

Speaker 1

Hello, everyone, and welcome back to "The Crux of the Story," the podcast that focuses on the intersection of communication and society. This is Gary Sheffer, I'm a professor of public relations at Boston University's College of Communication. I'm here with my co-host, Mike Fernandez, chief communications Officer at Enbridge. So, Mike, what were you doing 45 years ago?

00;00;28;15 - 00;01;00;28

Speaker 2

You know that for Yankee fans, 1978 was a pretty good year. I still remember member Bucky Dent hitting the famous home run against the Boston Red Sox, the AL East tiebreaker. But I actually was a student at Georgetown. I was working in politics and writing code using SPSS one. That's the you know code, it's used by social scientists, pollsters, researchers, and now they're on SPSS 29.

00;01;01;25 - 00;01;19;17

Speaker 2

But it certainly was a long time ago. I think I was sporting an afro then living in D.C. I remember the Washington Bullets winning the NBA championship with Elvin Hayes. But that's a long time ago.

00;01;19;17 - 00;01;22;03

Speaker 1

I'm glad this is an audio only podcast.

00;01;28;14 - 00;02;04;05

Speaker 1

Yeah, well, like you, I would say that college was completely and yes, I did. I had a lot of hair and today it's more streamlined than I used to be. But I was in college and studying English literature and I think Jimmy Carter was still president at that time. And for me personally, I'll just end this reminiscence by saying I think one of the most popular albums at the time was Darkness on the Edge of Town by Springstein.

00;02;04;05 - 00;02;04;13

Speaker 1

Yeah, I remember seeing Springsteen when I was in college before he really blew up. But. But yeah, you're right.

00;02;11;08 - 00;02;54;24

Speaker 1

All right. So we've just proven Mike and I that we're old and now we're going to get to the substance of today's podcast. And I'm talking about 1978 because that's when Boston University established PR Lab, which is the longest running student-led PR agency in the country. Of course, a lot has changed in 45 years, the creation of the Internet, the rise of social

media, the prominence of influencers, the creation of the Crux of the story podcast, very, very important, but also an increasing understanding of the importance of communicators being involved in C-suite discussions.

00;02;54;24 - 00;03;34;24

Speaker 1

Strategic planning, product development, you name it. The profession really has advanced from a value standpoint over those 45 years. But with all these changes, there are still some things in what we do that remain the same. Joining us today to discuss this is Professor Amy Shanler. Amy, welcome. Amy co-directs PR Lab with Professor Justin Joseph, and Amy has 25 years of experience managing communications activities for multiple organizations and industries, including director of Public and Media Relations for Royal Philips in North America.

00;03;34;24 - 00;04;07;20

Speaker 1

Great Company. Before that, Amy directed PR Strategies and Community Relations for the Office products giant Staples managed PR for Cognex, which is now a division of IBM and oversaw operations for the PR Club of New England. She served as a senior account manager for a high technology public relations subsidiary of Fleishman Hillard. In addition to PR Lab, Amy also teaches courses on the principles of public relations crisis communications and media relations.

00;04;07;20 - 00;04;38;14

Speaker 1

Suffice to say, she's won many awards over the years for her work in that I have stolen liberally from Amy as I learned how to transition from being in business to being a professor. And so, Amy, thanks for being on The Crux. I'm going to also introduce our other guests. Melissa Booker is a senior PR major at B.U. She's an account supervisor on the Alila Skin Care Product team.

00;04;38;14 - 00;05;07;22

Speaker 1

This semester, after working as an account executive last semester, she's interested in crisis and corporate PR, specifically the intersection between business and public relations. Melissa will be graduating in just a few weeks and has an exciting position lined up as a media analyst at Teneo in New York City. Very terrific agency. And our third guest is Nicole Malo, who's been a PR lab client for nearly seven years.

00;05;07;22 - 00;05;33;08

Speaker 1

Nicole is the director of development at Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter Public School in Boston's Hyde Park neighborhood. Previously, PRLab supported her work at Partners for Youth with Disabilities. She is also a BYU alum, graduating in 2003 with a degree in French language and literature. Amy. Mellissa Nicole, welcome to The Crux of the Story.

00;05;33;08 - 00;05;34;17

Speaker 3

Welcome to the Crux.

00;05;34;17 - 00;05;44;22

Speaker 4

Each week, two of the world's top communicators take you behind the scenes of the news of the day to explore the crux of communications that are shaping business, politics and our daily lives.

00;05;44;22 - 00;05;46;14

Speaker 1

Hello, this is Gary Scheffer.

00;05;46;23 - 00;05;52;18

Speaker 2

Hi, I'm Mike Fernandez and we're from Boston University.

00;05;54;02 - 00;05;56;14

Speaker 4

Great. Thank you. Thank you. Great to be here.

00;05;56;14 - 00;06;14;06

Speaker 1

Thank you. Let's start with Amy. So 45 years is a long time. Congratulations to you and Professor Joseph. Could you describe to our audience what PR Lab is and how it provides a unique opportunity for both students and clients?

00;06;14;11 - 00;06;35;23

Speaker 3

Sure, Gary. Mike, thanks so much for having us on today and for acknowledging our 45th anniversary. It's truly a milestone and one that we could not get to without the support of the greater PR community with Boston University and with our students and clients. So it's exciting to be here. So PR Lab is a full-service public relations agency.

00;06;36;03 - 00;07;09;25

Speaker 3

We provide paying clients a full range of services from media relations to social media, event planning, content marketing. We'll even do research projects, video creation. Really, it's whatever the clients are needing to help support and achieve their business outcomes. It's really a win-win kind of relationship though, because our students get to work with real clients on real business challenges.

00;07;10;24 - 00;07;36;14

Speaker 3

They have the opportunity to not just create content but to put it out in the market and then analyze the impact that it's having so they can measure their results. They walk away with a portfolio with real experience, and they're ready to step into a professional agency situation and be productive from day one. For our clients, it's also a win because they get access to the best and brightest.

00;07;36;24 - 00;08;01;15

Speaker 3

Okay, I'm a little biased, but I do think our students are the best and brightest in the industry. PR lab gets the support of not only these students, but also faculty members who have been in the industry for a long time and can pop in and support and bolster our students' efforts. The students are incredibly talented and incredibly diverse.

00;08;01;22 - 00;08;18;13

Speaker 3

The work that they can do in graphic design and video and writing is incredible. And it's worth so much value to the organizations. And of course, the clients win because we only charge a whopping \$300 a semester for the work.

00;08;20;01 - 00;08;23;12

Speaker 3

Yeah, we can say it's a win-win. We think we pretty much nail that.

00;08;24;09 - 00;08;41;02

Speaker 2

So that's a deal. Amy, Nicole, Melissa Welcome. Amy Because of the great reputation of PR Lab and maybe because of the price tag, how do you choose which clients the PR lab will work for and what does that process look like?

00;08;41;03 - 00;09;07;12

Speaker 3

It's so interesting, Mike, because you actually honed in on something where you said, we choose the clients. I think we're the only PR agency that has a waiting list. I think for most PR agencies, that model is different, right? You're going out and you're pitching the business and you're convincing clients why you're the best agency. But I think the secret has gotten out about PR Lab and we have organizations of all different sizes, different types of commercial entities, nonprofits.

00;09;07;12 - 00;09;27;18

Speaker 3

We've even worked with government offices before to get access to our students and the work that they can provide. It's all student managed too. I want to put that out there. It's not Justin and I who are deciding who the clients are. The students sort this out, clients typically apply through

our website and have to provide a summary of what they're hoping to accomplish and achieve with our students.

00;09;28;00 - 00;09;53;16

Speaker 3

Then the student leaders will interview those clients and get a better understanding of the context and the situation, and then they have to match up. How do our students' skills align with those client needs? We also are then balancing the unique academic environment. It's not like an agency where I can just go and hire more people. We have to right size the number of clients based on how many students are actually registered per semester.

00;09;53;16 - 00;10;14;06

Speaker 3

So it's a little bit of a chicken egg situation where we think we know how many clients we need. But once our students register, then we can loop in and make some adjustments there. And then we run in the Fall and we run in the Spring. And so we're doing our Spring recruiting in the Fall. And our Fall recruiting and qualification happens in the Spring and Summer time.

00;10;14;19 - 00;10;21;00

Speaker 2

So that has to be tough too, because these have to be more than likely project oriented given the time horizon, right?

00;10;21;10 - 00;10;38;12

Speaker 3

That's right. Mike. We really only have 13 weeks to do a good job for these clients. And I know Nicole probably speaks to that and Melissa can speak to that a little bit more from a hands on perspective. But it's you're right. It's figuring out what are those projects that we can reasonably accomplish well for our clients within that period of time.

00;10;38;12 - 00;10;53;28

Speaker 3

We also want to offer our students a diversity of selection. So we want to make sure we have some commercial entities and some nonprofit organizations to help our students find, find and work in those industries that will help propel them on their career trajectory.

00;10;54;16 - 00;11;07;25

Speaker 2

Now, if I remember correctly, when I was at Boston University that around that time PR Lab had actually won awards against for profit agencies. Is that right?

00;11;07;25 - 00;11;38;09

Speaker 3

Yes. And we're still doing that actually to this day. We still continue to win awards, not just in student categories, but in professional awards, professional categories against other agencies. So, for example, we just won an honorable mention in the PR news nonprofit Awards for 2023 in the shoestring budget category. For some work we did with a client called Aaron's Presents.

00;11;38;09 - 00;12;00;22

Speaker 3

Also, that same client also won a social Impact award from PRNews as well, so that we have a running list of awards. But I think it's really amazing that the caliber of work that our students are doing is on par with or exceeds the quality of work that's being conducted by my professional colleagues out in the industry.

00;12;01;09 - 00;12;02;01

Speaker 2

That's terrific.

00;12;03;21 - 00;12;12;19

Speaker 1

So I want to jump to our client's perspective here. Nicole, thank you for being here. First, could you tell us a little bit about your school.

00;12;12;22 - 00;12;57;10

Speaker 4

Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter Public School—We go by APR— is a 26 year old school with a legacy of a world class education. We are both a middle school and high school, so we're grades 5 through 12 with 545 students and our educators, our teachers and our staff have a commitment to every student because we know that every student can achieve at the highest levels so that we can fulfill our mission of empowering students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds to achieve their full intellectual and social attention.

00;12;57;19 - 00;13;27;29

Speaker 4

And what we do works for our students. We now have 720 plus alumni, and they graduate college at a rate of 70%, which is double the national average. And we're so grateful to work with PR Lab. We have worked in parallel since 2019, and the account executives have been able to really showcase some of the unique aspects of what we do.

00;13;28;12 - 00;13;42;02

Speaker 1

So. So, Nicole, what was your goal in connecting with PR Lab and what was it that you wanted to come out in your collaboration with the agency?

00;13;42;02 - 00;14;19;27

Speaker 4

I think a couple of things, and I think this touches upon some of what Amy mentioned, too. Well, of course we are. I mean, what we do and what we stand for is learning and education and making sure that students can grow and thrive. So that's been another beautiful aspect where we can work with these students and the BU community, which is another institution, higher institution of learning, and see our PR lab students learn and grow while at the same time we can really expand PR at AP.R

00;14;20;10 - 00;14;26;13

Speaker 1

Excellent. And how has that worked out for you? Nicole? What's the main result for you in your relationship with the PRLab?

00;14;26;25 - 00;14;57;16

Speaker 4

Yeah, we've been successful and I, I think to I mean, I think to every single semester. But I think that first semester in the fall of 2019 when the team came on board and one example is they honed in our college, our college placement program, which is one of the best in the world. And they said, gosh, you know, we definitely want to showcase this to all stakeholders.

00;14;58;01 - 00;15;37;15

Speaker 4

And so we created something called Tip Tuesday where we created videos with the college placement team experts sharing about some of the tips in applying to college and being successful in the college admissions process. I think about in 2020, in the fall of 2020, when the team came on board and right from the get go, I think one of our first meetings we said we have this project that just came to light for an update of the college admissions profile, a rebranding of this specific content marketing piece.

00;15;38;00 - 00;16;04;29

Speaker 4

And one of the ways that I can do this and they did it and it was amazing, and it's a piece that we still use to this day one. In the spring of 2020, we created an amazing recruitment video that would be for potential new students. We created the video in English and a version in Spanish. And again, videos we still use to this day.

00;16;05;07 - 00;16;06;01

Speaker 1

That's fantastic.

00;16;06;13 - 00;16;36;11

Speaker 2

So I want to change gears a little bit. You know, Nicole kind of opened up the door on learning and working with students. Amy, we've seen through the Edelman Trust barometer or other

anecdotal evidence, as well as our own experience. Public trust in general is down. And I'm sure the political, polarized world we live in doesn't help.

00;16;36;11 - 00;16;58;20

Speaker 2

People put more trust today in business leaders, especially in the leader of the company that they're working for than they do in other institutions like government and media. As you work with this next generation of top communicators, how do you think about this shift and how do you kind of prepare them for that world?

00;16;58;25 - 00;17;24;00

Speaker 3

I think first and foremost, Mike, we have to acknowledge it and we talk about it. And the Edelman Trust barometer is something that comes into many of our classrooms because of that shift. And it all comes down to understanding our audiences. Yes, I know. I'm talking to like minded PR professionals here. The more we understand our audiences, their beliefs, their attitudes, where they're coming from, the better opportunity we have to connect with them.

00;17;24;07 - 00;17;43;11

Speaker 3

So when we are working with our clients, one of the things that our PR lab students do is a really in-depth audience analysis to really try to understand who are we talking to? And it's not just customers. It might be, you know, in Nicole's case donors or prospective students, that might be customers, that might be partners or distributors.

00;17;43;16 - 00;18;12;14

Speaker 3

There's a wide range of potential audiences. It's understanding who they trust not only directly, but also as a credible third party. And that's where we direct our communication. So putting the person at the organization who is that subject matter expert out there, Right. That's the voice of the organization. Also, choosing third party news sites that the audiences still find credible in a lot of cases.

00;18;12;14 - 00;18;37;26

Speaker 3

Those are local news outlets, local news media sources, and working with third party influencers who, whether they're paid or earned relationships, hold weight in the minds of our audiences. So it's just part of good PR. I think, Mike, to understand what is the general context out there and then how does that apply with each of our individual unique client situations?

00;18;37;27 - 00;18;50;06

Speaker 1

Let's turn to Melissa, our student today. First, congratulate Asians on graduating in a few weeks in your new position in New York. There's lots of excitement ahead for you.



00;18;50;11 - 00;18;51;15

Speaker 4

Very exciting.

00;18;51;16 - 00;18;59;22

Speaker 1

Can you just tell us about your experience with PRLab? What have you been working on and what do you think you've gotten out of it?

00;18;59;22 - 00;19;09;27

Speaker 4

Absolutely. So I've been at PRLab. This is my second semester. In the fall, I was an account executive, and now I jumped up to an account supervisor. So I oversee a team.

00;19;10;25 - 00;19;12;11

Speaker 3

Last semester I worked.

00;19;12;11 - 00;19;46;28

Speaker 4

With a B2B B to C organization called the Boston Women's Market. And my team and I really focused on content creation and media relations. And, you know, this was my first time really getting to do some hands on PR work as opposed to just the academics I'd been learning for the past few years. And I think PR Lab is extremely validating that, you know, the projects that you're doing throughout your academic career really can make a difference and can be applied in a way that's actually helping clients and getting to see that, you know, hands on primarily.

00;19;46;28 - 00;20;10;11

Speaker 4

It was really an incredible experience and made me want to come back. And now I'm kind of, you know, working my skills a little bit with team management. I got to be on the team last semester and now I get to manage the team and it really stretches a lot of skills of, of course. PR, but also learning how to be a good director, learning how to be a team player, a collaborator, and kind of see how all the work we're doing makes a difference in the grand scheme of things.

00;20;10;11 - 00;20;11;07

Speaker 4

I think it's incredible.

00;20;12;07 - 00;20;39;14

Speaker 1

That's fantastic. You know, when students come to my office or we discuss their careers and their courses, I always recommend PRLab really for the direct contact with clients and the chance, the opportunity to lead a team. I can tell you that when I was recruiting undergraduates into my company, those are things I always looked for.

00;20;40;09 - 00;21;08;01

Speaker 1

Was actual experience working with clients. And have you begun to help define yourself as a leader? So I'm really glad to hear about that. Now you're going out into the world of work at a time where we've been through a few things over the past years and your college years certainly have been interesting. Melissa: So I'm going to ask you a big question here to sort of represent your generation here.

00;21;08;01 - 00;21;37;00

Speaker 1

If you don't mind. Sure. How has the experience of the last few years from COVID and sort of the social and civil and economic disparity that we're seeing in the United States, particularly, but around the world as well, too? How has that affected your mindset as you prepare to head into the world of work?

00;21;47;12 - 00;22;10;14

Speaker 4

Yeah, I mean, being a student these past three years has been crazy. And I think the most intimidating part of it is now we're seeing this shift of kind of like a post-COVID back to normal in the workplace. And, you know, this incoming graduating class has no realistic conception of what that looks like. We've kind of been in an isolated bubble of learning how to be a working adult through Zoom and Microsoft teams.

00;22;10;27 - 00;22;29;06

Speaker 4

You know, we talked about this in PR Lab recently, but I've never done a professional interview in person and my internships and my jobs have pretty much been on my laptop from the comfort of my room or a coffee shop. I think there definitely needs to be a lot of patience on both the side of the student and the prospective employer.

00;22;29;06 - 00;22;50;17

Speaker 4

Just because we're dealing with a group of people that, you know, has learned a lot in their time in college and is extremely technologically advanced. It has a lot of skills that previous generations might not have. But I think this incoming graduating class is definitely intimidated to see what's behind the doors of, you know, what COVID has been and where we're going.

00;22;50;17 - 00;22;54;03

Speaker 4

It's just leading us basically into uncharted territory for sure.

00;22;54;20 - 00;22;59;22

Speaker 1

Well, just talking to you for a few minutes. I have this sense that you're going to do just fine.

00;23;01;20 - 00;23;39;14

Speaker 2

Tenao made a smart choice. I'm just curious. You're going to go in, you're going to be a media analyst. You've grown up as a digital native. What kind of words of advice do you have for baby boomers like Gary and I in terms of what we should be thinking about? If we want to do better in social media, let's say for The Crux and what platforms might matter most to reach a younger audience, the Gen-Z consumer.

00;23;39;14 - 00;23;58;06

Speaker 4

Yeah, this is a monster of an entity. It's very complicated I feel. And I think the most important thing is that when you're realizing how to figure out creating socials and creating content and building an audience base, there really isn't a perfect algorithm that's going to give you a great social post or give you an engaged audience base.

00;23;58;16 - 00;24;22;17

Speaker 4

I think today trends move extremely fast and Gen Z is really quick to call out companies' organizations for being cringeworthy or for being out of touch, and it makes it really easy to mess up and puts a lot of pressure on the organization. And I think previous generations make the mistake in both ways of thinking a little bit too hard about the content they're producing because then it comes out over thought and stuff.

00;24;22;17 - 00;24;38;16

Speaker 4

But then if they try to, you know, take too many risks, it can completely miss the mark. I think having the younger team members who are willing to take risks and move with the trends is crucial. There also are just a lot of misconceptions about social media, and it's hard to pinpoint them because they're all over the map.

00;24;38;16 - 00;25;01;07

Speaker 4

I think some companies completely neglect social media because they don't know how to engage with it appropriately, and then some companies will overcompensate and tire their audiences with content. And then there are some companies that are doing everything right and never really hit where they want to hit because, you know, things like TikTok and platforms where there's just so much oversaturation of content there, they're never going to hit what they're looking for.

00;25;01;07 - 00;25;19;12

Speaker 4

And I think, you know, social media today is different than it was five years ago. It's different than it was three years ago. And I think being able to move faster than you ever have before and really stay in the know as much as you can and have those younger team members working with you is as much as you can do to really get that content where you want it.

00;25;19;13 - 00;25;40;29

Speaker 1

Nicole I'm going to come back to you as a client of the PRLab and and we talked about it earlier or you did you talked about it earlier and how you want to reach your prospective students. And I'm very interested in what works for you as a recruiter. Really. You're looking for for great students.

00;25;40;29 - 00;25;48;22

Speaker 1

And you mentioned how the PRLab has helped you. But really now to follow up on Melissa's comments, what works for you today?

00;25;49;07 - 00;26;30;15

Speaker 4

Yes, well, we find that in reaching that audience of prospective students, the most effective is our current families At school. We call them family ambassadors, our current students, our staff and educators. That's it. That's the number that's the number one way. But other parts of the strategy are making sure that we are out in the community in different ways, shapes, forms, whether we're tabling at local organizations, and then, of course, the presence in media as we've already touched on.

00;26;30;15 - 00;26;48;06

Speaker 4

Certainly social content is important, as is, as Amy mentioned, thinking about those third, those trusted third parties, it could say vehicles, whether it's local newspapers.

00;26;48;15 - 00;27;21;05

Speaker 1

It's a great case study really for community based organizations like yours and the effort you have to put in, in this case with the help of PR lab to continue to be successful, Things that, you know, schools didn't have to think about years ago when Mike and I were barefoot in a one room classroom. Right. So it's really I'm sort of intrigued by this, the need, particularly for social media, for a PR to be successful.

00;27;21;06 - 00;27;21;24

Speaker 1

Amy Yeah, I.

00;27;21;24 - 00;27;39;02

Speaker 3

Wanted to chime in that one of the reasons why PR has been successful is that Nicole is a terrific client. And I'm not just saying this to bolster her, but having a client who listens, who reflects on the counsel that the agency is providing. I know you're laughing because.

00;27;39;10 - 00;27;41;13

Speaker 4

We all.

00;27;42;00 - 00;28;10;25

Speaker 3

Know it's such a joy. I know that any student that we put on their team is going to have a positive experience because Nicole might not like every idea and she might not implement every idea. But she considers and she listens and she's thoughtful and and uses it as a conversation and doesn't just shut things down, will say, well, here's here's my thought or let me give this some thought.

00;28;11;04 - 00;28;29;11

Speaker 3

And I think that kind of dynamic is what leads to a successful engagement. And I know we joke because not all clients do that, but I do think it's that great connection, that relationship between the two that has made both of our parts successful.

00;28;29;21 - 00;28;52;12

Speaker 4

Thanks, Amy. I'd love to just add and as Melissa, as you mentioned that, too, I mean, these are young experts who are gaining the experience and they've got so many creative ideas that I could never have even thought of. And that's the beauty of teamwork, too. Right. And the diversity of all the minds engaged in the PR lab, That's one of the best parts of it.

00;28;52;14 - 00;29;29;16

Speaker 2

I think it works, too, because of you. Amy, I know that you bring to this and you bring to your teaching in the classroom extensive background. Gary alluded to it in terms of corporate communications work in agencies. I remember when you worked with my friend or friend, Paul Cappelli at Staples. Yes. As you look at the students today and seek to prepare them for effective communications careers, what are some enduring values, skills, attitudes that you seek to instill still in them as they prepare for their careers?

00;29;29;25 - 00;29;54;04

Speaker 3

Sure. And I want to just throw out a call to my co PR lab director, Justin Joseph, because I could not do this alone. He is an incredible partner and also comes from that public relations background. And one of the things that Professor Joseph and I do is we talk to agencies regularly and we try to understand just the answer to that question, like what do we need to be successful?

00;29;54;04 - 00;30;21;17

Speaker 3

We'll talk to alums who are working in-house and figure out what we could have done a better job with, and then we incorporate that into our approach to public relations education. But to answer your question, Mike, number one is writing. It keeps coming back to that. Even if you've got a tik tok, heavy client, there's still writing involved in the strategy in those message points that you're trying to communicate through video client experience.

00;30;22;00 - 00;30;44;15

Speaker 3

That's the second thing. Being able to work with people that you've never met before. Establish rapport, build trust, give them what they need before they realize they need it. Now. All of those softer skills that are very hard to put into a textbook that you can really only gain through experience and conversation. But that's something we really strive for.

00;30;44;15 - 00;31;08;14

Speaker 3

So writing client experience, the third skill that is never going to go out of style is this monitoring measurement evaluation of your impact. That is something that I know the industry has grappled with for many, many years, and it's something that we continue to push hard on with our students, even though we only have 13 weeks at PR lab to have an impact, Melissa will know.

00;31;08;14 - 00;31;28;23

Speaker 3

I force you to measure what that impact actually is then. Nicole No, we'll say, Hey, Nicole, we need some web analytics from you to help us connect the dots to show what it is that we're actually doing. It's so important, so vital to be able to articulate the value that you're providing to a client and the impact that you're having.

00;31;28;23 - 00;31;41;14

Speaker 3

I always tell my students, no one's going to give you a big bag of money and say, go ahead, have fun, do whatever you want with it. You're always having to tell them, What are you going to get for that money and then prove it at the end. What did you get for that money? And it's part of business.

00;31;42;06 - 00;32;03;19

Speaker 3

And then the last thing I'll say, Mike, is adaptability and flexibility. We can have the best plans in the world, but when news breaks or an issue erupts or even circumstances change and maybe the players change, you've got to be able to build off of that plan and then pivot and move into, okay, well, what are we going to do as a result?

00;32;03;19 - 00;32;14;03

Speaker 3

Or how can we take advantage of this new opportunity that's just emerged and just being comfortable with the constant flux and change that happens is such an important skill.

00;32;15;03 - 00;32;28;07

Speaker 1

Amy Let me extend it and maybe it's actually an extension of the question I asked Melissa earlier, which are some of the skills that you are expecting from the marketplace.

00;32;28;28 - 00;32;29;02

Speaker 4

Yes.

00;32;29;09 - 00;32;43;10

Speaker 1

What do you think of these young people who are graduating, who have gone through PR lib, what perspectives or skills or capabilities, what are they bringing that's different maybe from previous generations?

00;32;43;22 - 00;33;17;02

Speaker 3

I believe that this generation is bringing ethics and authenticity in ways that we haven't seen before. They really want to do the right thing because it's the right thing to do. And while sure, we all have to live and we all have to make a salary, they're not as willing to compromise their own values for a dollar. And I think that authenticity and that value matters so much to an organization, any organization who's trying to connect with its audiences.

00;33;17;13 - 00;33;47;13

Speaker 3

You know, Mike, you talked about the trust barometer. I think this helps an organization tackle that trust from the inside out. When you have a younger, newer, professional into the marketplace that is going to stand up for what's right, I think that is something that's new and unique and we haven't seen before, and that I think that this exploration, this hunger for maybe it's not a hunger, but just a being open to whatever is new on the horizon.

00;33;47;24 - 00;34;11;04

Speaker 3

Melissa is great at this. Yeah, I'll try that. You know, I don't ever hear Melissa say, No, that's not possible. Let's try that. And, you know, and it's that kind of that positive attitude that I think is also something that you're not seeing a jaded professional with 15 years experience. Be like, no, I try that. I said, all right, you're saying, no, this is something that I'm willing to put myself out there and learn something new.

00;34;11;04 - 00;34;16;12

Speaker 3

And, I don't know that you can teach those things either. It's just intrinsic to who they are as people.

00;34;17;16 - 00;34;48;24

Speaker 2

Yeah. In fact, I wish more professionals were like that in the sense that, you know, what we should be guided by is whether or not the work is successful and almost be constant students, you know, constantly asking questions, constantly probing in order to get to the right answers. And to your point, Amy, you know what worked even in the same organization two years ago may not work today because the whole world is changing.

00;34;49;03 - 00;34;59;05

Speaker 2

And to that point, as we think about change, what do you think we'll see in terms of changes with PR Lab over the next four years?

00;34;59;06 - 00;35;26;23

Speaker 3

It's a great question and it's something that Professor Joseph and I are grappling with. We actually have made a couple of changes recently that I think we're going to keep building on, and one is a focus on internal culture. It's something that we've been so client focused for so many years, but we're recognizing we can do a better job for our clients if we invest a little bit more in our own internal culture, whether it's through diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

00;35;27;10 - 00;36;07;18

Speaker 3

This semester we launched a culture survey that we're we're we're having multiple touch points throughout the semester. So that's one thing that I think we're going to continue to see. We also really this is something I really want to do a better job with is that monitoring and analysis piece. I really want to get some support around technology that is less piecemeal of students do a great job of piecing the different parts together, but I'd like to get some investment in a holistic perspective on the the broader impact that our clients are having in the market and be able to provide that service to them.

00;36;08;08 - 00;36;37;10

Speaker 3



And then to that end, I also see greater tie in with our College of Communication. We have a communication research center, which is incredible for everything from focus groups to eye tracking software to measuring people's responses when they're consuming media. And I want to see us get better at using that so that we can test the content we're putting out in the market, that we're making sure that we are creating content that has a significant impact.

00;36;37;10 - 00;36;41;02

Speaker 3

So that's what I hope to see more changes happening over the next few years.

00;36;41;17 - 00;37;06;09

Speaker 1

But that sounds really exciting and fantastic and thank you for the previous answer. It made me optimistic about the kind of work that we're going to be doing in our industry going forward. And I agree with the amazing, I would say, spirit of these graduates and young people. It really has impressed me in my time at B.U..

00;37;06;22 - 00;37;36;02

Speaker 1

Well, thank you. Before we end, I do want to thank one other person, and that is Sarah Goodman, who is my graduate assistant this semester. And she's been working on the crux throughout, doing all the production, taking out all the mistakes that Mike and I make and doing a great job. And the reason I mention it today is that Sarah put together this episode of the Crux, and so I really appreciate it.

00;37;36;12 - 00;37;48;19

Speaker 1

So, Sarah, thank you. And then a tip of the hat to you for all the work you've done, great work you've done this semester. So Amy, Melissa and Nicole, thank you for being on the crux of this story.

00;37;48;20 - 00;37;49;03

Speaker 2

Thank you very much.

00;37;49;03 - 00;37;50;14

Speaker 3

Thank you so much. Thank you.

00;37;50;17 - 00;38;04;25

Speaker 1

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