

BLUESTONE COMMUNICATIONS

The Nationally Affiliated Student-Run Public Relations Firm at JMU



p.3 MEET OUR TEAM



p.4 300BRAND COMPANY VISIT

Caroline Jessup reflects on her experience when Bluestone Communications spent the day in Alexandria, VA at 300Brand's office.

p.5 3 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR PR SKILLS

Abbey Chaplain is a creative director at Bluestone Communications. She shares some public relations tips she picked up through her coursework at JMU.

p.6 AFTER JMU...MEET LYDIA ERICKSON

Lydia Erickson is a senior communications analyst at Mercer in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Lydia received her undergraduate degree from JMU in 2019. While at JMU, she majored in communication studies with a concentration in public relations and minors in writing, rhetoric, and technical communications (WRTC) and honors interdisciplinary studies.



p.2 Account Updates

p.3 Meet Our Team

p.4 300Brand Company Visit

p.5 Improve Your PR Skills

p.6 After JMU

ACCOUNT UPDATES



Bluestone Communications

The Bluestone Communications account team has been creating opportunities to bridge our current employees with alumni and to garner professional development. In February, employees were invited to visit our corporate sponsor, 300Brand in Alexandria, VA. The internal team is also serving as the liaison between tactic-based clients and our creative team to coordinate design projects. We are excited to move closer to our Spring Showcase and the creation of an Instagram page!



Earth Day Every Day

The Earth Day Every Day of Harrisonburg, VA account team has been working on communication materials and event management for their kickoff event that took place on Feb. 18 at Pale Fire Brewing Co. They had over 50 attendees and the night was spent sharing announcements about upcoming events and the mission of EDED of Harrisonburg, VA. The team also successfully pitched their client's event to the media and earned coverage by WHSV. Moving forward, they will be focusing on a strategic plan for Earth Day, 2020.



Harrisonburg Little League Association

The Harrisonburg Little League account team started this semester off by helping plan and execute HLLA's First Pitch Meeting. The event was an informational session for new and returning parents to learn more about HLLA and to receive a discount on their registration. With over 60 families in attendance, the Bluestone account team viewed this event as a success. Since then, they have been working on secondary research and their strategic plan. They are excited to assist HLLA with public relations tactics as the semester continues.

James Madison University School of Communication Studies



The SCOM account is working to enhance the recruitment tactics of the department this semester through the implementation of various tactics such as visual communication materials and the annual CHOICES event. The team is also working on performing primary research and analyzing the data for future implications. The rest of the semester has a lot in store for the SCOM account team and they are looking forward to implementing their entire strategic plan by May.

MEET OUR TEAM



SCOM ACCOUNT TEAM



HLLA ACCOUNT TEAM



EARTH DAY EVERY DAY ACCOUNT TEAM



BLUESTONE ACCOUNT TEAM

BLUESTONE BY THE NUMBERS

We are...

- 18** Undergraduate Students
- 1** Graduate Assistant
- 1** Faculty Advisor
- 4** Social Media Art & Design Students
- 6** Clients
- 9** Senior Students
- 9** Junior Students
- 3** Student-Athletes

Connect with Bluestone Communications



@bluestonecommunications



@bluestone_comm



bluestonecommva.com



300Brand Company Visit

By Caroline Jessup, Account Executive, JMU School of Communication Studies



One of the best things about being a part of a student organization like Bluestone is the professional connections that you build through opportunities such as agency visits. Our firm had the chance to travel on Feb. 12 to Alexandria, VA to visit our corporate sponsor, 300Brand, for the day. This annual trip allows our employees to gain valuable insight into agency life.

Six employees loaded into a JMU van early in the morning, ready for a day of networking and learning. The drive is about two and a half hours and it's a great bonding opportunity outside of firm meetings.

Old Town, Alexandria is brimming with historical charm and it's one of the most highly recommended places in Virginia. When we arrived, we were greeted by Jamie and Dara, two JMU alumnae. The office is a refurbished three-story mansion and perfectly embodies the Alexandria "feel." We were taken on a quick tour of the building with floorboards and staircases that could tell their own stories.

We began the day with introductions by the wonderful employees at 300Brand and learned more about their roles in the company. Because they work with such a wide range of clients and have expertise in many areas, we dug deeper into what exactly 300Brand does in its work for clients.

We met the creative team, who showed us the process of storytelling through graphic design. Next, we circled back to the conference room and competed in a collaborative marketing challenge. Let me ask you this: How would YOU market an egg for something besides its cooking purposes? From egg-based face masks to using the shells as sustainable measuring cups for baking, we had a lot of fun presenting our creative ideas.

Interview skills are important to have when looking for internship and job opportunities, so we finished the day with a mock writing test and a Q&A session with employees. We were given a prompt to answer in 15 to 20 minutes and then received feedback one-on-one with a 300Brand employee.

This experience was such a fun and unique way to learn more about public relations and marketing in a setting outside of the classroom. I'm grateful for Bluestone's relationship with 300Brand. I can't thank the employees enough for being so welcoming and open with us about their professional experiences.

3 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR PR SKILLS

By Abbey Chaplain, Creative Director, Earth Day Every Day



Quick tips are all the rage. From BuzzFeed articles to life hack videos on YouTube, humans are obsessed with the small things that can make a big impact. To stick with that tradition, here are three tips that can instantly improve your PR skills.

1. Read like a Writer: If you've ever taken an English class, you may have heard the phrase "read like a writer." In other words, if you want to be the best writer you can be, you should read a lot of books and pay close attention to what the authors are doing that you like. This will make you a better writer. In the same way, if you want to be the best PR specialist you can be, always be on the lookout for how brands are communicating messages to their audience. Whether an Instagram post or a mass email, think a little deeper about what a brand is saying and, more importantly, why they might be saying it.

This type of thinking will become second nature over time and will begin to leak into your work, improving the way you communicate to your publics.

2. Who > What: So often as PR specialists, we get caught up in the "what" that we are forgetting the "who." You could plan the most incredible event, but if you don't know how to get your public to want to come, it will not be successful. Don't get so transfixed on what you're working on that you forget who you're doing it for. Approach every tactic by asking yourself how to spin it into something that your public will respond to, and then do it!

3. Put Down the Hammer: Before you get too excited about managing your client's Instagram account or planning the ultimate kick-off event, please, please, please do your research and set your objectives! Only then can you define a clear strategy. This will be your road map to move forward, the structure that every single tactic will need to fit into. If you ever get confused, remember this super handy metaphor a professor once taught me: Let's say your overall goal is to find a place to live. You decide that your objective is to build a house. So, your strategy is your blueprint of the house you're going to build and your tactics are the tools you're gonna use to build it. It's that simple. So put down the hammer and don't pick it back up until you fully understand your blueprint!

As professionals, we must continue to improve our skills so that we are constantly growing. Hopefully, these quick tips can create a lasting change within your work and improve the way you approach PR.

WE'RE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE...

Bluestone Communications is now on Instagram!



@bluestone_comm

Follow us to stay updated on firm activities!

LYDIA ERICKSON

Senior Communications Analyst at Mercer

Lydia was in Bluestone for two semesters and graduated from JMU in 2019. She was a communication studies major with a concentration in public relations and minors in writing, rhetoric, and technical communication (WRTC) and honors interdisciplinary studies.



How did Bluestone Communications help prepare you for your career?

One of the main ways that Bluestone Communications prepared me for my career was through the opportunity to work with and communicate with clients, especially as client relations director. I had experience setting up phone calls, emailing, and meeting with clients, and an understanding of different brands and communication strategies.

Bluestone allowed me to gain leadership experience as account executive that gave me confidence entering the corporate world.

And of course, I was surrounded by other talented students who encouraged me to do my best in a field we all love. Because of Bluestone, I felt more prepared for the transition from student to young professional, and will always be thankful for the time I spent there!

Could you describe your role at Mercer?

I am a senior analyst in the career department, which helps our clients manage their workforce, improve HR processes, and communicate with their employees. My work focuses on the communications side, so I do a lot of content writing for both print and digital, strategy planning for employee communications, and employee benefit work.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

What I enjoy most about my job is the range of clients I get to work with and the colleagues I get to work with. Consulting doesn't get boring - there is always more to learn about a new client or a new type of work to try. My colleagues challenge me every day to produce excellent work and continually do my best.

What is your advice to students preparing to graduate?

Enjoy every second of college, and don't forget about the amazing resources there to support you every day. You are surrounded by talented, engaged people who will do everything they can to support another Duke. As you grow in your career, don't forget to be that supportive person for others yourself.

What is your favorite memory from JMU?

My favorite memory from JMU was when I was on the quad walking to class one day, and a girl ran up to tell me that she had taken my tour as a prospective student, and I was one of the reasons why she chose JMU! Helping others fall in love with the school I love so much is always so rewarding.