

Exploring the Glamour and Strategy of the Beauty and Fashion Public Relations Industry

Sylvie B. Feldman

S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University

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About Vanessa Veltre

Educational Background

Vanessa Veltre received her college education at Towson University located in Maryland. While in college, Vanessa was a part of a Student Ambassador program called PRSA which she states “is a selective professional development opportunity for students who are enthusiastic about the college and want to enhance their communication and leadership skills. The goal of the program is to share the university experience with prospective students and their families and serve as special event assistants.” (V. Veltre, personal communications, October 7th, 2023)

Vanessa said, “I always knew what I was naturally good at and what I loved to do. I loved to write, meet people, be creative, and work on events.” Vanessa was able to narrow her choices into a field that fit her interests. She decided that working in PR and marketing would be a good direction for her to take. Vanessa graduated with a major in Communications receiving a bachelor’s degree on the Public Relations track and a minor in Marketing. Shortly after graduation, Vanessa secured a job at a small boutique PR firm in 2008 known for fashion, accessories, and beauty as an Account Coordinator. Some of her clients included: Cocobelle, Anna Beck Designs, Needham Lane, Nouba, Indah, and more. Later, in January of 2011, Vanessa became a Senior Account Executive for LaForce + Stevens PR agency where she worked with clients including OGX, Elizabeth Arden, OLEHENRIKSEN, QVC, Ouidad, Phillip Kingsley, Kiss My Face, ORLY, SHOW Beauty and more.

When I asked Vanessa what she likes about working in the communication field her response was, “I love meeting new people, working in the beauty industry, and being able to be

creative. Since I started in 2008, the field has evolved and changed drastically; however, those points have remained constant.”

Vanessa advises those interested in working in the Public Relations field to “talk to everyone you can in the industry. Ask questions. Be humble. Go above and beyond to show you care and want to be there.” “When you get into this industry, I believe that you need to be a few things to really succeed. It’s a fast-paced industry and you need to be flexible since things are constantly changing from an industry perspective as well as with clients. You need to be personable, approachable, creative, efficient, organized, a team player, and someone who understands the relevancy of being in the know with all things culturally.”

Role in Public Relations

Vanessa Veltre is an Associate Vice President of Alison Brod Marketing + Communications where she primarily works on beauty brands. Vanessa also from time to time tends to work on special projects in the lifestyle and fashion sectors of the business. She runs 5-6 brands at a time where she focuses on high-level strategy and planning from a media and influencer perspective. Vanessa added about her responsibilities stating “I’m responsible for being the client’s day-to-day contact, planning events, media coverage, managing our teams, and everything in between.”

Vanessa’s typical work day goes from 9:30 am to 6:30 pm, she explains that “when you’re a publicist you’re always “on” meaning, sometimes there are time-sensitive emails or events to get to or you’re on a deadline.”

Organization. Alison Brod Marketing + Communications offers a full range of PR, marketing, and influencer services including strategic media counsel, social media activation, crisis management + corporate communication, multicultural programming, branded content,

influencer ambassador + advocacy, media relations, experimental events + activations, talent relations, strategic partnerships, pro-artistry relations and regional media + programming.

ABMC has been featured in more than one hundred media outlets. (Alison Brod, 2016)

“Alison Brod Marketing + Communications is a full-service PR and marketing company in New York City. The agency represents over 70 beauty, lifestyle, fashion, and consumer brands and we are a company of 80 women. We represent brands such as Panera, Dunkin Donuts, Frida Baby, L’Oreal Paris, Charlotte Tilbury, Garnier, IT Cosmetics, Essie, and Lancôme to name a few.” (V. Veltre, personal communications, October 7th, 2023)

Overview/Specialization of Public Relations Sector and Special Areas of Focus and Skills

Vanessa specializes in media relations, planning, and securing events.

Media Relations

“Media relations can be described as a company’s interactions (directly or through intermediaries) with editors, reporters, and journalists from national, local, specialty, and trade publications or online and broadcast outlets. The goal is to communicate a message, story, or information by convincing the journalist(s) it is newsworthy and deserves mention or focus in their publication or broadcast outlet.” (Page, 2020)

“Another component of media relations critical to your success is to be an effective liaison between the company and the media. Dana Perino, who served as White House Press Secretary to President George W. Bush (September 2007–January 2009) and is now a commentator on Fox News, explains it this way: “Your job (in the White House) is to represent the President to the media, as most people expect, but it is also to represent the media to the President—both roles are crucial to your success in the job” (D. Perino, personal communication,

2017). This has clear relevance to the role you will play between your client or company and the media.” (Page, 2020)

Event Planning

Event Planning requires the public relations professional to choose the time, date, and venue that connects with what the audience wants. Public relations professionals should create a clear outline and detailed event plan that includes all elements of the event. “Strategic planning is deciding where you want to be in the future (the goal) and how to get there [the strategy]. It sets the organization’s direction proactively—avoiding ‘drift’ and routine repetition of activities.” (Horn, 2023, Slide 2)

Securing Events. Securing events calls on the public relations professional to manage, execute, and plan events to uphold a positive image and reputation for the person or organization hosting the event. As a public relations practitioner, you have to be able to set objectives, and goals and be clear on the purpose of the event. PR practitioners have to consider what they want to accomplish and establish goals for audience engagement, media attention, and public perception. PR practitioners need to be able to identify their target audience and stakeholders for the event and tailor the event to their client’s preferences and interests.

How Vanessa Veltre’s job aligns with Harlow’s definition of PR

As it connects to Rex Harlow’s definition of PR, media relations help to build long-term relationships between an organization and its publics. “Harlow wrote that public relations needed some common basis for understanding what it is, what it can do, and what constitutes acceptable work in the field.” (Heath, 2013) Rex Harlow, a pioneer in the field of public relations, defined it as "a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of

communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its publics." (Horn, 2023, Slide 12)

Managing an organization's communication with the media is a part of Vanessa's job in media relations. Establishing and preserving open lines of communication and understanding between a business and the media is the goal of media relations specialists. They assist in the dissemination of information to the media and support the company in fostering relationships with journalists, reporters, and media outlets in order to guarantee positive and accurate coverage.

A typical component of public relations is Vanessa working directly with clients, who could be individuals, companies, or organizations. Practitioners such as Vanessa assist clients in developing effective communication strategies for their various publics, such as consumers, stakeholders, and the wider public. The accomplishment of the client's aims and objectives depends on this partnership.

Vanessa helps secure and plan events like press conferences, product launches, or promotional activities. The organization can interact with its audiences at these events and spread its messages. Securing events involves giving people the chance to interact and communicate with one another. Planning events often involves organizing activities that promote understanding and cooperation between an organization and its publics. Effective event planning aligns with an organization's objectives and facilitates communication, acceptance, and cooperation among the involved parties.

Media relations, client collaboration, and event management all play a fundamental role in fulfilling the broader purpose of public relations and contribute to achieving Rex Harlow's definition of public relations.

How Vanessa Veltre's Work Differs from my Expectations of Public Relations

My expectations of public relations have come from the perspective of people who either have careers in social media or those who have established their brands and have become influencers as their full-time jobs. In high school, I was on the board of the Association of Creative Thespians. My role as Historian was to create and manage the website, and create content for social media profiles including TikTok and Instagram. As a content creator, brands reach out to me via email to collaborate on campaigns and send me products so that I can promote the products on my platforms, TikTok and Instagram. This has allowed me to create connections and foster long-term relationships that are mutually beneficial.

“Mutually beneficial relationship, a key theme in resource management theory, argues that organizations craft missions and visions that call for operations to gain resources they need to succeed. The logic of MBR reasons that when people believe that organizations operate with their interests in mind, those people support rather than oppose the organizations. Thus, they buy from businesses they believe give them full value for goods and services purchased. They support activists or other nonprofit groups that share values and hold similar goal-oriented commitments like ending specific childhood diseases. They believe in and support governmental agencies that act in their interest, in what can be seen as the public interest, where they are the “public.” (Heath, 2013)

I typically see public relations from the perspective of a content creator instead of seeing it through the lens of a public relations practitioner. I have always loved receiving PR packages as a content creator but wasn't necessarily aware of all the research, strategy, and planning that needs to take place on the other side for a campaign to be effective and successful. My conversation with Vanessa highlighted the many facets that go into the distribution of products

and PR packages. Protecting a brand's image and tailoring it to a client's needs is an instrumental part of how the public relations process occurs. Vanessa has a fundamental role in ensuring that the content created aligns with the brand's image and reputation.

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