

# UCT GetSmarter PR course offers online access to latest thinking

Staying on top of the new world of public relations requires effort to keep up with industry change or best practice and new tools and platforms. UCT's GetSmarter PR course allows seasoned PRs to freshen up on the latest techniques and trends, in-house marketing managers to understand the value of third party endorsement from industry influencers and freelancers who want to stay ahead of the PR curve, a part-time, viable solution for multi-tasking professionals.



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The PR short course head tutor, Rebecca Cronje, says that few industries are exempt from a rapidly changing 24/7 world and what one learned even five years ago can quickly become outdated. The PR profession has undergone a major makeover in the last few years and the practice is very different from its days of long lunches with the editor.

“Ten years ago, we were not using social media to engage stakeholders, user-generated content had just become a buzzword and the thud factor of traditional media clippings still held a lot of weight. Fast forward to 2016 and today’s PR integrates with social, digital, activations and events; advises businesses and brands on their reputation; engages stakeholders; produces video, visual, audio and written content and brokers relationships with strategic partners,” says Cronje.

While most PR agencies are on the cusp of new communication tools and trends, for the smaller boutique shops, freelancers or in-house PR, this information may not be as readily available. “There are plenty of very good websites that keep the industry informed, such as PRDaily.com, The Holmes Report and Trendwatching.com. Yet this is not always enough, especially when it comes to the practical implementation of the new shiny app that is shaking up everyone’s smartphones.

“Online learning is an accessible way to stay on top of it all while holding down your day job. The PR course is managed part-time and modules cover themes including stakeholder relations, how to create traditional and online content, online PR,

social media and crisis communications.”

Managed through GetSmarter’s VLE (Virtual Learning Centre) both student and tutor engage with one another in daily forum discussions, quizzes and written assignments and receive constant support from a dedicated course coach.

“From the lead story on your app, links in your Facebook feed to your favourite magazine’s newsletter, a large portion is motivated by PR people. In-house, it is the PR who is tasked with ensuring everyone in the company is engaged, that company news is consumed and understood and that staff present a positive brand image both physically and virtually.”

SMEs also find PR a very useful tool when launching or growing their business. Often bootstrapping their ventures in the early days, SMEs tend to do as much in-house as they can to save their media spend. Knowing how to create content, position your business and who to pitch to promote your ideas is invaluable and can give a start-up that much-needed lift-off.

“PR is relevant to anyone involved in marketing and business and in today’s increasingly integrated world, it is a timeless tool that teaches you how to communicate with stakeholders and strategically build your brand. However, to stay competitive and current you need to know of and use communication channels of the day,” Cronje concludes.

The UCT GetSmarter PR course runs every three months. The next class starts on 4 August 2016. For more information, go to [www.getsmarter.co.za](http://www.getsmarter.co.za).

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>