

Gabrielle Seguin
MC 3001-Haydel
October 6, 2019
Meeting with PR professional

I met with Sara Smith for my meeting with a Public Relations professional. Smith is the Director of Internal Communications at *Creative Communications Inc.* in Baton Rouge. She graduated from Southeastern Louisiana College with a bachelor's degree in Public Relations and bi-majored in Marketing. This is an interesting, but powerful degree combination because marketing under the umbrella of public relations so majoring in both just expands your PR expertise. Smith suggests that if not bi-majoring then to minor in something outside of PR to make yourself appear more flexible and knowledgeable.

One of the most regrettable "missteps" that Smith experienced was right out of college, she was expecting to have all of these job opportunities.

"I thought because I had a degree, that jobs would come to be, but then reality really hit," Smith said.

Employers are more than likely not going to come to you with a job opportunity right out of college, you have to go out and prove yourself worthy for the position.

Smith also mentions that she wished she would have started at a company and then worked her way up. Instead, she job-hopped for the first five years after graduating and had three different jobs in three different states. Although she gained a lot of different experience from this, she was not dedicated and patient with any of these jobs, which is necessary to be successful anywhere.

Smith emphasizes that dedication builds trust which presents opportunities. She advised making as many connections as possible in order to have positive relationships with the media. She went on to say how important it was to have a positive relationship with the media, because simply "...that is our job, to work with the media." In order to be respected as a PR professional, you need to be respected by the media.

Smith's greatest success to date would be her current job. She has worked there for the past 4 years and has worked her way up from consultant to Internal Communications Director.

She reviews and handles all business meeting scripts, as well as distributes any information that the employees throughout the office need to know.

In five years, Smith said she will most likely still be with the company she is with now and continuing to learn from the professionals above her. The only thing that would change this is if a great opportunity comes along that Smith cannot pass up. In 10 years, she hopes to be in the process of owning/owning her own PR firm. In 20 years, she plans to have a successful PR company that is based out of Louisiana and does the PR for companies all across the South.

My biggest takeaway from this meeting was to be patient and make connections. Being patient is important because you are able to build trustworthy impressions, make yourself appear dedicated, and learn from those above you. Especially in younger generations, people will change jobs for \$1 more an hour when instead if they would have stayed, they would end up making a lot more than that. Connections are important because "It's not about what you do, but who you know," Smith said. She later explained that this means that finding jobs and opportunities are easier when you know more people.

I, like Smith, thought that right after I got my degree, people would be offering me jobs and I would be able to pick which I want. This interview has taught me that is not the case and that I must make the effort to find jobs and make myself look hireable.

Smith and I had a great conversation and it truly felt like I was talking to a life-long friend. We plan to stay in contact with any questions about PR that I ever have. She also told me to contact her after graduation and she will see what she can do to help job-wise.

I found it interesting how she explained that bi-majoring or minoring in something outside of PR can make you more desirable and flexible to employers. If I did not already have a minor, then I definitely would have planned to add one after this interview because I did not understand the importance of this. I plan to actively start making a very in-depth contact list. I do not know many business/PR professionals personally, so my goal this year is to grow that list immensely.