

# **Winning at the Virginia PR Awards**

## **Professional Development Session**

**January 9, 2018**



# **Cameron McPherson, APR**

**President, PRSA Richmond**





# **2018 Updates**

# **Jay Ell Alexander**

**Individual Awards Chair  
PRSA Richmond**



# **Thomas Jefferson Award For Excellence**

- Recognize the extraordinary achievement of a seasoned public relations practitioner working in the Greater Richmond metropolitan region with the chapter's highest honor
- No fee to submit a nomination
- Deadline for nominations is the same as that of the Virginia Public Relations Awards
- Submit a 250-word statement summarizing why the nominee deserves the award, the nominee's current resume, a headshot, up to 5 letters of recommendation and up to 5 supporting documents (attachments or links)
- Executive summary of the submission (no more than 100 words)
- Accept both self-nominations as well as nominations from colleagues

# Thomas Jefferson Award For Excellence

- Thomas Jefferson Award recipients are selected by a panel of their peers
  - Winner will receive a special surprise announcement and will be publicly announced before event
- Nominees are assessed based on the following criteria:
  - ✓ Participation in PRSA
  - ✓ Contributions to the profession of public relations
  - ✓ Local or national recognition for professional achievements
  - ✓ A commitment to public service
  - ✓ Mentorship of young practitioners
  - ✓ Pursuit of continuing education in the field
  - ✓ Professional awards

# Rising Star Award

- Recognize an outstanding new member of the public relations profession who has five or fewer years of experience in PR
- The recipient of the Rising Star Award is always announced at the Virginia Public Relations Awards.
- Submit a 250-word statement summarizing why the nominee deserves the award, the nominee's current resume, a headshot, up to 5 letters of recommendation and up to 5 supporting documents (attachments or links)
- Executive summary of the submission (no more than 100 words)
- No cost to submit a nomination and it is okay to self-nominate.
- Keep nominations a surprise!
- Deadline for nominations is the same as that of the Virginia Public Relations Awards

# Rising Star Award

- **The panel of judges is looking for candidates who display:**
  - ✓ Early career successes that promise future leadership in the public relations field
  - ✓ Outstanding work with significant measurable outcomes
  - ✓ A commitment to the values of PRSA
  - ✓ Involvement in the community and volunteer service
  - ✓ Enthusiasm and initiative infused with a spirit of cooperation and teamwork

# Scoring

## Thomas Jefferson Award For Excellence

- Participation in PRSA
- Contribution to the profession of public relations
- Local or national recognition for their achievements
- A commitment to public service
- Mentorship of younger practitioners
- Pursuit of professional development in the field
- Professional Awards
- **7 sections (1-4 scoring, max 28 points)**

## Rising Star

- Early successes that promise future leadership in the public relations field
- Outstanding work with significant measurable outcomes
- A commitment to the values of PRSA
- Involvement in the community and volunteer service
- Enthusiasm and initiative infused with a spirit of cooperation and teamwork
- **5 sections (1-4 scoring, max 20 points)**

# **The Path to the Prize**

## **How to Create Winning Award Entries**

**Jeff Wilson, APR**



# Decide If It's Worth It

Award-winning programs and projects go beyond well-executed assignments. Judges anoint awards to truly “game-changing” work that resulted in outstanding and measurable results for clients.



# Make Sure You Have All the Elements



Use this checklist to decide if your work stands apart:

- Can you clearly state a problem your communications program solved?
- Do you have detailed, interesting information about the objectives of the project/program, as well as the execution?
- Did it have an especially creative or innovative twist, or a major challenge that potentially stood in the way of success?
- Did it have a significant, **quantifiable** impact on the intended audience?

# Start Early

The sooner you start working on your entry and supporting materials, the better. Begin collecting your materials in files that correspond to most entry requirements:  
**Research, Planning, Execution and Evaluation.**



# Follow the Directions

Consider:

**Category details:** Which category best fits your project? Keep in mind that you can enter in more than one category – if appropriate

**Elements that must be submitted:** Make sure you have all the elements and materials required.

**Timing** – Your program – including specific results – must occur within the time frame set by the award sponsors

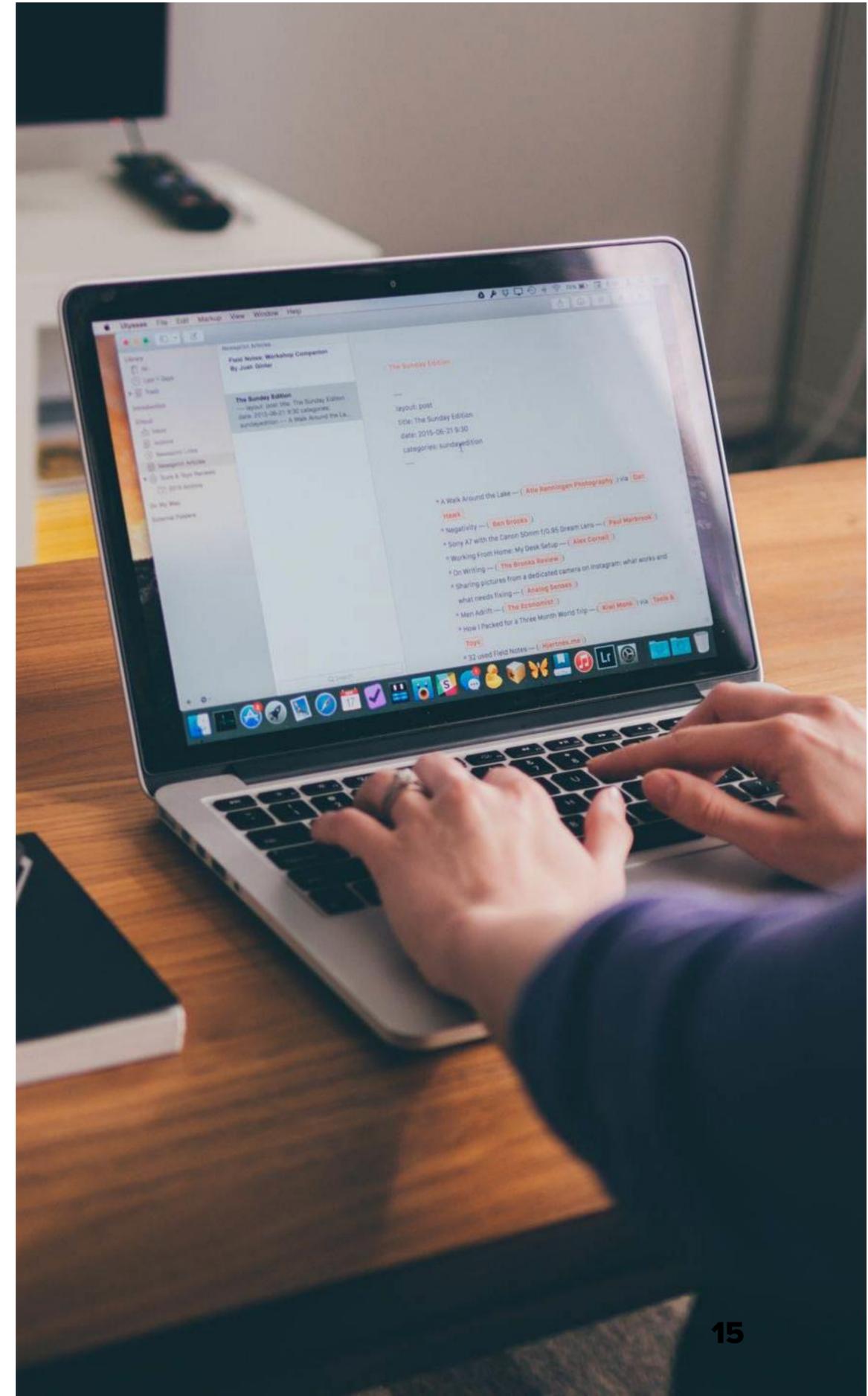


KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
READ the  
Directions

# Compose a Compelling Overview

The opening narrative is the cornerstone of the entry and is your first – and maybe last – chance to impress the judges.

Keep in mind that judges know nothing about your program until they open the entry. So make it clear and interesting from the first word.



# Tips for a Compelling Overview

1. **Know your audience.** The judges are public relations professionals like you. They generally spend about five minutes with each entry, most of that on the overview.
2. **Be a storyteller.** The overview should be a short summary of the entire entry, including the four classic elements of every good story.
  - **Stage setting:** What was the situation, dilemma? Explain the client's circumstances and needs, and perhaps the reasons behind them if they aren't obvious.
  - **Conflict/challenge:** Were we up against a tight deadline, budget or negative public opinion about the client?
  - **Resolution:** How was the problem resolved, the clients' needs met? This is where choice details about strategy about tactics come in.
  - **Outcome:** Conclude the overview with a synopsis of the best results.

# Tips for a Compelling Overview

3. **Start strongly.** The lead is the key to your entry. Make it interesting and compelling so the judge will read on.
4. **Remember the three “Cs”**
  - Be **Concrete**, using specific facts and details instead of vague words or generalities.
  - Be **Creative**, using lively language, especially strong verbs. Also, be sure to highlight any innovative or especially interesting aspects of the campaign/program.
  - Be **Concise** – 200-300 words for overviews.

# Describe Your Research

## Know the two types of research:

- **Primary** research: information we gathered first-hand, through surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc. Our own media scans also are primary research
- **Secondary** research: information gleaned from outside sources, such as the media, databases and other primary research

# **Reveal Research Insights**

**We do research for a reason: to inform the direction of our work.**

When summarizing the key findings, point out how their relevance in shaping the messaging/strategies/tactics, etc., of the campaign/program.

# Required: Quantifiable Results

- Business results are the best metric, where applicable: Did sales increase, and by how much?
- Did attitudes change and by what proof?
- How many people attended the event?
- How many hits did the website receive?

**Remember: Judges want more than media impressions.**

# Writing Objectives

- Define **WHAT** opinion, attitude or behavior you want to achieve from specific publics/
- Specify **HOW MUCH** change you want to achieve from each public
- Tell by **WHEN** you want to achieve that change.

## Objective 1

Increase adult Virginians' awareness that Lottery profits support public education by 2 percent, as measured by the Lottery's annual benchmark study.

# Writing Objectives

- Define **WHAT** opinion, attitude or behavior you want to achieve from specific publics/
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**WHAT**



Increase adult Virginians' awareness that Lottery profits support public education by 2 percent, as measured by the Lottery's annual benchmark study.

**WHAT**



**WHEN**



# Required: Quantifiable Results

- Business results are the best metric, where applicable: Did sales increase, and by how much?
- Did attitudes change and by what proof?
- How many people attended the event?
- How many hits did the website receive?
- For every objective, there **MUST** be a corresponding result.

**Remember: Judges want more than media impressions.**

# Required: Quantifiable Results

## Objective 1

Increase adult Virginians' awareness that Lottery profits support public education by 2 percent, as measured by the Lottery's annual benchmark study.

- Doubled goal: Awareness among adult Virginians about the Lottery's support of public education increased from the previous year by 4 percent, reaching 63 percent – the highest awareness level ever.

# **Anatomy of an Award Entry**

# **Virginia Historical Society Food Truck Court**

**2013 Virginia PR Awards  
Commonwealth Award Submission  
Extended Events and Observances**

**Jennifer Guild, APR**



# Set the Stage

- **Summary:**
  - Overview of the entire campaign
  - This will be read during the event if you win
- **Background:**
  - Set the stage for the reader
  - Remember, people reading your submission aren't from Virginia and are probably not familiar with your organization or campaign
  - Is there a problem you're trying to solve?

# Summary

In March 2012, the Virginia Historical Society (VHS)—a free history museum and research library—entered into a unique partnership with mobile vendors to host Richmond’s first Food Truck Court.

From April to August 2012, the VHS hosted 38 Food Truck Courts. The VHS used media relations, social media, and community relations to build awareness, drive attendance, and engage younger and more diverse populations.

The campaign—which did not have a budget—was an overwhelming success. It attracted thousands of hipsters, young professionals, and families—with bikes, blankets, and dogs in tow—to the VHS during traditionally low-visitation months.

# Back-ground

In March 2012, Virginia Historical Society (VHS) created Richmond's first Food Truck Court (FTC), bringing the community together on Tuesday and Friday evenings from April to August 2012. By serving as the backdrop for FTC activities, VHS seized an opportunity to increase awareness, attract younger, more diverse audiences, and boost attendance in June and August, traditionally low-visitation months.

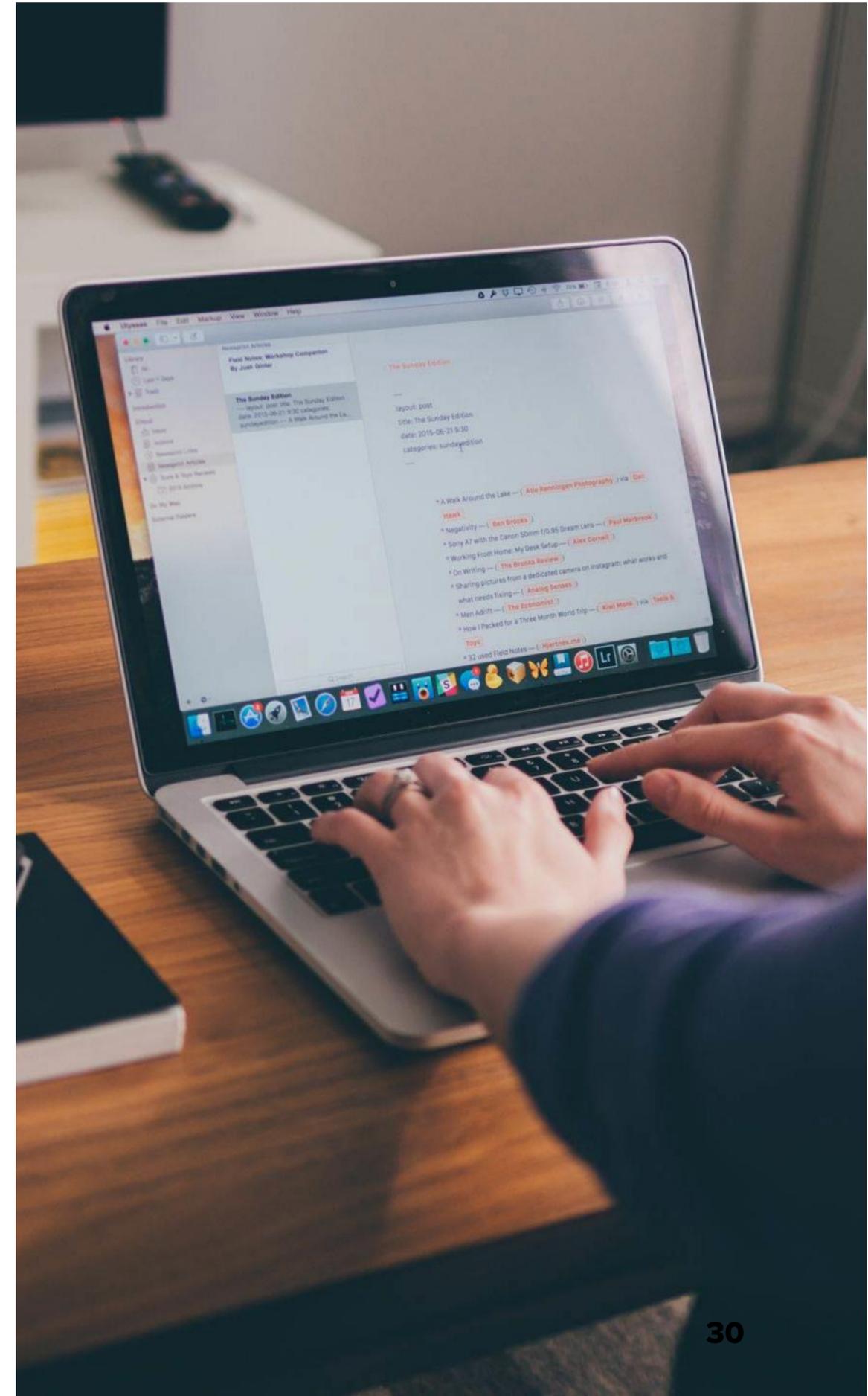
VHS—a private nonprofit established in 1831—is a free history museum and research library with a collection of more than 8.5 million items. Because VHS has struggled to attract young, diverse visitors, we wanted in on the Thai food and vegan cupcakes!

FTC plans were finalized two weeks before the first event, resulting in expedited planning and execution.

# Submission

Set up the submission in the standard PRSA format

**RPIE**



# Research

- You must have research
  - Even if you can't do your own, you must have research
- Use the words that PRSA likes to hear: primary, secondary, formal, informal
- Explain the type of research but also what you learned from it
  - How did it influence your decisions for the campaign
  - How did it help you craft messages, define your publics, determine the best strategy, etc.

# Research

- Conducted secondary research by evaluating existing VHS data
  - 2003 and 2005 surveys showed a majority of VHS visitors were 55+ and a large majority Caucasian. This allowed opportunity for growth attracting a younger and more diverse set of visitors.
  - More than double any other method, visitors heard about VHS via word of mouth. Building awareness would generate an increase in word of mouth recommendations, resulting in increased visitation.
  - VHS attendance is historically low in June and August due to the lack of school visitation. Increased visitation efforts were a top priority.

# Research

- Conducted web research about food trucks
  - Social media and media coverage show Raleigh, NC; Albuquerque, NM; Seattle, WA; and Orlando, FL had successful food truck gatherings.
    - Young professionals and families attended when events were in urban areas with grassy surfaces.
  - Richmond food trucks have existing following, are in downtown business district, and serve weekday lunch.
    - Community and foodies receptive to collaborative outdoor evening food events.

# Goals

- Broad, global and future statements of “being”

#GOALS

# Objectives

- **Objectives**
  - Define what opinion, attitude or behavior you want to achieve from specific publics
  - Specify how much change you want to achieve from each public
  - Tell by when you want to achieve that change

# Objectives

- **Objectives**
  - Objectives should be SMART:
    - Specific (both action to be taken and public involved)
    - Measurable
    - Achievable
    - Realistic (or relevant or results (outcome) oriented)
    - Time-specific

*Understand the difference  
between output and outcome*

# Goals and Objectives

- ***Build VHS awareness***
  - On Facebook, get 250 new likes and 150 new checkins
  - On Twitter, acquire 300 new followers
  - Get *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Richmond.com, one TV network, and two additional media stories
- ***Drive VHS attendance***
  - 100 people per FTC event
  - 10% of FTC attendees visit VHS
  - 10% increase of VHS visitors from first to last FTC
  - 10% increase in VHS visitation over April-August 2010 (didn't use 2011 data as comparison because unique circumstances inflated visitation numbers)
- ***Attract and engage young professionals, diverse audiences, and families***
  - 50% of FTC attendees in 20-40 age range

# Planning

- **Planning**
  - This is the meat of the campaign
  - Place to include staffing, resources, materials, timeline, message, spokespeople, budget
- **Strategy = Roadmap**
  - Accelerate, position, enlist, establish
- **Tactics = Specific actions/tools**
  - Press release, meeting, social media posts

# Strategy and Tactics

Media relations: In addition to sending a media alert, VHS staff pitched outlets with a high 20-40-year-old following.

Social media: VHS staff promoted, reminded, and engaged by posting FTC pictures; using well-followed #RVA and #RVAdine hashtags; following FTC visitors, thanking them for attending, commenting on pictures, and encouraging repeat attendance with friends. VHS also created on-site signage with social media QR codes to allow quick access and interaction.

# Strategy and Tactics

Community relations: VHS staff informed neighborhood associations; handed out FTC fliers at family-friendly community events; created FTC page on the VHS website; and sent FTC emails to VHS database (half aren't members).

Staff engagement: Staff approached FTC attendees encouraging them to visit VHS; offered free guided tours; and developed an all-ages printed scavenger hunt including social media information and upcoming programs.

# Evaluation

- Provide quantitative data
- Tie it directly back into the objectives
  - We said we wanted to do this and we did this
- Be honest: if something didn't work, say so
  - Everything doesn't have to be absolutely perfect for it to be a great campaign
  - Identify the ways you could have improved or what you might do differently in the future
- Don't include anything that doesn't directly tie to the research, objectives, strategy, etc.

# Evaluation

Public response to the FTC was overwhelmingly positive. The events created VHS awareness, raised its profile among diverse younger groups, and increased visitation. The VHS received attention and recognition as being innovative, supportive of the community, and accessible.

- Build awareness
  - FTC webpage received 5,237 page views and 4,620 unique page views, making it the 5th highest landing page on VHS website.
  - VHS acquired 400+ new likes and 200+ new checkins on Facebook and 350+ new Twitter followers.
  - Media coverage generated 500,000+ impressions. In addition to getting ongoing coverage in *Richmond Times-Dispatch* and *Richmond.com*, *Style Weekly*, WTVR CBS 6, RVAnews.com, and *Dine, Grid, Richmond*, and *Virginia Living* magazines did stories.
- Drive VHS attendance
  - Of the 38 FTCs, all but three (due to rain) met the goal of attracting 100 attendees.
  - At all but two FTCs, more than 10% of attendees visited VHS.
    - In total, more than 800 people visited VHS during FTC
  - In April and May during FTC events, museum visitation averaged 30 people. In July and August, museum visitation averaged 50 people, a more than 160% increase.
    - Guided tour attendance also increased dramatically from three at the June 8 program, to 31 at the August 31 program.
  - Total VHS attendance from April 1 to August 31, 2012, equaled 39,726, up from 30,262 during that same 2010 period. This increase far exceeded the 10% goal.
- Attract and engage young professionals, diverse audiences, and families
  - VHS staff observed approximately 70% of FTC attendees were 20-40 years old and at least 25% were not Caucasian
- Maybe the greatest example of success, VHS is hosting food trucks in 2013. Bring on more Thai food and vegan cupcakes!

# Final Thoughts

- Hardest part for me was staying within word count
  - Attachments are unlimited so make those work for you
    - This took the most time!
- Resources
  - APR study guide
  - PRSA award winning case studies

# VIRGINIA LIVING



## Circling the Wagons

Hungry Richmonders no longer have to worry about tracking down their favorite food truck's latest location. For the first time, these four-wheeled moveable feasts will all be in one place, with Boka Truck, Sustenance Truck and more parking weeknights from 6-9 at the Virginia Historical Society in hopes of becoming a mainstay in the Museum District. The new Food Truck Court woos with such innovative offerings as Asian-Mexican-American fusion, truffled tater tots and gourmet drinks. "We're trying it out," says the Society's Jennifer Guild. "If it does well, we'll continue it through the summer. And if that does well, we'll do it again next year." For truck dates, check [Facebook.com/RichmondFoodTruckCourt](https://www.facebook.com/RichmondFoodTruckCourt)

Jennifer Guild

From:

Sent: Friday, April 20, 2012 10:54 AM

To: Jennifer Guild

Subject: RVA Food Truck Court

Dear Ms. Guild,

I attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> RVA Food Truck Court evening and was enthralled. Needless to say, I returned the following week with 5 friends in tow. We had a wonderful time – visited the museum, watched myriad children make new friends and have fun, and met so many new people.

My question is, do you plan to continue the RVA Food Truck Court once warm weather gets here? It would provide a fabulous outing not only for us "local" folks, but what a delightful place it would be to bring out-of-town guests.

I look forward to many warm evenings of good food, laughter, and visits to the VHS.

**Staff Pick**  
**Best Food Cart Educational Opportunity: Food Truck Court**

Food trucks and carts aren't just learning how to play well together and participate in big events and regular pods. Patrick Harris of Boka has been a leader in this movement. Richmond's new Food Truck Court ([foodtruckcourt.com](http://foodtruckcourt.com)) sets up Tuesdays and Fridays behind the Virginia Historical Society. The museum plays host to the trucks while attracting families to educational treasure hunts for food-related items. Stroke of genius with a side of salsa!

When I arrived earlier that summer morning, he'd warned me that today would be demanding. The normal Friday lunch service for both of his trucks, followed by the evening food truck court at the Virginia Historical Society for Boka 1 and a private event booking for Boka 2, would make for a busy day, vying on frantic. Since starting with one truck two and a half years ago, his business has expanded to include two trucks and a cart, with lunch service throughout the city daily and dinner service at one of the food truck courts. Harris starts the regular food truck court in April in the parking lot at the VHS on Tuesdays and Fridays @ 6pm and since then, they've spread to multiple other locations. For a while, he partnered with GrovEVA on organizing the courts, but they have ended that arrangement and developed separate full schedules, which do not include the VHS.

The first time I ask him about his typical day, the conversation goes like this: "First, I come in and get everyone set up to go in the other room. We can walk and talk if you want..." He takes off through the swinging door that leads to the commercial prep kitchen. By the time I catch up, he's talking to an arrayed-looking man wearing a trucking-company uniform.

"Do you own this green truck?" Harris responds. "He's not here. He's not part of our operation." Harris is referring to the owner of another Richmond food truck that also prep at Kitchen Thyme. I poke my head out the back door and soon understand the man's put-out expression. The trailer of his massive 18-wheeler is about to the green truck. The driveway around the back of the shopping center is narrow, and a less-than-stellar parking job by the green truck's driver the night before resulted in a too-tight fit for the semi this morning.

Melissa Krumboltz, owner of Kitchen Thyme, soon enters the scene and pulls out her cell

**Questions?**

# **Additional Information**

## **General Awards**

**Diana Burkett**

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## **Individual Awards**

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