself without a conversation partner.
- Step Two: Know your worth
 - Young professionals often diminish the work that they have accomplished in the workplace because they believe it's less superior to that of senior colleagues. I believe the opposite. In a networking situation you should leverage every piece of experience you've had. You never know when someone might be looking for a future intern who has completed the same tasks you are so shy to admit to.
- Step Three: Smile
 - While I admit this one might sound silly, a smile is an essential component to any networking situation. Not only will people be more receptive to you, but you'll also give off an air of confidence. Never a bad thing while networking.

Finally as my fellow career contributions winner Julie Muldowney said in her post: it works! Every internship I've had has come from a networking connection. So start practicing your smile, and get on out there.