

Ecomm April 19

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Symposium Wrap-Up

PenSPRA's first solo symposium was a great success! Over 50 attendees and a group of vendors enjoyed the beautiful Bedford Springs Resort and a day of professional development and collegial sharing. Attendees mentioned that alternative revenue and social media were topics of great interest to them at this time and they were grateful for the opportunity to learn more. If you were unable to attend, you can review the live posts on PenSPRA's twitter or FB page for read on for a summary of the information presented.

The Keynote speakers for the Symposium were Meg Carnes and Kitty Porterfield, formerly of Fairfax County, VA schools and authors of the book Why Social Media Matters. Meg and Kitty shared pertinent information about how and what to share on your social media outlets. They began by explaining that in the past five years we've gone from the question of "Do I need a social media account" to "How do I do it?" For example, at a recent conference for superintendents, Meg and Kitty found that no superintendents questioned whether or not they should use social media.

Even though social media is relatively new, it is a part of your existing communication tools and plan. All social media should be based on your website. Treat your website like home base. Social media outlets like Facebook, twitter or a blog are outposts. Your social media outposts should direct people back to your website for additional information and content.

Meg and Kitty discussed what to share through social media. Ask yourself if your social media content inspires or maintains a change. They define great content as content that creates excitement, teaches, helps or answers questions. Great content tells a story with passion and purpose and heart. Your social media plan should also repurpose content that you already have.

They also covered a few technical points about social media. They believe the best Facebook pages do allow people to post comments on the page; although this step can be anxiety provoking for some. But they cautioned that someone at the district must be committed to monitoring the Facebook page comments if you take this step. They have seen the discussion that results in the comments section of social media outlets allows readers to understand how school decisions do provoke different reactions. The ability to dialogue is worth the investment in time.

If you are having trouble managing multiple pages and social media platforms, try using Hootsuite or a similar social media management dashboard. There are also several free programs like recitethis, picmonkey, haikudeck or piktochart that can be used to quickly edit photos for website and social media use. These sites add text to photos in cool ways that will jazz up your look!

PenSPRA has taken steps to increase our social media presence and we are excited to use some of Meg and Kitty's great advice. If you would like to learn more, their book is available through NSPRA. Look for a re-cap of the Alternative Revenue section of the Symposium in the next issue of e-Comm Alert.

Communicating Budgets and Proving Your Value

Communicating your budgets and/or the value of the PR office might be of concern to some of you at this time of year. Here is some information that might be of use. Sometimes a new way of looking at a topic can jog a good idea when you are stuck with writer's/thinker's block!

This article is in reference to corporate PR, but there are lessons for school PR pros as well.

<http://www.bulldogreporter.com/dailydog/article/how-prove-prs-business-value-boardroom>

These thoughts on the New Year from Rich Bagin, NSPRA President, might be helpful now too.

<http://schoolpr.wordpress.com/2013/01/07/considerations-for-the-new-year/>

Budget difficulties are also opportunities to engage and involve your public.

<http://www.nspr.org/turning-budget-shortfalls-stronger-relationships-credibility>

What to include in your budget communications.

<http://smartblogs.com/education/2013/01/09/communicating-financials-effectively-joel-gagne/>

A great example of what information to include on a school budget piece

<http://www.nspr.org/files/docs/understanding%20school%20finance%20feb%202010.pdf>

PenSPRA Eastern Chapter Spring 2013 Workshop

The eastern region will host a workshop on Tuesday, May 7 from 9 am to 12 pm at the Educational Services Center, North Penn School District, in Conference room "B." The address is 401 East Hancock Street in Lansdale. PenSPRA members are welcome to forward this invitation to other staff in their district who may be interested in these topics. However, a maximum of 32 people may be accommodated. PenSPRA members will be given first priority. Carpooling is encouraged as parking is limited.

WORKSHOP AGENDA

8:30 - 9 am - Networking and Continental Breakfast

9 - 9:45 am - Innovation Celebration

Bob Schoch, NPSD Director of Business Administration, and Christine Liberaski, Manager of School & Community Engagement, will discuss a special event, Innovation Celebration, which allows the district to showcase ideas for revenue enhancement, cost reductions and efficiencies in productivity. There is discussion among the Montgomery County superintendents and business managers to have the MCIU assist with the facilitation of this affair and expand the celebration into a county wide event this fall.

9:45-10:30 am - Mobile Apps

This session will focus on the use of mobile apps to inform and engage parents. Knapp Elementary Principal Joe Mazza and Knapp Elementary Home & School Association President Gwen Pescatore will share how their school has successfully used the Knapp App to communicate with and engage families.

10:30 - 11:30 am - Public School Education Foundations - The Who, What, Why, and How

Dr. Myra Forrest, Executive Director of Foundation for Pottstown Education and former Superintendent of Owen J. Roberts School District in Chester County, will provide information on why education foundations are needed in public schools, who should run them, what they do, and how they function.

11:30 – 12 pm - Alumni Development and Advertising

NPSD Family Welcome Center Tour. Members of the NPSD Office of School & Community Engagement will share how their office has recently restructured to include alumni development and advertising. They will also provide an overview of their services and a tour of the NPSD Family Welcome Center.

12 pm Lunch on your own

Please RSVP to Kristen Rawlings at krawlings@mciu.org by 5/3/13

Publication Contest

In case you missed the e-mail, the PenSPRA Publication Contest winners have been announced. Click here for all the details.

Mobile App

PenSPRA has an official app! This app has been developed in cooperation with [ParentLink](#) and is available for immediate download on Android and Apple iOS devices. Our new app will provide you with quick and valuable access to everything PenSPRA-related in the future. Check it out today.

News From Around the State and Nation

PSBA releases information on a legal defense of Corbett's pension reform plan

<http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/news/politics-state/pa-school-boards-association-says-corbett-changes-to-pension-benefits-legally-possible-683696/#ixzz2Qi4BF6D9>

Florida teachers are suing because their job performance is tied to student performance of student's they don't even teach. Is this a trend?

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/17/education/florida-teachers-sue-over-evaluation-system.html?ref=education&r=1&>

Philadelphia Schools are Facing a \$300 Million Budget Deficit

http://www.philly.com/philly/blogs/school_files/Doomsday-budget-for-schools.html

A Surplus in Pension Funds has Legislators Debating What to Do with the Extra Funds

<http://triblive.com/state/pennsylvania/3832286-74/pension-state-surplus#ixzz2QL09WO18>

President Obama has Proposed a \$.94 cent tax on a Pack of Cigarettes to Fund Pre-School

http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/paying-for-preschool-with-a-1-a-pack-cigarette-tax/2013/04/10/cea4de30-a21f-11e2-82bc-511538ae90a4_story.html?wpisrc=nl_cuzheads