

## Career Profile

### **Pamela Youngberg, Corporate Communications Project Manager**

By: Martina Fallon, Student Career Leader

Pam Youngberg, featured in top of picture – busy with her fellow brand boosters Laura Beingsner ('06) and Julie Millard ('93) raising brand awareness among OTIP employees.



As a graduate of Laurier's Bachelor of Business Administration degree from WLU in 2002, Pamela Youngberg had always focused on being an accountant. It was not until midway through the third year of her studies that she realized the drive and focus behind the accounting profession did not appeal to her. Although Pam still had a passion for numbers, she wanted to uncover a career that would appeal more to her creative side. During her last year of study, Pam complimented her finance concentration with several marketing courses, which allowed her to broaden her knowledge, as well as her career prospects.

Pam is currently a marketing and corporate communications project manager for the Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP). "I'm not sure it ever crossed my mind that I would be working in insurance, but it ended up being a great fit." Her current focus spans several areas including: project management, online work and internal communications. Her most recent accomplishment surrounds the launch of a new website for OTIP and two years ago, she assisted with the introduction of a new Intranet. Pam's experience and performance has lead her to speaking engagements at a national Intranet conference where she presented a case study to highlight the type of work being performed at OTIP, along with the learning gained from these projects. More specifically, she speaks about OTIP's Intranet and their journey, highlighting her role as an internal communicator and project manager.

Pam loves the surprises her career affords as no two days are exactly the same. "There is always something new going on...always something new to learn ... and I love learning. I enjoy working with all the different departments and a variety of people across the organization." A learner by nature, Pam continually commits to professional development activities. For instance, she has taken French at UW as well as project management and graphic design at Conestoga College. In order to keep constantly informed about the communications industry, Pam is a member of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) local chapter and serves as the regional treasurer for the Canadian Eastern Region Board. In addition, she is a member of the local Project Management Institute (PMI) Chapter and is currently participating in a mentoring program as a mentee. With all this ongoing learning, Pam's greatest challenge with her job is that there are just never enough hours in the day.

As far as trends in the insurance and communications industry, Pam explains that the advent of new technology has significantly impacted decisions regarding how to project company messages most effectively in order to reach target demographics. In the field of business communications, it is integral to stay on top of these trends and to understand how (if at all) these trends impact businesses and whether customer demands have changed. For example, Pam notes that there are a lot of different expectations from new grads/employees versus the aging baby boom. A boomer is more likely to call a meeting and discuss something face to face whereas a Generation Y employee or customer is likely to still be living at home and would rather share ideas and collaborate online. "Communicators need to understand what their key messages are and how to craft them to reach each generation."

A key piece of career wisdom Pam wishes to pass on is, "always be aware of your surroundings. You never know where opportunities will appear." Especially with respect to the corporate communications industry, Pam stresses the importance of a portfolio as it can really set candidates apart in the eyes of a

recruiter. Participating in a variety of activities can help add to a portfolio and help to better sell oneself during an interview. As an undergraduate student, Pam spent a lot of time at Laurier's career centre making use of various job posting services as well as company orientation sessions. She suggests that students take advantage of everything Laurier has to offer. "Volunteer, meet people, network. Yes I know sometimes this is easier said than done. But the people you meet in university and build relationships with will always be there for you down the road."

While at WLU, Pam volunteered with the Student Alumni Association (now called the Laurier Student Alumni - LSA), which then lead her to landing a summer job as the alumni assistant with Laurier's Alumni Relations department. Through this opportunity she was able to gain experience in event planning and project management. Above all, her volunteering and summer jobs at Laurier enabled her to foster connections and build relationships which ultimately lead her to securing a position at OTIP.

Pam doesn't know if she chose a career in corporate communications as much as it chose her, but she tells us "If you enjoy working with a variety of people and learning new things while wearing a thinking cap and adding a creative flair to everything you do...perhaps corporate communications is a career for you."

For more information on the various volunteer engagements and professional associations that helped Pam foster her career path, please visit:

Grand Valley IABC - <http://iabccgrandvalley.ca/section/view/>

Project Management Institute Chapter - <http://pmi-ctt.org/section/view/>

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