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Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

# PR News



## All-Stars Issue



*Featuring the PR People & 15 to Watch Award Winners*

**More so** than other industries, PR is intensely social, fueled by human interaction. No matter how brilliantly conceived, a program can never come to fruition without talented and focused PR pros guiding and galvanizing it. People—not concepts—continue to be the engine driving this business. At *PR News*, we know this instinctively, and we are delighted to pay homage to the winners of the PR People Awards and the Hall of Fame inductees in this issue, which is being unveiled at our Nov. 6 awards luncheon at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Also included in this issue is our nod to young turks—the “15 to Watch” PR up-and-comers.

# Melissa Perlman

**Manager, Media Relations, Office Depot • Age: 26**

Four years in PR at a single company is a lot of time, particularly if you started at the company at age 22. There's a lot you can soak up, and a lot of responsibility to assume, if you're willing to put your heart and soul into your work. That's exactly what Melissa Perlman has done at Office Depot, where she has nearly single-handedly taken on the challenge of communicating Office Depot's environmental initiatives to its key stakeholders.

## **Defining Initiative So Far**

"In partnership with Office Depot's director of environmental strategy, I have helped to craft Office Depot's reputation as a corporate leader in the area of environmental sustainability," Perlman says. "One of my personal favorite PR tactics is the use of an Environmental Internet Press Kit, which I built from scratch and continue to populate and update."

## **Secret Weapon**

"Without the support, understanding and buy-in from the company's executive team, we would not be able to accomplish all that we are able to. [Also,] the key is to keep information straightforward and simple to comprehend; digital media has made this focus possible."

## **A Gen-Yer's Perspective**

"As a professional under the age of 30 at a \$15.5 billion company with 49,000 associates around the world, it would be easy to be brushed to the side when first meeting with company executives. However, I have made it my priority to alter this perception by proving myself in terms of intelligence, strategic thinking, accountability and resilience."

## **The Truth About Top PR Pros**

"Public relations professionals often get a bad rep

because there is an assumption that they are stretching the truth or spinning the story to benefit their client or company. Office Depot is a corporate leader in terms of sustainability, and I feel both lucky and honored to be able to share our positive story with a broad range of stakeholders." ■



# PR News' PR People Honorees



Michelle Alvarez, Jules Andres, David Bartlett, Jim Billimoria, Kristin Binns, Jessica Renee Borchert, Bonin Bough, Stacie Bright, Tracy Calabrese

Emily Callahan, Pete Campisi, Ken Capps, Craig Carroll, Nancy Christy, Jonathan Collegio, Barbara Crystal, Ron Culp, Donald Davis II

Harris Diamond, Joann Donnellan, Elizabeth Dougall, Sean Dougherty, Sandra Fine, Rachel Foltz, Christopher Fuller, Leslie Gaines Ross, Amiee Goforth

Matt Gonring, Allison Greco, Huma Gruaz, Jon Harris, Gail Heiman, John Hellerman, Kelly Hershkowitz, Billee Howard, Julie Ice

Ed James, Laura Kane, Matthew Kelly, Denise Keyes, Claire A. Koener, Emily Kooistra, Kristie Kuhl, Jessica Lange, Deirdre Latour

Liam Leduc Clarke, Tina Martineau, Brendan May, Nicole Messier, Erin Naman, Margie Maddux Newman, Maggie O'Neill, Sunok Pak, Tim Paynter

Christine Perkett, Melissa Perlman, Richard Ramlall, David Ritchey, James Robinson, Michael W. Robinson, Linda Rutherford, Michael Sacks, Jennifer Seelin

Liya Sharif, Frank X. Shaw, Sam Singer, Pam Slay, Natalie R. Virgilio, Saurabh Wahi, Brian Wachur (Not Pictured), Brian Woodland, James Wright