

Letter from the President

Rachel
BENAVIDEZ



Dear PRSA San Antonio Members,

It's officially peak summer in South Texas, and the temperatures aren't the only thing heating up. Across our city — and in the communications profession — we're seeing rapid shifts that are reshaping how we connect with audiences, build trust, and lead meaningful conversations.

July is the perfect month to look at "hot" topics and the trends that are shaping the future of public relations, right here in San Antonio and across the industry.

Hyperlocal Storytelling and Community-centered Engagement

One of the most important trends to watch—especially in a city as culturally rich and diverse as ours—is the shift toward hyperlocal storytelling. As San Antonio grows, so does the need for communications that reflect and respect the unique voices of our neighborhoods, small businesses, military families, and multilingual communities.

Gone are the days of one-size-fits-all campaigns. Today, effective communication means co-creating narratives with communities — not just delivering messages to them. That might include:

- Partnering with local organizations or community media to create and expand an inclusive reach
- Prioritizing Spanish-first or bilingual messaging for communities that prefer or require language diversity

- Elevating voices from the East, West, North and South sides and everywhere in between to shape a more complete narrative and conversation around important topics and events.

For PRSA members working in city government, health, education, tourism, tech, or transit (like me), this is more than a strategy — it's a responsibility. The more rooted we are, the more impact we create.

AI and Automation: From Tool to Teammate

AI is rapidly transforming how we plan, write, and analyze. From real-time transcription to audience sentiment analysis, automation is unlocking new levels of efficiency. But the magic happens when it enhances human creativity — not replaces it. As San Antonio's innovation economy expands, so will opportunities to leverage tech-driven storytelling in a culturally grounded way.

Consider these trending tactics:

- Interactive QR codes posted in public and community spaces that link directly to neighborhood-specific service updates or stories, culturally relevant content, easy-to-follow videos like how to access products, programs and services.
- Augmented reality for place-based storytelling that leverages the technology to bring local history or cultural content to life in public spaces. A development or renovation project could integrate AR markers that, when scanned, reveal stories of neighborhoods that existed before the redevelopment.
- Quick, culturally sensitive AI-generated summaries of long public documents—like city reports, policy changes, or school updates—delivered in multiple languages and audio formats to expand accessibility to important information.

Corporate Citizenship and Authentic Impact

In this era of heightened public expectations and, in some cases, public scrutiny for how well information is communicated, San Antonio organizations are being called to show their values, not just list them. This is where communicators shine — helping leaders bridge action and narrative, from Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategies to diversity commitments. Our city's nonprofits, foundations, and public agencies are leading the way in modeling community-centered responsibility.

Some shining examples include:

H-E-B's deep-rooted community investments. H-E-B consistently demonstrates corporate citizenship through disaster relief, education partnerships, food access and relevant cultural initiatives. Their efforts, provide hyperlocal and sustained impact and earned the grocery chain the rank of "top grocery chain in the U.S." for the past three years.



Photo courtesy of Ken & Danielle Austin

University Health's efforts to improve health equity and language access. Their mobile clinics, bilingual health education and care, and maternal/infant health programs are grounded in the belief that trust and access begin at the neighborhood level—a guiding principle reflected in their communications.

VIA has reframed the concept of mobility to be about more than moving people from point A to point B. It's about moving them toward something. The focus isn't only on the agency's service operation, it's on improving quality of life, putting opportunity within reach, and achieving inclusion through access. VIA's communications position mobility as a public good and catalyst for prosperity.



Photo courtesy of VIA Metropolitan Transit

Metrics That Matter

Measurement continues to evolve — and so does the pressure to prove impact. We're seeing more integration between PR metrics and business KPIs. Whether you're tracking social sentiment during Fiesta or evaluating engagement on city bond projects, we must move from impressions to insights.

In my opinion, this is one of the most important (and too often overlooked) skills communications professionals can develop. Beyond reporting numbers, it's about translating those figures into actionable narratives that drive decisions, shape strategy and demonstrate value.

If you're not already doing this for your client or organization, here are three easy steps to start:

1. **Find the "So What?"** Every data point should answer "What does this mean for our audience, our strategy, or our reputation?"
2. **Look for trends, not just totals.** By tracking change over time, you can craft a more powerful "story" than reporting a single point and make informed recommendations for action.
3. **Layer quantitative and qualitative data.** Metrics give you volume but creating insights through comments and sentiment analysis gives you a story to tell.

As we look ahead, I encourage you to be curious and lean into the power of place. PRSA San Antonio is proud to be a space where professionals across industries can connect, grow, and lead. We hope to see you at one of our upcoming events — and if you haven't already, bring a friend or a new professional into our growing network.

Let's keep telling the stories only we can tell — the stories of San Antonio.

Until then, stay cool, stay curious, and keep leading the conversation.

Rachel
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Member Spotlight

Shelbi Young



This month we shine the spotlight on one of our incredible members, **Shelbi Young**, Communications Director at The CE Group. Young joined PRSA San Antonio in 2023, and this year, she's also lending her talents as VP of Communications on our PRSA San Antonio board. We're lucky to have her creativity and leadership in the mix!

Get to know a little more about Shelbi in our quick Q&A below:

Q: What inspired you to pursue a career in Communications?

A: I started college as a Business major, but a required speech class changed everything. My TA told me I had a natural talent for public speaking and writing, and encouraged me to explore communications. By sophomore year, I switched my major to Public Relations.

Communications gives me the space to write and connect with people. I've worked in PR, radio, events, corporate marketing, and now back in the PR/Communications world, where I get to tell meaningful stories. That early encouragement still inspires me; I love helping others find and share their voice.

Q: How has being a part of PRSA San Antonio enriched your career?

A: PRSA San Antonio has helped me to learn more about the profession, it's an ever evolving profession and staying involved in PRSA San Antonio has allowed me to network, learn new skills and develop current skills through the membership luncheons and online workshop offerings.

Q: What advice would you give to someone entering the profession today?

A: Be a learner. Everyone around you, whether they've been in the industry for one year or twenty, has something valuable to teach you. Take the time to listen, ask questions, and soak it all in. Also, don't be afraid to say yes to new opportunities, even if they feel a little out of your comfort zone. Some of the best growth happens when you're stretching yourself. Be helpful, stay curious, and trust that you're building something great with every experience.

Not a member yet? Become a member today and start building your network!

Fast-track a Graduate's Future!

Give the Gift of PRSA Membership





VirtuCon is a half-day conference featuring keynotes and sessions that focus on the “the business of business.”

Created as a way for indies to enjoy the benefits of a conference-like experience without the added burden of travel and lodging fees, as well as the intangible cost of “closing up shop” to attend, IPA’s VirtuCon is designed specifically for the virtual setting, and focuses on working ON the business, not just IN the business

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

PRSA is the preeminent learning organization focused on professional development for public relations and communications professionals, offering a range of tools designed to provide practical insights, enhance skills, and foster industry connections throughout the year.

Here are some upcoming webinars available at no cost to PRSA Members.

Unidos: PRSA Hispanic-Latino Affinity Group Kickoff Event

Aug.6, 2025, 6-7 p.m.

Be part of history as we launch the PRSA Hispanic-Latino Affinity Group — an inclusive, dynamic space dedicated to empowering Hispanic-Latino communications professionals nationwide.

PRSA Storytellers: From Noise to Noteworthy: Turning Media Intelligence Into PR Impact

Aug. 14, 2025, 3-4 p.m.

Whether you’re navigating a crisis or planning your next big campaign, this webinar will equip you with practical tools to elevate your communications strategy.

Driving Video Engagement for Nonprofits and Associations

Sept. 3, 2025, 3-4 p.m.

Join this webinar to learn the essential steps of developing and implementing a video content strategy that aligns with organizational goals and maximizes return on effort.

Bulletin Board Career Opportunities



[CPS - Digital Communications Specialist](#)



[UT Health San Antonio - Communications Specialist](#)



[City of San Antonio - Senior Public Information Officer](#)

About PRSA San Antonio Chapter

The mission of the San Antonio Chapter of PRSA is to advance communication professionals by providing career development opportunities and fostering a collaborative community where individuals can strategically and ethically practice effective public relations.

This year, the PRSA San Antonio Board of Directors' goal is to bring maximum value to PRSA Members.

To learn about PRSA-SA and how to get involved, email PRSA-SA 2025 President **Rachel Benavidez**

Have an idea for an article you'd like to submit to Byline? Or news to share? A promotion or a job change? Please email Vice President of Communications, **Shelbi Young**.

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