



**International Association of
Administrative Professionals®**

PR Therapy for Chapters

A question and answer with Gail Freeman CPS, Greater Boston Chapter Membership Chair

Q. Your chapter, the Greater Boston Chapter, has had success with getting publicity. Why do you think publicity good for a chapter?

A. An IAAP chapter is only as strong as its members. Like in any business entity growth and change are necessary for progress. IAAP chapters need to make themselves known to the greater community around them in order to gain members and attain resources. Publicity has made the Greater Boston Chapter a go-to point for speakers, caterers and others seeking our business and connections. This in turn leads to membership growth as these vendors tell their contacts about us.

Q. What do you think are the basics every chapter should have in place for public relations and outreach to the media?

A. All chapters should have a one-page brag sheet touting the benefits and highlights of the chapter.

All chapters should have a website. Being a part of the IAAP Web Community is ideal. However if your chapter does not yet have the financial resources for a web community site, there are numerous resources for free web hosting and easy programs for developing your own site. Your site should be kept current and visually interesting. In today's technologically dependent society, people will be expecting to find you online. If they can't, they most likely won't be interested in membership.

Chapter leaders and members alike should have a simple elevator speech handy to describe what IAAP is and what your chapter does. Keep in mind that the listener does not need to know everything all at once. Keep it simple, grab their attention and then expand on your pitch once they are engaged. Personally I use the following "We are the International Association of Administrative Professionals. We provide networking and educational opportunities for admins." In almost all instances, the person wants to know

more and then I tell them about the kinds of programs our chapter offers, when we meet and how people might learn more about us.

Q. What have you and your chapter done in the last couple years as far as reaching out to the media?

A. One of the best decisions our chapter made for publicity was to join the local chamber of commerce. They offered a special not-for-profit membership rate. We are listed on their web directory and have access to online resources of other chamber members. The biggest benefit of membership however has been their chamber's free networking events. Our chapter board members attend these events to expand our presence in the local business community. We do not look at the networking events as necessarily a way to meet other admins, but rather it is an opportunity to meet people that can help us with our programming and events. We have been fortunate to meet keynote speakers, caterers and to have access to some of the best event facilities in the city. Generally these speakers, caterers and event planners are willing to negotiate favorable terms for us in order to market their own resources to the greater administrative community. It's a win-win situation.

Word of mouth is one of the best free forms of advertising you can get. Staffing agencies have their finger on the pulse of the local admin community. They speak with admins every day and truly understand what we do. The staffing agencies that we collaborate with have been more than willing to talk up IAAP to the admins that they meet and to pass along marketing materials. As with the chamber networking, this is also a win-win situation. They promote IAAP; we promote them as one of the go-to places for admins seeking new opportunities. We have also been able to provide exclusive job opening info and to develop specialized programming content through our staffing agency relationships.

Q. What news coverage have you garnered from your work?

A. The chapter has used funds gained by selling advertising on our website to place our own ads in a local magazine. This particular ad led to a second negotiated complimentary advertisement and several new members.

We have also been fortunate to be featured on a local radio show and in one of the major newspapers. We credit these opportunities to our close relationships with local staffing agencies.

Q. What's the hardest part of seeking media coverage? How have you overcome that?

A. Believing what you have to offer is valuable to the reading/viewing public. If you are not confident, professional and succinct in your message, the media will not be interested. Cost is also a factor in gaining publicity, but I strongly believe that if you tap

into the free/low-cost resources mentioned here and you polish your message, then you can attract the positive attention that IAAP deserves.