

# NOVEMBER 2020

## BLUESTONE COMMUNICATIONS NEWSLETTER

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The 1 for All team celebrated free speech for all of campus to see—on the JMU Spirit Rock.

# HOW THIS YEAR MADE US BETTER

## COVID CLARITY: How a pandemic can actually help us as people and PR practitioners

By Madison Farabaugh

It is no secret that the stress and confusion of 2020 have left the majority of us longing for 2021 to begin. As a senior at JMU, however, I have learned over the past four years that time is precious no matter the season. As much as we long for the new, we must continue to appreciate where we are.

Despite the added difficulties that this year brought us all, I can't help but be inspired by the personal and professional growth that I have experienced and seen within our firm. Here are just a few ways COVID has helped us become better as people and as PR practitioners...

### Resiliency:

Resiliency to me is the drive to pursue something regardless of difficulty and/or unforeseen circumstances, and that is exactly what my account team has proven during this pandemic. Running a firm mainly online is difficult. But when things get difficult, our team simply communicates more— with each other, with our clients, and with the rest of the firm!

I have witnessed a heart- warming level of empathy come out of the semester as a result of this practice. Everyone is aware that these are uncertain times, and that uncertainty has motivated us to find humanity when we acknowledge our challenges and choose to tackle them together.

### Adaptability:

Adaptability to me is the ability to adjust how we respond to different situations and environments. My team shows this quality repeatedly, whether that is working from different locations, through different platforms, at different times, and/or with different people on a variety of tasks. We constantly take the initiative to be efficient with what we make because, without the ability to work together in-person, turnaround times and deadlines frequently shift for one reason or another.

### Re-evaluating Priorities:

Practicing PR during this pandemic has emphasized the importance of checking in with others and expressing gratitude for hard work. As an account executive, I must keep track of every task on which our team is working, from the team's perspective and the client's perspective. While there is value in being as efficient as possible, I always make sure to see how my team members are doing and let them know that what they are creating is valuable. I understand that we produce higher quality work when members know they are understood and valued!

## Team Updates:

### RESTORATIVE MASSAGE THERAPY/EARTH DAY EVERY DAY

Recently, our account team has been focusing on multiple writing and design tasks! For EDED, we have drafted articles for a December newsletter and are in the process of revising as well as putting together a template. For RMT, we have been designing a Facials page for their company website, along with social media promotion for services and holiday specials.

- Madison Farabaugh

### 1 FOR ALL/SCOM

Our team just finished our last campaign event: the painting of JMU's spirit rock with the student's free speech messages from last week's Chalk It Up to the First Amendment event. We had great turnout to all our events and even some mentions from multiple media sources. Going forward, we'll be wrapping up our campaign with a post-survey for JMU students to evaluate the success of our campaign and then work on the executive summary!

- Taylor DeRossett



### HLLA/SVEC

HLLA team has wrapped up all our Bat-A-Thon promotion! All the new content has given us a much needed boost for our First Pitch event materials. We have tons of promotional material, social media content and presentations in the works. Also, we just finished a second story for SVEC, which will be pitched very soon! This topic is very cool for younger, college-aged audiences.

- Stefany Fuentes



Check out our new Bluestone t-shirts!

### CREATIVE TEAM

Bluestone Creative's members have been quite busy this month! Most of our creators have been occupied with their separate account work, working hard to develop great deliverables for their clients. Throughout October, Bluestone Creative has experienced exciting events such as creating multiple videos, pushing out beautiful social media graphics and hosting a firm-wide creative workshop with our corporate sponsor, 300Brand!

- Emma Sisk

# WORKSHOP RECAP

By Bailey Butler

At Bluestone Communications we are lucky to have an incredible corporate sponsor like 300Brand to give us advice from a professional's point of view. On November 11th, our firm members attended a creative workshop with 300Brand's Creative Director Chad Heathcott. Chad gave us a presentation on their creative process and showed us examples of some of their work for leading tech companies such as CenturyLink and Oracle. With Bluestone Creative just launching this semester, this workshop sparked a lot of great questions from our creative team, but also from our non-creative employees as well. Sometimes creative work can be challenging but Chad offered his best advice to the firm:

## 1 Make things more interesting for yourself!

What better way to show off all the research you've done than in an infographic? According to Chad, everyone always wants infographics and they truly are a great tool for sharing information visually. The one problem with doing work like this all the time is that it can tend to get boring and repetitive. His suggestion was that sometimes you have to make things more interesting for yourself. Think about possibly adding animation or even making the content interactive, so you can quickly mouseover or click certain elements on the page to get more information.

## 2 Never show the client just one thing.

Sometimes it's hard for our clients to talk about what they want in terms of design; not everyone is design-forward -- and that's okay! Chad stated that clients often ask for something edgy, new, and hip to set themselves apart. One good practice you can do as a designer is to offer options because what seems edgy to you could be completely foreign to your client. The strategy he offered us was safe, in-between, and edgy. Typically the client will choose the middle and that's how we best build that trust between designer and client.

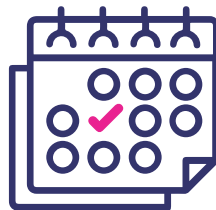
## 3 Collaboration is key to a great relationship.

It's important to maintain a good and healthy relationship between creative members and non-creative members. Chad summed it up in one word: collaboration. From a non-designer's perspective it is totally okay to say something looks weird, but don't tell the designer how to do their job. Keep an open conversation going -- voice your opinions and don't be afraid to make suggestions. It's the collaborative effort that produces the best results for all members involved.

## Bluestone Showcase Preview

On December 9, Bluestone Communications will be hosting a virtual showcase so that our account teams can present their work and share the results of their campaign. Professional advisers and sponsors are invited, and the recording will be shared to clients and anyone who misses the event. New employees (joining in spring 2021) will also be there to learn more about our process and ask questions. The event will be followed by an opportunity to bond current and incoming employees.

Each semester, we look forward to occasions like this to show off our work and see it all come to life!



## 300BRAND

[300Brand](#) has been a supporter of Bluestone Communications from the very beginning! Their guidance, mentorship and financial support has directly contributed to our growth and development as a firm. Each year, they host our employees at their office and provide job shadowing opportunities. They even hire us! We currently have two Bluestone alumni working there, and over five have worked there at some point in time. It's so special that we have a successful firm full of talented and supportive people to look up to and model after. We are so grateful for their continued support!

300Brand companies – O’Keeffe & Company, MeriTalk, and 11mark – make the tech ecosystem tick. Our firms represent the biggest, most powerful, and most disruptive brands. Brokering relationships, building joint go-to-market strategies, securing joint funding. 300Brand companies do more than marketing.



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This has been a really hard year for a lot of people, but I think there's been an opportunity to re-evaluate what is important in our lives. Family, friends and health were shifted back into focus and, in a way, I feel refreshed and ready to move forward into the next stage of my life!

-Amanda Christian

This year more than ever, I am thankful that I have the right to vote. Because of so many who fought for this right, I was able to vote in my first presidential election and make my voice heard!

-Madison Buiting

While COVID has changed a lot of what life looks like for us all, I'm really thankful for all the new things it's brought! I've enjoyed being able to slow down and enjoy time with my dog and housemates and really dive into some side hobbies that I haven't made time for.

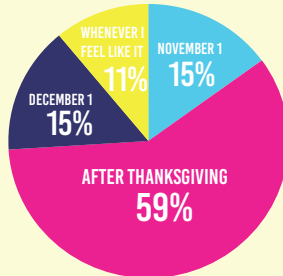
-Kaylee Ann Schwarz

While COVID forced us to stay in our homes for so long, I am honestly thankful for having to quarantine. Getting to spend time with my family through playing games, crafting and relaxing together allowed me to grow closer to them and learn things about my siblings and parents that I had never known before! I'm thankful for all the laughs from themed dinners, sweat shed from hikes and fights over competitive card games!



-Ella Ferrin

## WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS?



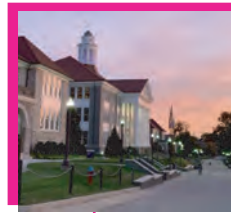
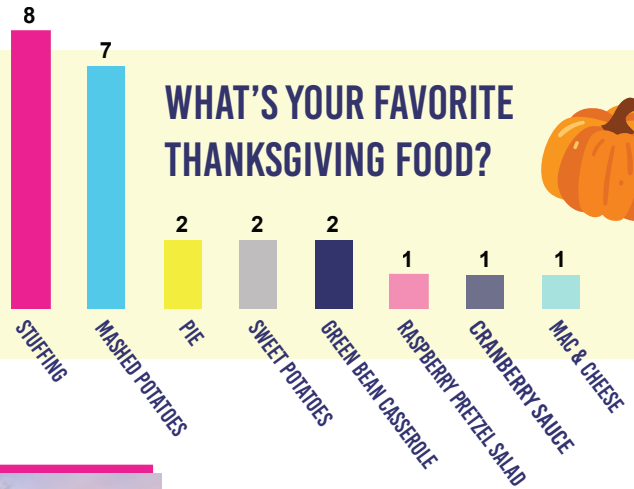
In the midst of such difficult times, I am so beyond grateful for the friends I have here at JMU. I can't imagine the past 4 years without their laughter, their advice, and their adventurous spirits :)

-Madison Farabaugh

I'm thankful that my family has remained unaffected by Covid-19 as of yet. I'm thankful that I work in a field that allows me an opportunity to work even during a pandemic. And finally, I am very thankful that Joe Biden will be our next president!

-Taylor DeRossett

## WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE THANKSGIVING FOOD?



I am so thankful to be a JMU student! I am so very appreciative of all the opportunities that have been presented to me through this school, even though some of them have been difficult. These challenges have pushed me to grow as an individual and develop as a professional moving towards my career path.

-Carli Aldape

I am thankful for all the professors that I've had while at JMU. As a sappy senior, I look back on the past four years and all the amazing professors I've had who have done everything they can to prepare me for my career.

-Alli Baxter

## HOLIDAY MUSIC PREVIEW

- MISTLETOE - JUSTIN BIEBER
- LAST CHRISTMAS - WHAM!
- ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS YOU - MARIAH CAREY
- JINGLE BELL ROCK - BOBBY HELMS
- SANTA TELL ME - ARIANA GRANDE
- LIKE IT'S CHRISTMAS - JONAS BROTHERS
- BLUE CHRISTMAS - ELVIS PRESLEY
- I'LL BE YOUR SANTA TONIGHT - KEITH URBAN
- SLEIGH RIDE - THE RONNETTES
- WINTER WONDERLAND - TONY BENNETT

I am so thankful that I can receive a college education and continue learning new things every day. I am also extremely grateful for my supportive family and friends.

-Mary Comerford

## SPRING 2021 EXECUTIVE TEAM

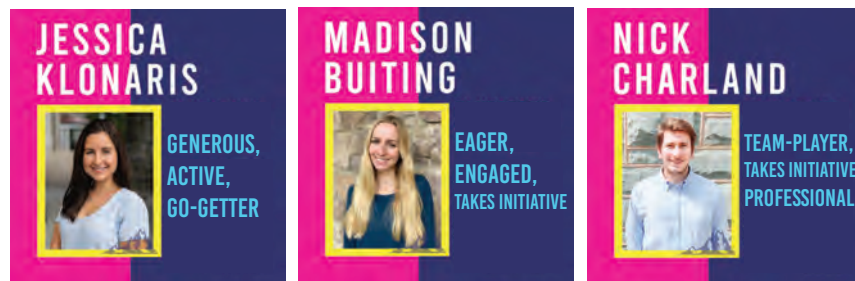


This last semester with Bluestone Communications has been such a great experience for me and I am so excited to take over as firm director in the spring. One of the things I'm looking forward to the most is getting to work with not only our returning employees, but also with our new team members joining the firm. I'm excited to watch them and Bluestone continue to grow!

**-Liv Hart**

For the first time ever, Bluestone Communications will be creating a mini newsletter for the month of December— under new leadership! This is an opportunity for Liv and Hanna to lead production of our monthly newsletter in preparation for next semester. Stay tuned!

## ★ BLUESTONE ROCKSTARS ★



## ★ ALUMNI ROCKSTAR ★

Our alumni of the month is Julia Smith, a founding employee and 2018 firm director. Julia says that being a part of Bluestone helped her become more flexible, which is something she puts to use often as a digital content coordinator at Illumine8 Marketing and PR. We are so happy to see that she has found a career that allows her creativity to shine! We are proud to have you as one of our incredible alumni, Julia.



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