



Firm Handbook

2016-2017

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Administrative Assistant: Dalita Collins

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Faculty Adviser: Dr. Hyojung Park

About

ImPRint Communications is a student-run public relations firm at Louisiana State University and is affiliated with the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) Chapter at LSU. ImPRint Communications is dedicated to providing clients with thorough PR services and solutions. It aims to develop the future leaders of the industry by giving students hands-on experience, while building solid relationships and credibility with organizations in the community. Membership is selective as we strive to provide our clients with the best possible experience.

Mission Statement

The mission of ImPRint Communications is to provide LSU students with real-world experience to prepare them for their professional career. We seek to train, advise and inspire future public relations practitioners by creating professional working environments, upholding high ethical standards and building positive relationships between clients and colleagues.

Slogan

Lasting Impressions.

Firm History

ImPRint Communications was founded in 2006 to enhance the learning experience of Manship and LSU students by providing hands-on work experience and interaction with professionals in the industry. As a full service communications firm, we strive to utilize the materials, processes and resources from the classroom to establish our imprint on the community. In the fall of 2012, ImPRint Communications, formerly known as PRestige, underwent a rebranding process. During this process, our firm adopted a new name, slogan and logo. The firm now offers many services, including but not limited to public relations campaigns, social media management and event planning.

Purpose & Objective

A student-run firm is an operational public relations firm managed by LSU members. Firms allow you to get hands-on experience with business-to-client relationships. The advantages of participating in a firm include the following:

- Building client relationships and meeting professionals
- Learning how to lead and work as a team
- Creating resume and portfolio material
- Receiving hands-on public relations experience

- Learning to balance tasks and handle numerous duties
- Applying theories learned in the classroom

Executive Board

Co-Directors

- Serve on the PRSSA at LSU executive board and communicate firm activities at meetings
- Establish firm structure
- Conduct firm, executive board and account executive meetings
- Select firm members, establish departments and appoint account executives
- Direct account executives, department heads and firm departments in strategies for completing all projects, needs and goals for clients
- Seek and accept new clients
- Maintain mutually beneficial relationships with clients, account executives, department heads and firm department to ensure satisfactory progress of all projects
- Maintain files of all firm related activities
- Establish communication between the firm and the PRSSA at LSU Chapter by attending and presenting updates on firm activities at chapter business meetings
- Evaluate firm members and client relationships
- Provide leadership, examples of ethical behavior and both professional and personal development opportunities for firm members
- Report and receive approval for all firm related activities to the faculty adviser
- Oversee the executive board assistants and ensure they are effectively completing duties
- Oversee the firm's progress with clients, PRSSA at LSU and the Manship School of Mass Communication
- Conduct interviews and select the firm co-directors for the following year
- Motivate members through professionalism, ethical conduct and enthusiastic attitude toward the firm at LSU

Administrative Assistant

- Records and distributes the minutes of all ImPRint firm and executive board meetings
- Maintains record of firm members, their contact information and history with the firm
- Prints sign-in sheets and records attendance for each firm meeting
- Reports to the firm directors and faculty adviser
- Provides a list of active firm members for membership selections, elections and appointments
- Collaborates with the ImPRint executive board in preparing the annual budget
- Collects firm member dues
- Provides financial reports twice per semester (beginning and end) to the ImPRint executive board
- Receives and provides safekeeping for all monies of the firm and keeps accurate financial records of all expenditures and transactions, including archives

- Disburses firm funds with proper approval of the ImPRint executive board and in accordance with University policies
- Assists directors with various firm activities
- Attends all executive board and firm meetings
- Motivates members through professionalism, ethical conduct and enthusiastic attitude toward the firm at LSU

Communications Assistant

- Manages social media (Facebook and Twitter) updates and provides weekly social media plan
- Introduces new social networks for the firm where relevant and feasible
- Conducts social network research to ensure the firm's social accounts are maximizing brand and reach
- Manages and updates firm website
- Takes pictures at events and meetings to put on website, social media, blog and newsletter
- Composes press releases and other written materials when necessary
- Assists directors with various firm activities
- Attends all executive board and firm meetings
- Motivates members through professionalism, ethical conduct and enthusiastic attitude toward the firm LSU

Faculty Adviser

- Serves as a resource and support mechanism for firm directors, assistants & members
- Approves all official firm documents
- Oversees all client dealings with firm directors
- Attends all official firm meetings and events
- Motivates members through professionalism, ethical conduct and enthusiastic attitude toward the firm at LSU

Training & Practices

Firm members and departments must be trained in the firm's operations and procedures. Advisers may assist. The firm should send at least one individual to the PRSSA National Conference each year to attend the workshop specifically for student-run firms, as well as professional development sessions and networking opportunities.

Public relations skills that should be practiced:

- Research — Focus groups, surveys, interviews, evaluations
- Business — Budgeting, proposals, presentations, management function
- Media Relations — News releases, press kits, media pitching
- Design — Publicity (newsletters, brochures), websites, logo, photography

- Writing — Social media plans, feature stories, communication/strategic plans, speeches
- Web Development — Copy design, graphics design, forms handling
- Event Planning — Fundraising, campaign planning, goal setting

Good Management Practices

Management involves planning, setting goals and making decisions. Officers are responsible for the business and influence its success. Management encompasses the following:

- Planning — Setting the goals and strategies for your firm
- Organizing — Deciding on tasks, delegating, scheduling, etc.
- Staffing — Hiring, training, and terminating (if necessary) employees
- Directing — Supervising and motivating employees
- Controlling — Evaluating achievement of goals and reacting accordingly

Firm Structure

Account Executives

Serve as the primary contact for the client. Report the client's requests and feedback to the ImPRint executive board and the various departments. Oversee and ensure the progress of projects, tasks and deadlines for the client. Handle logistics (i.e., set up client meetings, keep client meeting notes, etc.) and keep open communication with the client.

Account Team

Primarily responsible for a specific client's account, including all services requested by that client. Each Account Team consists of a member from each department, including the Account Executive. Account Team members report to their Account Executive to receive assignments, project instructions and deadlines.

Research Department

Primarily responsible for all research designed to analyze the situation, organization and publics. Directs all research gathering methods, such as focus groups, surveys or in-depth interviews to create a situation analysis. Responsible for overseeing development of goals, objectives and evaluation plan.

Social Media Department

Primarily responsible for development of social media strategies and tactics. Works to develop, implement and execute the social media plan. Monitors the plan's effectiveness and makes changes when necessary to ensure audience engagement.

Media Relations Department

Primarily responsible for all written communication or media relations, such as news releases, media kits, crisis communication plans or press conferences. Handles coordination of stories for various media outlets.

Promotions Department

Primarily responsible for planning, organizing and implementing events. Includes reserving a venue or location, event setup, fundraising, contacting sponsors, staffing the event and more.

Design Department

Primarily responsible for the look and feel of a campaign's visual presentation. Designs and distributes materials, including newsletters, fliers, infographics, social media visuals and more. Responsible for creation of visual piece work such as logos.

Evaluation

Every department will need to file an evaluation of their plan and tactics for any client projects. An effective evaluation process measures the firm's performance and identifies areas of improvement. Maintaining thorough, accurate records of evaluations is vital. Each firm member should keep a portfolio of all projects for use as an evaluation and employment tool.

The firm directors will meet regularly with members throughout the semester to ensure the members are gaining valuable skills and not experiencing any major difficulties with any aspect of firm membership. The firm directors will also conduct at least one three-minute interview with each firm member for a semester review.

Once a semester, the faculty adviser will individually meet with each firm member to provide direction, advice and counsel regarding the member's professional goals, as well as to discuss any recent client work, successes or mishaps.

Firm Brand Identity

ImPRint Communications follows all official style guidelines for PRSSA, which are outlined in the PRSSA Style Guide. Our own firm brand identity guidelines are listed below.

Capitalization

Anytime the firm is referenced, no matter the outlet, ImPRint Communications should be capitalized as such.

Logo

The official firm logo, which can be found at the beginning of this firm handbook, should be used on all official documents and communication. The logo must be used in consistent ways across all collateral, including social and digital media.

Typeface

The official font for any firm related documents, emails or other communications forms (where applicable) is Georgia. For the firm website, the Open Sans font is used.

Any design collateral created for the firm for promotional materials can utilize other fonts with explicit permission from the firm directors.

Color Palette

The firm utilizes the official LSU purple and gold colors.

Social Media

The official firm hashtag is #GeauxImPRint, and capitalization rules apply.

Membership Agreement & Expectations

Dues

Each selected firm member must be a dues-paying member of ImPRint Communications. Only those dues-paying members in good standing with the organization, as well as the University, shall be eligible to participate in firm meetings, work with clients or serve in any elective or appointive positions. The amount of said dues shall be determined by decision of the co-directors before each semester's membership process begins.

For the 2016-17 academic year, dues will be \$15 for one year, which includes the cost of a firm membership. If a member is selected for firm membership for the fall semester, they do not need to pay dues in the spring semester. If a member pays their dues in the spring, they will be considered a paying member for the following fall semester.

Meetings

As a member of ImPRint Communications, attendance at firm meetings is very important. The date, time and location of firm meetings are announced at the beginning of each semester and can be found on the firm's website. While meetings are mandatory, firm members are allowed one excused meeting each semester. Additionally, it is expected and required that each department spend additional time outside of firm meetings to work on any client projects. Each department should establish a meeting schedule, and if necessary, members should work on their own to meet deadlines. If a member cannot attend a firm meeting, they should email the firm directors at imprintcommlsu@gmail.com at least 24 hours in advance with a valid reason for their absence.

Professional Behavior

Business casual attire is required for all firm related events, unless otherwise noted. Business casual should include professional and appropriate blouses, shirts, pants, skirts, khakis and shoes. If a member is questioning whether a piece of attire is acceptable or not, they should not

wear it to a firm related event. If a member's attire is inappropriate, the firm directors can and may ask the member to leave the event to change their outfit.

For all ImPRint Communications related events, any alcohol, tobacco or drug use is strictly prohibited.

Proper language etiquette should be practiced at all firm related events. This includes refraining from using any curse words, derogatory or offensive terms or expressing any bias against an opposing team or organization.

The firm's executive board expects professional behavior, in every aspect, at all firm related events. The executive board reserves the right to determine what is and is not professional behavior. If a member's behavior is deemed unprofessional, the executive board will review the case and may terminate firm membership.

Deadlines

Firm members must take all assignment deadlines seriously. In order to serve our paying clients to the best of our ability, all assignments must be completed in accordance to the deadlines set by the executive board.

Member Code of Ethics

All ImPRint Communications members will conduct themselves under the PRSSA Code of Ethics/Conduct and represent the firm in a positive, ethical and respectable manner.

The PRSSA Code of Ethics/Conduct pledge will be recited by the entire firm membership at the first official firm meeting at the beginning of each academic semester. By signing the membership agreement and expectations form, all members agree to adhere to the pledge below.

"I pledge to conduct myself professionally, with truth, accuracy, fairness and responsibility to the public, fellow members and to Society; to improve my individual competence and advance the knowledge and proficiency of the field of public relations; and to adhere to the articles of the Member Code of Ethics/Conduct by the PRSSA National Committee.

I understand and accept that there are consequences for member misconduct, up to and including membership revocation.

I understand that members in violation of the PRSSA Code of Ethics/Conduct may be further barred from PRSA Membership."

Membership Monitoring

To ensure the membership agreement is being upheld, the executive board enforces a membership monitoring system. The purpose of this is to ensure firm members are conducting

themselves as ethical, efficient and professional practitioners. This system will record any negative firm member instances (i.e., violation of PRSSA Code of Ethics/Conduct, unexcused missed firm meetings, not meeting deadlines, etc.).

Consequences

Firm members are expected to abide by the aforementioned rules and code of conduct. Any member who violates these rules will face consequences. For one instance, a warning will be issued. For two instances, the firm directors will meet with the member to discuss the instance and any underlying issues. After three instances, the member's case will likely result in termination from the firm.

Each member will receive 3 strikes before being terminated. The following violations will receive a strike:

- Violation of business casual dress code at firm meetings and events
- Exhibiting unprofessional behavior as outlined in the above section
- Missing a deadline on an assignment for a client
- Missing a firm meeting unless a valid excuse is given in advance, such as a medical emergency

If a member is terminated from the firm, it is required they immediately remove any reference to ImPRint Communications from resumes, social networks, websites, portfolios, etc.

Client Requirements

As a student organization of Louisiana State University, ImPRint Communications must not endorse or promote any religious beliefs, political views and controversial social values. Thus, ImPRint must remain neutral in the clients it represents. The Firm may choose not to accept religious or political individuals or groups and controversial advocacy groups as clients.