

SHELBY KAILEY

SENIOR CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST
AT HALTON REGIONAL POLICE

IN 2015, SHELBY KAILEY GRADUATED FROM SHERIDAN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM. TODAY, SHE IS A SENIOR CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST AT HALTON REGIONAL POLICE SERVICES. I MET WITH SHELBY TO TALK ABOUT HER CAREER PATH.

Shelby, with a masters degree in History from the University of Waterloo, what prompted you to switch to public relations? How did you know that PR would be a good fit for you?

When I graduated from university, I wanted a job where I could use the core competencies I attained during my history studies. I knew I had strong public speaking, writing, and analytical research skills. Public relations caught my eye because all of those competencies were really valued in this profession. I applied to Public Relations and Professional Communications at Sheridan and got accepted. It was during my time in this program, I realized that I found my niche and fell in love with public relations.

After completing college, you worked in marketing roles as well as corporate communications roles. How did your earlier marketing roles help you build your skills? Are there any notable positions you held that were important stepping stones for you?

The most notable positions in my early career were marketing communications consultant at Boggio Pharmacy and the various communications roles at Niagara Health Foundation. Similar to most junior positions in the industry, these roles focused mainly on external communications and marketing. They encompassed only a small internal communications component. The marketing aspect of those positions allowed me to get to know my audiences



very well. I also learned how to use different communication channels to reach those audiences. As I progressed through my career, more of my time started to be devoted to structuring internal corporate communications. I got to apply the skills I learned in my earlier roles and this helped me advance further in my career.

Now, that you are in a senior role, what does a workday look like for you? What are the major components of your job?

Even in a senior position, I am still involved with both external and internal communications. Although social media strategy is still one of the large external components of my role, I now have several internal clients whom I advise on their internal and external communication campaigns. For example, I help human resources and recruiting teams with their external communications aided at recruiting new employees. I recently worked with HR representative and one of our staff sergeants to create a series of videos that profile a new position in a 911 operators department. In addition to human resources team, I advise our equity, diversity and inclusion team, as well as help with the communications that need to be published for our employees internally.



What aspects of your role do you enjoy the most?

I really enjoy the public affairs and corporate communications aspects of my role. I also really like that I have latitude to introduce new social media strategies. I started #yourhrps campaign where I interview the members and publish their profiles on social media. I love that I get to showcase various paths they took towards becoming police officers. It's gratifying to help shine the spotlight on the members at the service. The second aspect of my job that I really enjoy is the ability to update the community and the media about the ongoing incidents in Halton by providing on-scene incident support. I get to go on location, live-tweet the updates, and develop media releases.

What do you enjoy the least?

Sometimes, the day can get very unpredictable and may require frequent re-prioritizing of a 'to-do' list. There are many competing priorities and it can get very busy. This is not something that I do not enjoy, but I believe the students should know about it before they enter the field.

What skills do you think are the most important for someone in Public Relations?

I think it is critical for communications professionals to have a solid foundation in graphic design and video editing. Being able to provide this service to your employer is a great advantage that will set you apart from the other job applicants. These skills will also allow you to be a more valuable member of a team even if you are working with a dedicated designer or video editor. You will still be able to add value by providing meaningful feedback.

What kind of people do well in communications?

The people who do well in the communications are comfortable in an advisory position. They are outgoing and confident in their knowledge. They

view themselves as the subject matter experts, but they are also open to new learning opportunities. Lifelong learning is incredibly important as PR professionals continuously develop their arsenal of tactics and strategies.

If you could go back and do anything differently in your career path, what would you do?

If I had to go back, I would probably still take the same path. Each of my positions provided me with valuable experience and further refined my skills and abilities. It is because of my involvement with so many business sectors, I was able to pursue Accredited in Public Relations (APR) designation early in my career and succeed.

Thank you so much for talking to me, is there any advice you can give to students who are just starting out in Public Relations?

I always advice students to get involved with professional associations such as CPRS. It is through CPRS that I was able to access networking opportunities and learn from more experienced practitioners. I highly recommend their mentorship program. I was a mentee myself and a few years ago, I started to mentor. Lastly, there is a network within corporate communications and public relations that can help you get where you want to go.

"It is critical for communications professionals to have a solid foundation in graphic design and video editing."



CPRS Hamilton team at a networking event

by Mariya Kadar
Mariyakadar@gmail.com