

## Career Profile

### Miranda MacDonald, Social Media Specialist

Many students quickly rush into further education following their undergraduate degrees. That is, except Miranda MacDonald, a 2006 English and Communications graduate who refused to follow the path of immediately pursuing more education. Miranda had been led to believe that in order to pursue a career in public relations she would need post-graduate courses following her BA. Instead, Miranda began accruing volunteer, work and networking experiences *early on* in her academic career in order to make her resumé strong immediately following graduation. "I didn't think that there was anything that a one-year PR course could do for me except cost me money when I could be making some". Despite not having a specialized diploma, Miranda continually committed to volunteering and career planning throughout university and conducted an assertive job search following graduation - all of which has paid off.



Currently, Miranda is a Social Media Specialist with the Corporate Communications team at Rogers Communications Inc.. Social media has revolutionized PR (and marketing) practices creating unique career roles managing the organization's online image, content, message and brand. Within this role, Miranda manages the social media tactics of external communications, writes content and conducts video interviews for the Rogers corporate blog - [RedBoard](#). In addition, Miranda co-ordinates sponsorships of various social media events across Canada (e.g., Mesh – Canada's number one Social Media Conference in Toronto), manages blogger relations with more than 50 online influencers and engages customers online via Twitter, blogs and other forums to answer questions and assist with issues. If a new device is launching, it is Miranda's role to determine how to best promote that launch.

So how does one land this job? In summary, being extremely assertive, strategic volunteering and networking, networking, networking!

As far back as high school, Miranda worked as a reporter and photographer with her hometown weekly newspaper, The Kincardine News. As a university student, Miranda served as a production assistant, news writer and photographer. Volunteering with The Cord was a great activity for Miranda as it gave her the opportunity to try out a bunch of different journalism roles including interviewing and writing as well as production and graphic design. Being enrolled in the co-op program, Miranda secured two work terms with Research in Motion where she was given an opportunity to further refine her writing repertoire as a technical writer and exposed her to a corporate environment. The combined exposure to the corporate world along with experience as a reporter led Miranda to believe that she would be a great fit for a media relations career since she'd been on both sides of the role. "I thought I'd be the perfect liaison between the company and the media because I had a good understanding of what both needed and wanted from each other. I knew what sorts of questions the media would ask, and I knew what sorts of corporate news the media would cover." Following graduating, a posting in Media Relations at Nortel came up which she secured and worked at for 2 years authoring press releases and developing outreach plans. While at Nortel, Miranda consistently looked for opportunities to work social media elements into the traditional PR plans. Realizing she was keen to find more opportunities to leverage social media, she embarked on a networking mission that involved having coffee with over 32 different people (for "informational interviews"), which lead her to an opportunity to meet with a Senior Director of Social Media at Rogers Inc. resulting in her landing her current role.

For Miranda her greatest rewards include phenomenal opportunities to travel and attend social media conferences. For instance, Miranda recently travelled to Utah to film [a video](#) helping to promote Rogers products and services through YouTube. Miranda identified her job as a fantastic outlet for creativity where she gets to write, produce and star in various videos to promote Rogers products and services. Of course with every career come certain challenges. "Social media never sleeps. People don't stop commenting or asking questions just because it's after 5. One of the major challenges for me is making sure I maintain a good work/life balance with this role."

To examine whether a career in public relations (or more specifically social media) is the right career path for you, like Miranda, you need to cultivate volunteer or paid opportunities that allow you to hone your writing skills. Miranda indicated that many corporations actively track coverage in blogs as much as they track coverage in mainstream business and trade publications. Miranda notes that "citizen journalism" is a revolutionizing form of media as it provides an excellent way for a company to generate a discussion that will allow people to talk more candidly about issues, products or services that may have traditionally been filtered by mainstream media. Maintaining your own online presence that is professional, authentic and dynamic (via blogs, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) is also *integral* to showcasing your writing talent and social media savvy. "For any applicant we get for this team, we very often search them out on Facebook, Twitter and Google. If nothing at all comes up - as in they have no online footprint, it wouldn't really speak highly of their interest and dedication to online/new media".



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