

Headline/Title: Jennifer Tornetta: A Day in the Life of a PR Pro

Albert Einstein once said, “In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.”

Jennifer Tornetta, public relations director at Atlantic Care in Egg Harbor Township, N.J., and her career choices almost replicate Einstein’s motivational saying — and should be an inspiration to college students across the board.

With more than 14-years’ experience in the industry, Tornetta didn’t always envision herself in public relations.

The 5-foot-2-inch, slender blonde has quite an extensive resume, which she jokes is embarrassing because in the public relations world, one’s resume shouldn’t exceed more than one page, unless there’s a special request or circumstance regarding an interview and/or certain position.

Tornetta received her bachelor’s degree from Temple University in radio/television/film and her master’s in business from The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

From working morning shows in Philadelphia, the assignment desk at Fox29 Philadelphia, freelance reporting for KYW breaking news and New Jersey 101.5, an internship at Channel 6, a column in The Press of Atlantic City called “it’s your party,” to covering planning board meetings for the Times-Herald in Norristown — Tornetta dipped her hand in many opportunities in both radio and print.

While working at Light Rock 96.9 in Northfield and volunteering one day a week at the hospital, Tornetta asked the then-public relations director at Atlantic Care if he had any recommendations for her.

“He said, ‘you know, we actually have something here you might be interested in,’” said Tornetta “[Immediately] I started working here, and I’ve been working here for over 14-years now.”

According to Tornetta, when she made the switch from radio into public relations she looked for another radio position, not specifically public relations.

“I was always interested in public relations for the right company,” said Tornetta.

Turns out, Atlantic Care was the right fit for her.

“Having volunteered at the hospital, I saw a glimpse of what they [Atlantic Care] did,” said Tornetta. “I was interested in helping people be well — not just while the patient is being treated in the hospital.”

When Tornetta made the decision to leave radio behind for a career in public relations, it was a strategic decision.

“[The] radio business back then was not stable and the pay was not conducive to my years of experience in the business — which can be the case with many media related jobs, even today,” said Tornetta. “I wanted something new.”

Tornetta’s wish was granted.

At first, her primary responsibility lay in writing press releases and handling media. Over the course of 14-years at Atlantic Care, Tornetta’s duties have increased.

Now Tornetta is a part of the Emergency Preparedness Team (EPT), which is more than just crisis communication. It also deals with the planning so that during a crisis or natural disaster her team is prepared on how to handle it properly.

For example, the EPT handles natural disasters like hurricane sandy and communicates internally, as well as externally, about how Atlantic Care dealt with the storm.

Tornetta also contributes to the writing and production of paid marketing including commercials and radio spots. And due to her radio background, she does voiceovers and records some of the corporate messages.

Atlantic Care’s public relations team is also responsible for about 60 percent of all the written materials that go out from the department including stories about a patient, an ad, a calendar mailer, etc.

But Tornetta and her team’s tasks don’t stop there. In addition to everything else, they also coordinate video and photo shoots, leading key messages and ensuring the public relations plan aligns with the strategic goals of the organization.

One of the most successful projects Tornetta implemented was the social media program.

“I went straight to administration and said, ‘listen, we need to be doing this [using social media],’” said Tornetta.

The social media plan included creating a new policy with the co-chair of Tornetta’s team, putting together a team of representatives from areas within Atlantic Care including Human Resources, Nursing, Information Technology, Physicians, among many others and educating them on the appropriate use of social media — not only at the hospital, but also in their personal lives — to change the way social media was done at Atlantic Care.

But, it’s not always a breeze.

One of the more challenging aspects Tornetta's worked on involved getting a handle on media monitoring.

"We've put a lot of work into things that sometimes haven't gotten media coverage, but that's just the luck of the draw," said Tornetta. "We spent a tremendous amount of time trying to work with auditing services and it didn't give us the return on investment we expected

"And the challenging thing is that there's really no (most public relations professionals would agree) accurate way to say here is the value of your media coverage."

Now Atlantic Care's Public Relations Department does its own media monitoring, which Tornetta is responsible for.

"We have an access center that we punch numbers of press materials into, and it's how we determine our profit on investment," said Tornetta. "For example, the access center shows that typically for every \$1 we generate, we receive \$9 in return."

According to Tornetta, for the first three quarters of 2012, Atlantic Care had approximately 600 separate media mentions—which she assures is a conservative measurement on the company's mentions because she only counts the first one.

Although her specialty is public and media relations including writing press materials, Tornetta considers it a must for any public relations professional to have a seat at the table with the leaders of the organization for which they work.

"And we do have a seat at the table," ensures Tornetta. "We have a seat at the table whether it's for a crisis or a new program. We share the pros and cons of how to develop something. Because PR isn't just there to write the press release, or pitch the story to the media or get something up on social media."

During any planning process, Tornetta's team looks at what's trying to be accomplished, the budget, as well as looking at the strategic goals of the organization, and putting together strategic plan and methods to use such as direct mail, paid marketing or a press release depending on what's appropriate.

One thing that's helped Tornetta grow as a strategic communicator was keeping her hand in freelance writing while working in radio.

According to Tornetta, radio is a tough career and professionals should have something to fall back on — and that something should include being a proficient writer.

“Now [to be successful in public relations] you have to be able to learn different things and assume different duties because that’s what we have to do in our business,” said Tornetta.

However, to be successful that’s not all an aspiring public relations counselor must be able to do.

In 2012, society is truly seeing the convergence of “new media” at work.

“A person must truly believe in the mission of the organization for which they’re working, said Tornetta. “You must be committed to transparency and accuracy, know your industry inside and out, be able to adapt to new technologies since everything now is electronic, be able to tell a story — communicate it clearly and succinctly — and you need to continually grow as a professional.”

When Tornetta first started, she primarily used fax machines to get out press releases, and would be “on-call” on occasion in case a reporter needed to reach her.

Now there’s the 24-7 news cycle.

“If something happens [in today’s society] it can be on video and/or on the Internet instantaneously,” said Tornetta. “And it’s not just traditional news media posting it, it’s now anyone with a smart phone—which makes it even more challenging to ensure your company’s message is getting out there accurately.”

Public relations professionals, now more than ever, need to be available 24-7 to control the message.

“PR is really morphing from traditional media relations to encompassing many forms of communication, including paid, said Tornetta. “I think as organizations look at different ways to promote their message, and every organization at some point, if not all the time, relies on public relations.

“So you should know how to write a factual press release, but also understand how to write copy for an ad and understand the difference of what’s effective.”

The future is now and so is the future of public relations. And although Tornetta’s not psychic, she is sharp.

“With the changing media landscape from every business wanting print ads in the newspaper, to everyone wanting to dabble in mobile apps and mobile marketing, public relations professionals need will need to be even more well rounded than in the past,” said Tornetta.

When, and if Tornetta retires, she will keep her word about always falling back on writing because she advocates that she'll continue freelance writing, as well as trying to speak at colleges to pass on her knowledge.

Tornetta has experienced her fair share of overcoming obstacles, but within everyone, she's learned something new and seized the opportunity.

Overall, Jennifer is nothing short of a sharp professional who students should emulate.

Always number pages 1

from passive
to active

Field Interview Assignment

I had the pleasure of interviewing Miss Stephanie Agresti, an alumnus of ~~TCNJ~~ ^{at TCNJ}. Stephanie graduated from TCNJ in 2015 with a Communications Studies major, and Professional Writing and Art History minors. She chose public relations as a career because she always loved writing and working with people, and she wanted to pursue something that would allow her to integrate both passions. Miss Agresti works at R&J Strategic Communications, a strategic communications firm that has an office in New Jersey and an office in New York.

What Stephanie does as a career relates to the public relations process because she is an assistant account executive at a full-service integrated public relations and marketing agency. Her specialty is healthcare. She works on healthcare and a consumer products accounts, generating media coverage in traditional and digital spaces, and developing strategic communication materials to help build her clients' brand positions. Miss Agresti's current responsibilities as assistant account executive are the integration and execution of public relations, media relations and social media campaign efforts, and driving a variety of tactical actions for her various client accounts.

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Stephanie

Stephanie works both with a team and by herself on a regular basis. Often, Miss Agresti attends team meetings to discuss strategies and next steps, however, after the team meetings, the execution of the strategies and materials is done independently. Even when working independently, there is frequent communication with team members. She uses a media relations software, called Gorkana, to help her with her work. Gorkana allows strategic communicators to research reporters based on their beat and the publication they work for, to build media lists, and to distribute pitches and press releases. Additionally, Stephanie looks at analytics reports to

Can you define full-service integrated?

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analyze social media and digital media campaign efforts so she can continually monitor and evaluate her strategies. Also, Google and Talk Walker internet alerts are set up to help Miss Agresti monitor for media coverage based on key words.

During her time at TCNJ, Stephanie was fortunate to have had several great internship experiences that helped prepare her for a career in public relations. She has internship experience in publicity and corporate communications. Many of the skills she learned during her internships she uses every day in her current role. Also, Miss Agresti enjoys continuing to learn on a professional and personal level every day.

Before working at R&J Strategic Communications, Stephanie worked at a public relations agency that focused on the interior design industry. A turning point in her career was switching agencies and roles shortly after beginning her career. Even though she had been working in the public relations profession, her first role after graduating college was not the best fit for her. Consequently, Miss Agresti decided to look for another job and placed importance on finding a role and a company that was a good fit for her. Ultimately she chose R&J Strategic Communications, an agency that works in a number of practice areas so she has been able to explore public relations across many fields, and as a result she found a passion for healthcare. Reflecting on the turning point in her career, Stephanie told me, "Although tough at first, changing roles was a great decision that helped me find my passion and more clearly define my career path."

Miss Agresti has worked on numerous projects considered to be successful. Describing one of the successful projects she said, "One of my favorite things about my current role is helping amazing stories of innovation, strength, survival and recovery find their homes in media outlets." Furthermore, coordinating media opportunities with multiple sources and interviews can be complicated. Issues come up and sources may have to cancel last minute. With a smile on her face

love it,

Stephanie added, "Any day I pick up the newspaper and see one of the stories I helped secure on the front cover, or an article I have been working on with a reporter go live online, is a great feeling." In her opinion, hearing positive feedback from intelligent physicians who devote their lives to saving the lives of others, and from courageous patients who share their stories with the public in hopes of raising awareness for a cause, or helping others in the community know they are not alone, is a successful and exciting project. Miss Agresti needs a little more experience in the field to be able to describe a public relations disaster because at this point in her career she has not encountered any significant public relations disasters.

agree

Good For her

What Professor Litwin mentioned in class is true; in the public relations profession there is no normal day at the office. As Stephanie put it, "A day in the office can go from zero to sixty in a matter of seconds," and "every day is different at a public relations agency." Strategic communicators have to be able to switch gears quickly. Some days Miss Agresti spends most of the day writing and preparing materials, or coordinating interviews with physicians and patients for the media. Other days she attends one strategy and planning meeting after another. Working on a variety of client accounts at once keeps the work interesting. Indeed, each day is different from the one before it. Even though there is no normal day at a strategic communication office, there are routine frustrations, as in every industry. However, Stephanie believes successful public relations practitioners are problem solvers who are continually looking for ways to turn negatives into positives.

excellent

I learned in class that public relations is now being called strategic communication, meaning public relations is essentially the same as strategic communication. Working in the profession, Miss Agresti believes this to be true because recently the agency she works for rebranded, changing its name from R&J Public Relations to R&J Strategic Communications.

let's share this with the class

Public relations is still an important component of what they offer as an agency, but their offerings

have expanded to include digital and social media services. Being able to develop and disseminate strategic messages across a variety of platforms to specific audiences is key in being successful in today's digital world where there is an "... evident oversaturation of content out there." Strategic communication includes 5 major media, as I learned in class, and can flow in many different channels, so it is vital that all messages are cohesive across platforms. Stephanie's definition of public relations is "... the development and dissemination of strategic messages across specific channels to key audiences. This can be accomplished through a number of tactics, all of which aim to assist with managing and shaping a brand's reputation." (Don't forget 2-way-161)

Public relations practitioners must be avid writers, careful listeners, be detail-oriented and be able to work with people. They must also be able to build and maintain strong genuine relationships. Miss Agresti absolutely recommends public relations as a career. Stephanie provided the following advice for college students currently studying public relations: "Take as many opportunities to learn as possible through internships, on campus writing organizations, social media webinars and workshops. Also, seek mentors, read the news, keep up with industry trends and take time to listen and observe what's going on around you because you never know what will inspire you."

Miss Agresti is happy in her current role and looks forward to continue growing as a strategic communicator. She is grateful to be surrounded by a smart and experienced team. When asked what her dream career in public relations would be, Stephanie enthusiastically replied, "One day, I would love to work on public relations for a children's hospital, and continue to meet and work with amazing people with incredible stories to tell."

I really enjoyed reading this. You did, indeed, "Tell me a story."

↓
How gratifying

Interviewee's Business Card

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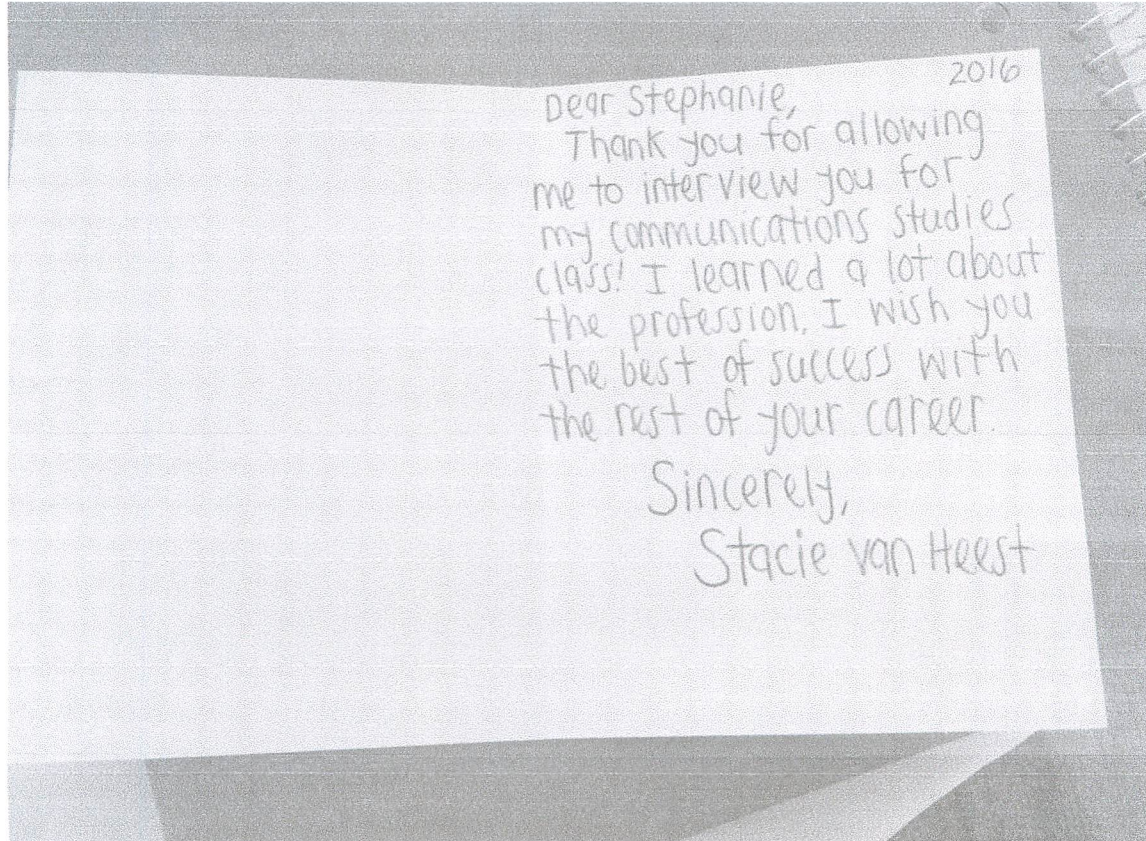
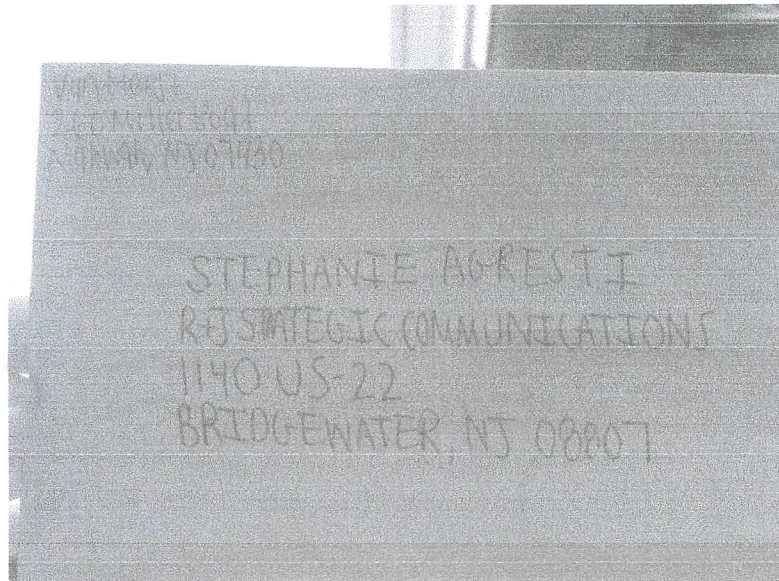
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Headline/Title: A Day in the Life of a Sales Engineer

Life often takes you down paths you never thought of travelling on.

Mike Faith dreamed of becoming an aerospace engineer. His dream came true after he graduated college. What he didn't expect, however, was that his side job would become his passion.

Faith received his Bachelor's of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Lehigh University in 1984. He met his future wife and they moved to Southern California so Faith could begin his job as a design engineer at Thompson Ramo Wooldridge. The pair took up second jobs as salespeople in the Amway business.

Amway sold everything from cleaning products to cosmetics. According to Faith Amway "was a networking marketing business. You basically had to recruit people to join you in the business. You made money by selling products and personally consuming them."

Not only did Faith have to recruit people, but then he had to teach them how to sell and recruit, too. It was imperative that he taught them well because he would get a percentage of commission based off of his recruits (and their recruits') profits.

"The training and coaching for the [Amway] job was incredible." Faith said.

"We learned communication skills, how to work with people, and how to train others to be effective," Faith said. In addition, "Amway was a professional, ethical, family-oriented business full of good people." ??????

Many different tools were used to train employees, including big seminars and group meetings. A successful speaker from Amway or a motivational speaker would be the highlight of these large monthly seminars.

In contrast, the group meetings were usually at someone's house. There was always a different topic of discussion, "sometimes we were training the new people- we used what we had learned from our sponsor [person that recruits you] or the seminar. Sometimes the meetings were to actually recruit people to your team."

Amway, though just a side job, taught Faith many valuable techniques that he applies today to both sales and strategic communication.

"I learned how to start a conversation with a stranger. One way to do it is to make an observation or talk about something interesting that is relevant to the situation you are in. I also learned how to read a person. Their body language, their actions, their voice modulation."

One of the main things Faith learned was "how to take rejection and still stay motivated to press on. This is a big one in any kind of sales."

Faith became very skilled and passionate about sales, and decided to apply the knowledge to his engineering career. After moving back to New Jersey, Faith landed his first 'real sales job' as a field engineer for Hewlett-Packard in 1998.

He was responsible for selling electronic test and measurement equipment to businesses in the state. The businesses included research and development companies, manufacturing companies, universities, and service providers.

"Generally, the customer would be developing a product and they needed a way to verify and test that product. Our products can do that."

With a wide range of customers, Faith used many of the techniques he learned to have success at his dynamic job.

There is not exactly a 'typical' day for a sales engineer.

For three or four days a week Faith would visit customers. These visits could entail a number of different things, such as training the customers on the product.

Often he would present a new product, known as new product awareness. Other visits were for moving a sale through the process to get a purchase order.

At this point, Faith stressed the importance of developing relationships with the customer as well as making your face known in the company.

"You have to go up and down and sideways in the organization you want to sell to so that you will have an open line of communication. If you do that, you can be efficient and get the sale done."

In addition, the presale, how you act and interact with customers before the sale, is just as critical as the post sale, the interactions that occur after the sale takes place.

According to Faith, it is critical to be present after the sale is made. Customers usually need help with the equipment or may have issues with the product.

If you are not available to help your customer, then you will be hurting yourself for the next sale with them.

"You need to put the same amount of dedication into the post sale as you did in the presale. You will need to help the customer again even if the product is there. They will remember if you didn't help them after you completed the sale and then they won't want your new product the next time you come around."

In addition, if there is an issue, it is imperative to talk to the customer immediately. The importance of an open line of communication cannot be overstated.

“For example if something comes in late, you should tell the customer right away and offer a loner unit for them to use while they wait for the unit.”

Faith emphasizes that public relations and sales go hand in hand.

“You need to know everything there is to know about your company and your brand. This is an essential step in to being able to communicate about what value your company brings.”

“The other part is putting that into action. You can say great things about your company, but that is worthless if you cannot uphold that image and deliver on it.”

In moments like these, Faith says, “You should have a really good elevator pitch, or value statement for your company.”

Having extensive knowledge about your company is the backbone of any sales position.

With over sixteen years as a sales engineer, Faith has seen failures and triumphs. One of the failures stands out in his mind.

He sold a piece of measurement equipment to a costumer who was a CEO of a small company.

Apparently, the customer thought he had gotten a bad piece of equipment because the measurements he was getting from it were not what he wanted to see. Yet, this customer’s equipment could have gotten bad readings because his products may have, in fact, been bad.

Regardless of what really happened, this customer overreacted.

He yelled and cursed at Faith and his applications engineer. They stood there and did not react.

Faith addressed the customer, “you’re very upset and I’m sorry to see that. You’re obviously not in the position to talk calmly about this. Maybe we can set up another time to meet.”

Even though this customer was usually very cordial and kind, he had reacted poorly. This experience taught Faith the importance of keeping emotions in check and upholding a sense of professionalism even in difficult or uncomfortable circumstances.

Faith explained that he knew this customer was a friendly guy because he had often taken him out lunch. Sharing meals is a great way to build relationships with customers old and new.

Building and maintaining relationships with clients is a critical aspect of any sales position.

Faith underlined the importance of spending time with your customers, “Sitting down and having a meal tends to bond you. While you’re having this meal or spending time together, you are able to find out more about the client.”

It is important to be observant; “There are usually hints in their office- whether it’s a picture of their kids or a bowling trophy. Then you can ask questions. You can ask about bowling- are they part of a league, what is their best score.”

Asking questions is important, but retaining the information is arguably more important.

“I am very good at keeping very detailed notes about my clients. I review the notes before I see them. If I find out a client’s daughter had a dance recital coming up, I can remember that and ask him about it. You are pretty much friends for life if you remember a detail like that.”

Having a genuine interest for people fosters relationships and friendships.

Faith mentioned a book that heavily impacted his view on relationships, and ultimately his career in sales.

“ ‘How to make friends and influence people’ [by Dale Carnegie] is literally the bible of how to make friendships. If you understand how to form this relationships then you can pretty much go anywhere in life.”

In his third year as a sales engineer, Faith had an overwhelmingly positive experience. He says it was luck: the meeting of preparation and opportunity.

“ I worked very hard to develop a relationship with a company called Multilink when they were just getting started and only had a few employees. I got many of my application engineers involved in their company and had an understanding of their needs.”

At the same time, the market forced many startup companies, such as Multilink to expedite.

“We helped them develop their product and they needed more test equipment. Many [of the startup companies in New Jersey] were buying because they had no budget restrictions. When the time came for Multilink to buy [test and measure equipment] it was only natural for them to buy it from us.”

They ordered so much equipment that the orders were backlogged.

Halfway through the year Faith sold less than \$100,000 worth of equipment to Multilink, but by the end of the year he had sold them over \$10 million. Putting time and effort into relationships really paid off.

According to Faith, the sales game has evolved along with technology

“From a relationship point of view the cardinal rules still hold true. But the way you interact with the customer has definitely changed. Now, people don’t answer the phones or listen to voicemails. For many people you really need to give them a motivating reason for them to give you face time.”

In addition, the way customers view a product and the way a salesperson makes a sale has changed.

“Consumers are so used to doing product research and comparison online. By the time they get to you about 57% of the buying decision has already been made up.”

Faith explains that the customer may have already decided to buy from a competitor because of this prior research, but they will still call you in to get two other bids.

“You need to prove your worth which can be a challenge.”

Social media has also changed the game.

“Your company needs to have a presence on social media. You need to have adequate content in things like YouTube and Facebook. You need to align with the technology generation-anyone in the know.”

It is also an important tool for hiring because people want to see positive messages when looking at a company.

Faith encourages anyone interested in sales to “Make sure that the company you’re considering holds their sales force in very high regard. Some companies view the sales team as very important and respected. They are allotted resources like a car and a phone. At the other extreme, some companies view the sales force as a necessary evil.”

Also, “look hard at the compensation plan. It is important that you are at a company where you are able to make more money even if you surpass your goal. This way you will have more motivation and incentive to work hard.”

Faith also praised the flexibility of the job “Working in sales is the closest thing to working for yourself. You are able to make your own hours and work it around your life. I was able to make it to all of my kids’ soccer games, and communions, and graduations.”

Faith’s workplace has evolved over the years “My part of the company got spun out of HP and became Agilent Technologies. Two years ago it was split in half and my section became Keysight Technologies.”

Faith is currently a District Manager for the Northeast Field Applications Team where he is responsible for leading and managing sales engineers.

Interestingly enough, this current job seems to be a sort of evolution of his job as a representative at Amway all those years ago.