What Green Might Mean for DBC Members
By Kate Geagan MS, RD

It’s hard not to almost feel physically altered by all that has transpired in the US over the past year. In short, change (economic, political, social and environmental, to name just a few) is here. As Thomas Friedman noted in his best selling book “Hot, Flat and Crowded,” there are new global realities. Big ones.

For America, however, this can be a tremendous opportunity.

I believe that the intersection of “green” with our role as nutrition experts is precisely one of those perfect opportunities. While most Americans are aware that food impacts how you look, feel and perform, few realize the true extent to which our current modern food system impacts the planet. And a flurry of research in the past five years is quickly building a case that the American Diet is the sports utility vehicle (SUV) of eating styles.

But can Americans really fight global warming with their fork? Surprisingly, yes. When it comes to greenhouse gas emissions (which comprise only one sliver of the broader issues of sustainability), most people are shocked to learn that switching to greener food choices can actually reduce global warming as effectively as stepping out of an SUV into a new fuel-efficient vehicle.

So how does green present opportunities for dietitians everywhere, especially those in business and communications? Some key ways include:

1. Registered Dietitian (RD) messages about nutrition and health overlap in many respects with a “greener” diet as well. This helps to not only refreshen our own nutrition messages to highlight specific connections, but will offer new opportunities for us in many sectors including: government, the corporate world, foodservice operations, agricultural industries and healthcare.

2. Perhaps more importantly, this also presents a chance for RDs to take the lead in framing the coming debate about just what constitutes “healthy eating” at a national level. And it provides an opportunity for us to rethink some of our recommendations and messages that are actually a more “carbon dense” way to eat.

3. To help Americans understand how to best reach their own health and weight goals without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs is a continued on page 6
I can’t believe the ADA Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo (FNCE) has come and gone. The FNCE Committee of Erin DeSimmone, MS, RD, LDN, Amy Lauer, MS, RD, and Barb Pyper, MS, RD, CD, did a fantastic job of organizing a fabulous reception at the historic Chicago Firehouse with over 200 DBC members and many sponsors in attendance. At the networking breakfast we honored Marsha Diamond, MA, RD with our Founder’s Award and Linda Schuessler, MS, RD, LD with our Circle Award. Congratulations to these wonderful DBC Executive Committee members who have contributed generously with their time and talent. At FNCE, DBC sponsored the session, “Live Like You Mean It—The Experience”. Our speakers, Ken Wasco and Ellyn Luros-Elsdon, RD, captivated the audience with their road map to a more meaningful life. DBC’s other sponsored program featured Jean Caton, MS, MBA, RD and Mary Cluskey, PhD, RD guiding leaders with management skills to enhance opportunities for advancement with their presentation, “From Practitioner to Manager: Developing Your Leadership Profile”. You can find the synopsis on www.eatright.org/FNCE2008. A big thanks goes to Ken, Ellyn, Jean and Mary for their outstanding programs.

The Membership Team is piloting LinkedIn for ADA and it will be open only to DBC members at this time. Terri Raymond and her team are expanding the mentoring program and hoping to offer student discounts for membership. Currently, we have 9 Regional Networking Coordinators (RNCs) throughout the US offering informal networking opportunities. We are looking for RNCs in California and other parts of the country. Cheryl Toner, MS, RD, has been our RNC champion and produced the great slide show seen at the membership showcase and networking breakfast. Last, but not least, Sally Cummins Healy and Kendrick Repko, have put together a slate of candidates worthy of a standing ovation.

Rayona Baker, RD, LD and her marketing team have updated the website, exhibits, member postcards and other marketing collateral. DBC now has a unified look that is definitely cutting edge. DBC members will present “The Nuts & Bolts: How to become a Dietitian in Business and Communications” at seven state dietetic meetings in 2009.

Char Norton, MS, RD and her education team are continuing their monthly tele-forum educational series through the Foodservice Coaching Group. An in-depth four part series will be offered as well, which will be announced in the spring newsletter.

Our sponsorship team, chaired by Karen Chowdhury, LD garnered great support from our friends in the industry. Without their generosity, we would be unable to offer the fabulous programs and networking events throughout the country. Please review this year’s sponsors and thank them when you see them.

Getting involved with DBC is the best way to enhance your membership and meet incredibly talented dietitians. Contact any DBC Executive Committee member to see how we can meet your needs and expand your horizons.
Shaping the Future of Our Profession by Working with Interns

By Melissa Halas-Liang, MA, RD, CDE, CNSD

My business journey started out not as a business idea at all. It was the summer of 2006. As a new mom, I watched with growing concern as other moms I knew fed their kids 10 am snacks consisting of alphabet cookies (“aren’t they so cute?”), fruit roll-ups (“it’s fruit, right?”), lowfat girl scout cookies (“they’re only 110 calories, they must be good?”). I was saddened.

As a registered dietitian I wanted each mom to know magically all that I did - how blueberries, not fruit roll-ups, were a better choice for that snack. If only they knew that blueberries may help prevent UV damage and help their children remember all that newly acquired knowledge! If only those moms knew that green leafy vegetables provide the lutein and xeanthanin found in the retina of their children's eyes! If only they knew that snack choices should be based on more than cuteness or calorie content, then maybe they would choose more fruits, veggies, and whole foods. I needed to do something. Parents just needed to “see the light” and learn the right way to feed their kids healthier.

I wanted to inspire and show them the tremendous physical and mental benefits a child and family can achieve through good nutrition. But, how to reach all those parents? What better place than the internet, I decided. My specific plan evolved into the creation of a mega website where registered dietitians and nutrition scientists would be promoted as nutrition experts and provide tips and tools to help grow healthy families and communities. Our audience would be parents, teachers and health care experts. Since existing nutrition mega sites included messages by celebrities, fitness experts and physicians, RDs needed to be connected to big consumer friendly sites as well. On my site, registered dietitians would write the articles, be represented on the expert editing team, and sign off on approvals of article content. I envisioned a unique community of RDs connected to a site where we could tap into each other's talents and share successes. There could be a barter system for presentation materials and mini-websites for writers in exchange for content to feed the message.

Additionally, I planned to create cartoon characters who would entertain kids, while subtly promoting healthy eating. These super kids, later named the Super Crew™ would appear in children's books, on my site and when educating through community outreach. The concept of “superkidsnutrition.com” was born and I knew I had my work cut out for me! So I sat down and considered my skill set. What did I have that was an asset in my career thus far?

- I was hard working: Having drive and determination is important as many new businesses don’t make it past a year.
- I was a good mentor: I’ve always enjoyed mentoring and teaching and I knew I could help people fine tune their talents. As a past clinical manager at a teaching hospital I had expanded our internship program from clinical to include food service and community rotations. For the length of my career as a preceptor it has been a passion of mine to help shape the future of our profession through mentoring and teaching interns.
- I was creative: I knew my plans were too big for one person. What I needed was help!

At the time, I was a working mom with a husband and new baby at home. Volunteer work was also on my schedule. Fortunately, my current job allowed me to work from home, with flexible hours, a big advantage when becoming an entrepreneur.

Starting a business is full of challenges. One of the most difficult tasks is to get everything done on your long to-do list according to your time line and business plan. I started to explore the idea of involving dietetic interns in my project. I had provided an elective internship rotation through my teaching job and had a working relationship with a site coordinator from a dietetic internship program. I reviewed their elective and community dietetic internship objectives and carefully evaluated if what I had to offer could meet these objectives. As someone who works from home, I was not sure if this informal setting would be perceived as too casual of an internship. I was serious about strictly
adhering to core objectives and wanted to show from the start how this internship would be a win-win situation for the University and its students.

As it has turned out, dietetic interns have helped my business in many ways. They have helped develop the nutrition curriculum section of my website while learning what defines effective education, conducted interviews which enhanced their confidence, provided exposure to the diverse opportunities in our field and improved verbal and written communication. My interns were learning and building a solid evidence based foundation while my business plans began to take shape more quickly.

Sample of Intern Projects with www.superkidsnutrition.com

1) Research - gathering journal articles on a specific topic, categorizing or summarizing content. Tapping into the interns’ interests produces better results.

2) Developing presentations with lesson plans, props and scripts – then presenting in the community. They have learned to appreciate how much time goes into an effective and professional presentation while improving their public speaking skills. This will be an asset when they interview for their first job, when speaking to members of our health care team and when working with future clients. As we work to have registered dietitians recognized as the nutrition experts in the public eye, we need to ensure that interns learn to grow and fine tune their nutrition communication skills.

3) Interviewing nutrition experts and writing articles - this is how they get to hear first hand about a RD’s or nutrition scientist’s personal career journey and his or her unique perspective on nutrition messages. They also make a future professional contact. It is important to make sure the intern has the maturity and professionalism required when working with the public. They need clear steps for all processes. I have learned to make no assumptions.

4) Developing fun nutrition activities. Interns master complex nutrition knowledge by communicating them in simplified messages to the public. They also learn to adjust literacy level while insuring the accuracy and integrity of the message.

5) Reviewing children’s books. Interns are able to tap into the creative side of delivering nutrition messages. They enjoy being able to list a web publication on their resume.

6) Evaluating websites that provide nutrition curriculum for the classroom or home. Interns benefit from being exposed to new and unique approaches to nutrition education. Although many of the sites are geared towards kids, the interns may find themselves using similar strategies to educate adults. Most people of any age can remember and apply simple nutrition messages.

Evaluating if an Internship is Right for You and Your Business:

1) How are your interpersonal skills and management skills? Remember - interns are not employees, but your good leadership and management skills are essential for a positive experience. Being able to delegate aspects of projects is crucial. Be clear that interns should not be assigned tasks, such as photocopying, spread sheets, and filing. If you need assistance with this, place an ad with career services at your local college. This can save you time and is relatively inexpensive.

2) Can you define clear expectations, while also teaching, mentoring and being supportive of students who may not have the life experience and maturity to follow through on their projects or have a clear picture of what professionalism means yet?

3) Does having an intern sound like an aggravation or a joy? If the thought of having an intern does not sound exciting, perhaps you should re-evaluate.

4) Can you schedule set times during the day to be available for student Q & A and for timely feedback?

5) Re-evaluate: Are you sure you have the time to create a win-win situation?

a. Create a list of benefits and challenges.
b. Will this save you time and money in the long run?

c. Do you have the time and resources to put the student’s learning first? It’s important to accept that not every project will save you time. For example, some projects took up significant time that didn’t help me or my business. Although I knew this up front, I felt compelled to create a project to match a student’s expressed interest or passion.

d. One goal should remain consistent: we need to shape future dietitians because their success is ultimately our own.

Planning Your Internship:

1) Define your internship:

a. Is it community, clinical, administrative or elective?

b. Community or elective options may include enhancing the intern’s skills in research, development of education material, marketing, and public speaking.

2) “Establish your core objectives based on ADA Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE) guidelines. Ask colleagues or DPG listserv members if they are willing to share their objectives.

3) Evaluate your business plan and decide what you can delegate.

a. Are these tasks of value to the students’ growth and development?

b. Do these tasks or projects match the Dietetic Internship core objectives? Stringent guidelines and appropriate experiences are essential to ensure the integrity of our profession.

4) Location: Where would the interns work on their projects?

a. If working off-site, can they complete at least half of the projects from their own homes? If done correctly, telecommuting can save everyone time. It can also help you “be green” while saving your intern the cost of gas.

5) Determine the length of the internship. Perhaps starting with a 3 to 4 day rotation is best. For example, I have longer internships for local students and shorter rotations for distance programs.

6) Prepare a list of expectations, communication and project guidelines and timelines for your new interns.

a. This could be in the form of a “welcome to the internship email” before his or her first day. It is important to be very specific and clear about all expectations.

b. One example of an expectation is the time clock issue: decide whether or not it is important for the intern to stay until a project is done within reason. I have found that many of today’s students are more sensitive to this issue asking questions I would have never dared to ask as an intern.

Although I prefer for an intern to finish on time, I emphasize, don’t stop because of the clock if you’re in the midst of learning something very beneficial. It was at these moments during my internship that I often made the biggest leap in my learning.

7) Establish a contract with the intern in addition to the school contract.

a. It is important to have both contracts available if an intern gets “off track.”

b. It is always best to clearly define what constitutes ethical behavior.

8) Interview the students to gather information such as:

a. Did they choose this rotation or was it assigned?

b. Do they seem able to work independently and responsibly? Not all student’s have the life experience or maturity yet to work partially from home.

c. Do they seem open to learning new things?

d. What are they passionate about?

6. What are their expectations and goals?

f. Ask an ethics question; after all they will be working in your home office.

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responsibility we will increasingly be faced with. In light of new energy and environmental realities, there is also likely to be a revaluing of food by the consumer. In fact, a 2009 trends report from Mintel that was recently posted on the DBC listserv has already hinted at it. In the past, the language of food as regards dietetics has been limited to terms such as nutrient density or calorie density, health outcomes or cost…. in today's market (possibly with legislation) and social climate (as awareness continues to grow) this may well be redefined in terms that seek to evaluate the “total impact” or “true cost” of choice. RDs who keep pace with these new realities will be best positioned to retain their value in this era of change.

4. On the lighter side, thinking green opens up a whole host of fresh soundbytes to garner renewed attention from clients, companies and media in innovative ways (something many of us are looking for). Double play on words like “energy” and “fuel” (which is also our own lingo for calories), and comparison with other aspects of our energy intense lives (like the afore-mentioned SUV) anchor our messages with immediate relevance and can help lighten somber truths. And perhaps most importantly, in these new realities, eating green is also a great way to save “green” in your wallet-something that will likely resonate deeply with both companies and consumers in the months ahead.


Some Easy Tips Ways to Cool Your Diet

1. Consider a flexitarian diet. Enjoy a diet rich in plants, with limited amounts of animal products, especially red meat and dairy products. At the very least this offers yet another benefit of realigning your diet with current USDA guidelines rather than typical American eating patterns.

2. Portions are key. Experts estimate it takes between 7-10 calories of fossil fuel to bring 1 calorie of food to the American plate. By simply taking less from the system (more in line with actual nutrient and calorie needs) you can reap immediate savings.

3. Think your drink. Liquids are one of the heaviest materials to ship and have a very high ratio of packaging to beverage.

4. Eat local and seasonal produce to the extent you can. While not a silver bullet for carbon emissions, there are numerous other “green” benefits, which help deliver a wide array of foods (and hence protective nutrients) that dietitians advocate.

5. Pare down the packaging and convenience foods. Get back to real food instead as much as you can, and try to limit use of single serving or overly packaged products.
Finding a School:

1) Perhaps you were a preceptor in the past. If so, you may want to reconnect with that program.

2) Ask your colleagues if they have interns and if so, from which schools? It’s to your advantage to find out who coordinates the program and the standard of expectations that is required from students.

3) If you do not have connections established, contact your alma mater and perhaps you could try a telecommuting trial internship for 3-4 days.

4) Develop a relationship with the Program and Site Coordinator to ensure compatibility. This is a great asset.

Steps to Take When Contacting a School’s Internship Site Coordinator:

1) Send your updated curriculum vitae or resume with your introductory letter.

2) Define what your business uniquely offers for the interns both professionally and personally. Be sure to highlight these benefits in your proposal. Taking the time to do this right shows your professionalism and reflects on your organizational abilities. Provide specific examples of projects that reflect these unique offerings.

3) Include sample projects as well as a clear list of how students can meet the ADA CADE core objectives.

4) Provide a summary of your company similar to an “about us” page on a website.

An internship evolves over time and its rewards are many. You are there to help develop the way the interns interact with the community and share in their excitement of putting new knowledge into practice. A few guidelines I have developed along the way are:

1) Think back to when you were an intern: remember it can be overwhelming at times. What were some things that helped you… offer these tips to your intern?

2) Make sure you end your first conversation on the same page—they can type up notes based on your conversation and email them back to you.

3) Be flexible, but at the same time be sure the intern stays on task.

4) Reinforce that any work they do must be their own. I recently added, “if it would be considered plagiarism if it was a term paper, then it’s plagiarism for an internship project.” Define “paraphrasing” as well and the importance of reading original research articles versus viewing abstracts. Not all undergraduate programs include a separate course in Research Methodology; don’t assume they know what qualifies as solid research.

5) Define the steps to get from “A to Z.” Make sure they know what a finished project entails; work half done will only create more work for you later.

Starting a business can be exhausting, but an intern’s passion and excitement can provide you with energy reserves you didn’t know you had. I enjoy mentoring because when I see the light go on in a student’s eyes during the course of a tough project, it can be tremendously rewarding.
Please share how you started your business.
I launched IT Nutrition, LLC in 1999 when I was living in Boston. IT Nutrition, LLC provides corporate wellness, speaking, consulting and media/spokesperson services. We have also developed nutrition-related programming for many large corporations, including GE Aircraft, Sun Microsystems, Reebok International, Yankee Candle, Boston Scientific Corporation and Citistreet.

Do you have a “typical” workday?
No! This is actually one of the things I love about my job. Some days I may be doing media work, writing materials for a client, giving a talk, researching some emerging info about the carbon footprint and diet, or any one of a number of things.

What are some of your daily duties and responsibilities?
For the past year, most of my activities have primarily revolved around writing and promoting my upcoming book, as well as raising my one and three-year-old children.

Tell us about your new book ..........
My book is called Go Green Get Lean: Trim Your Waistline with the Ultimate Low Carbon Footprint Diet (Rodale, March 2009). The goal of the book is twofold. Number one to let Americans really see how much their food choices contribute to their personal impact on global warming. The American Diet is the SUV of eating styles. Number two to show people how a leaner, healthier diet, with tenets that RDs have been embracing for years, is actually a much greener diet as well.

What prompted you to write it?
Just as all roads lead to Rome, all roads are starting to point in the same direction when it comes to personal and planetary health. My goal is to continue to find ways to invigorate our key RD messages so that people continue to come to us as the premier source of nutrition information. With "green" truly moving into the mainstream, I thought it was a perfect fit to position us at the forefront of the food dialogue.

In addition, the environment and green issues at large have always been a great personal passion of mine.

What surprised you most about dietitians who work in business and communications?
I know many people who contribute to this column say it, but it is so true - the possibilities are endless for our profession to play a key role in business and industry, and they will only continue to grow.

What are challenges facing dietitians in the changing work environment?
I think one of the challenges that I have seen in the past several years is that we have to be careful to be sure that our core values are aligned with what industry or business wants us present as our "voice". While this is certainly more the exception than the rule, it does seem that there are an increasing number of companies that want to use an RD to position their products as somehow more healthful or providing some benefit that may or may not actually be there. I think we need to be vigilant about not diluting the value of our brand and our expertise.

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Predictions for dietitians working in business and communications?
Green is rapidly moving from fringe to mainstream. Labeling and marketing around green will be here soon, and this is a tremendous opportunity.

What is the largest hurdle for dietitians just starting out?
Honing business related skills is currently a bit lacking in the traditional dietetics curriculum. However, anyone can assume that role themselves - take an extra business class, be an avid reader of a thoughtful reading list to address weaknesses, and seek out mentors to help in your journey.

Finally, what words of wisdom can you offer to dietitians who chose business for their career path?
Do not give up! Pursue your passion every day, even if you hear rejection along the way. Get involved with DBC! These professionals are truly at the forefront of what is happening in dietetics, and the chance for mentoring relationships and volunteer experience is invaluable.

Visit Kate’s website at www.itnutrition.com to learn more about her and the services of IT Nutrition, LLC.
As a dietitian working in public relations (PR), I receive many questions such as:

- How does a PR agency benefit from having an in-house dietitian?
- How did I enter this line of work?
- How can others pursue such a career?
- How does a dietitian benefit from a PR agency.

**PR Agencies and Registered Dietitians**

As many PR agencies have food and beverage companies as clients, dietitians can serve to bridge the gap between science and consumers. “RDs on staff give us a unique point of view and ability to deliver higher-order thinking for our clients. From leveraging health claims and the latest scientific studies to creating strategic partnerships and alliances, our nutrition teams know how to help our clients connect effectively with both consumers and key food and nutrition influencers,” says Susan Howe, Executive Vice President of Weber Shandwick, Chicago.

Today’s consumers are increasingly aware of the benefits of healthy foods, with 78 percent trying to eat healthier and 66 percent trying to eat snacks with nutritional value according to a recent survey. With these types of statistics, it is extremely important for food and beverage companies to know and understand the nutritional needs of consumers, and to fulfill that need in a way that differentiates them from their competitors. An in-house RD serves as the link that differentiates PR agencies. “I’ve encountered multiple perspective clients who were impressed that we have a RD on staff at a boutique agency. Plus, if you ever have a personal nutrition question, you have a counselor right down the hall,” says Virginia Devlin, General Manager of Current Lifestyle Marketing.

**How I Entered the Field**

I started my career in academics as a research dietitian conducting and analyzing human weight loss studies. From academia, I transitioned into industry as the Corporate Manager of Nutrition at Bally Total Fitness, where I focused on weight loss and wellness. This position offered great opportunity as well as the bridge needed to enter the PR industry. By working closely with the in-house marketing and PR departments, I was able to build a communications foundation that provided me with the confidence to pursue a career at a PR agency.

So how can others interested in pursuing a career in PR get started? For me, my communications foundation included proactive research on the basics of PR as well as the necessary communication skills, one being writing. A PR professional must be able to write materials for a variety of audiences, including healthcare professionals, consumers, clients and the media. For many dietitians, writing may not be something that is practiced daily.

If writing is not one of your strengths, practice. You can take a class at a local school or create an “Ask the RD” function at your work (ask co-workers to submit questions and on a weekly basis, send the answered question to your colleagues). You can practice writing and get a step ahead of others by collecting consumer insight. This goes hand-in-hand with nutrition or health-related trends.

This leads to another necessity of PR. Staying on top of nutrition trends and translating that information into consumer-friendly content. “For dietitians to succeed at public relations agencies, they need to be skilled written and verbal communicators that are able to turn nutrition science into media and consumer-friendly sound bites,” says Devlin. For example, knowing that 76 and 65 percent of consumers changed their purchase choice due to high blood pressure and high cholesterol, respectively, is of the utmost importance for food and beverage clients in regard to the key messages that have to be delivered to the media, healthcare professionals and consumers. Or, when considering food product labels, 71 percent of shoppers read the labels of food products for specific ingredients. This information may change the way food companies design/package their food products which, in turn, provides different angles for a PR professional when reaching out to the media and educating consumers.

Additionally, in May 2008, the FDA officially recognized a health claim for whole grain brown rice. According to the recent study done by the Food Marketing Institute, health-related claims motivate food purchases, as 62 percent of consumers purchased a food because of its whole grain claim. This is valuable information for dietitians who can help translate the science and leverage key points to enhance an existing PR campaign or begin a new one.

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All this information can boost the chance of getting your clients’ message across as well as helping you understand what your audience is and what they want. It helps you cut through the clutter and deliver a sound message.

One of the easiest things to do to increase your value and become more marketable in the PR industry is to take what you already know and use it in a different situation. Many dietetic training days, as well as real life professional experiences, focus on speaking and listening to patients. This is an extremely valuable asset in any industry, given that it is a fine-tuning of communication skills. The ability to listen, sympathize and rephrase to reassure that you understand what is being said, are fundamentals to dietetic training and of communication in general.

According to Devlin, she looks for RDs that “can demonstrate knowledge about and passion for nutrition topics, show enthusiasm as a ‘foodie,’ and demonstrate that they can translate their skills to a creative, fast-paced environment.” Howe adds, “We look for passionate communicators and dietitians who can translate the science into sound bites and have media experience, such as writing in their local newspaper, a newsletter or their own blog.”

How Registered Dietitians Can Pursue a PR Career
If you are interested in entering the PR industry, many agencies have a food and beverage marketing expertise that employs dietitians. “A great first step in entering the field is securing an internship - most are paid and span three to four months,” says Devlin.

Keeping the above mentioned duties in mind, my role varies from account to account with responsibilities such as writing consumer or healthcare professional materials, presenting campaign ideas that speak to specific health issues, managing a team, coordinating events, and much more. “At Current, because we’re a small agency, I really need team players. When looking for a dietitian, I sought someone who could share nutrition expertise and be our in-house expert, but who also can master the basics of PR and serve as a smart client counselor and integrated team member,” says Devlin.

Registered Dietitian Benefits
As you can see, the demand for and responsibilities of a PR agency dietitian are high, but so are the benefits. PR allows dietitians an opportunity to “spread the word” on a large scale and reach an audience they may not have previously been able. “Agencies can provide dietitians who are strong communicators with a new or different career path,” says Devlin. “In PR, you wear many hats - strategic counselor, creative director, team manager, skilled writer, media pitcher - and the variety of the job offers many challenges and opportunities. Every day is different!” Howe adds, “It’s a fast-paced and challenging environment crafting nutrition information in ways meaningful to consumers. Our goal is to be a true partner that helps our clients achieve both their communications and business objectives as more and more of our clients seek counsel on complex nutrition assignments.”

If you are interested in pursuing a career in the PR industry, be proactive, make the first move and learn as much as you can.

References/Books:
- “The Common Sense Guide to Publicity” by John DeFrancesco and Gary Goodfriend
- The Associated Press Stylebook
- A Writer’s Reference by Diana Hacker

— Jennifer Seyler, MS, RD, is an account supervisor at Current Lifestyle Marketing, a public relations agency that specializes in food and beverage clients. She can be reached at jseylenutrition@hotmail.com or 312-929-0507. For more information on Current Lifestyle Marketing and Weber Shandwick, visit www.currentlifestylemarketing.com and www.webershandwick.com respectively.
Breathe. Breathing to calm the mind and body is one of the 52 simple strategies offered in this book. Our natural physiological response to stress is shallow, restricted breathing. A few deep breaths can bring us back into the moment and calm the body and mind. Inner Peace for Busy People author, Joan Borysenko Ph.D., knows what she is talking about. Among her impressive credentials are a Ph.D. from Harvard Medical School, her research on the effects of emotions on immunity, health, and disease, and co-founding one of the first mind-body clinics in the 1980’s. This book is not new. It was first published in 2001- and yet has never been more relevant than in these times of global financial turmoil, stress over layoffs, and the rising cost of living.

If your life feels like a never ending to do list that leaves you feeling stressed and overwhelmed this book is for you. “Not enough time’ to read is not an excuse. The book is divided into six parts and 52 specific, practical strategies each only 2-3 pages long. Among the pearls of wisdom the author presents is that our use of time is truly a choice we make. Yet, so often we feel our lives are not under our internal control rather external life demands rule our world.

You are not alone if you are overwhelmed with life, stressed over finances, family demands, your job, burdened with another day with a mail box full of e-mails, a ringing phone, meetings to attend, and child care issues.

Here are a few of the strategies from the book that I found especially useful:

**Get Your Priorities in Order:** Don’t let your work come before family, friends, and self-care. The author suggests you buy a glass jar and some marbles. Every time you honor your three most important priorities put a marble in the jar. If at the end of the week there are 21 marbles in the jar you have succeeded. If there are fewer than 21, examine the barriers that got in the way and course correct next week.

**Focus on Making Small Changes:** You are stressed and unhappy yet you keep doing the same thing. The “enemy you know seems safer.” Make one or two small changes at a time. You didn’t arrive where you are overnight so don’t look to change instantly either.

**Give up Perfectionism:** “Anything worth doing is worth doing to excess.” Society, unfortunately, admires the sometimes addictive perfectionistic trait. A suggested solution - notice when the desire arises to be perfect. It can stop you cold in your tracks, cause you to miss a deadline, create undue worry, loose sleep. The author suggests you become aware of this “devil” and reflect on just how awful it really is (not to be perfect) and ask yourself who will really notice or care? What difference will it make in a week, a month, or a year? When it comes right down to it perfect is an imperfect goal because you will never achieve it anyway.

**Try Power Whining:** This one has to be my favorite. The author says you get two minutes to complain and then move on. She points out how the ‘pity party’ is about looking back and in no way helps resolve the issues you are complaining about. She suggests you look in the mirror, power whine for two minutes with hands on your hips, and the laugh.

If you are serious about making changes that will result in living and enjoying the gift of your life and not simply enduring the burden of the to do list called your life, then chose to incorporate some of these simple strategies into your daily routine. Fifty two strategies, one per week, can mean a year from now your life may be just a little less stressful. Practice the strategies with a friend, work colleague, book club, or a coach. An external source of accountability always helps us stay on focused. And one more thing - Breathe.
As medical informatics becomes global, it is imperative to understand nutrition informatics in the context of nutrition care and food service. Nutrition informatics pushes to the forefront quality promotion through the use of computers and information systems.

Nutrition informatics is known as “the effective retrieval, organization, storage and optimum use of information, data and knowledge for food and nutrition related problem solving and decision making.” Informatics is supported by the use of information standards, information processes and information technology.

How this applies to me?
While nutrition informatics isn’t knew to many of us, below you’ll find a few ways nutrition informatics applies to various areas within dietetics:

- **Foodservice systems management:** Computer use in foodservice has included almost all tasks involving food procurement, preparation, and delivery.

- **Educational/instructional/data intake:** Computers have been used both for writing and printing educational materials; software programs help consumers to learn more about nutrition.

- **Communication:** Technology supports data networks with other departments, e-mail communications, Internet, Web sites, aspects of patient privacy, and patient medical record documentation.

- **Nutrient analyses:** Interest in using computers to accurately calculate nutritional values of menus, patient’s intake, and modified diets was first documented in the early 1960s.

- **Nutrition research:** Researchers have used computers for areas of statistical computation used in reporting study results. Nutrient analysis programs are used by research dietitians for consistency. In addition, researchers use computer programs for accurate protocol data reporting.

- **Reimbursement for nutritional care:** Increasing success in reimbursement for nutrition care has prompted RDs to assess the use of doing so electronically.

- **Clinical nutrition care:** Nutrition informatics is quickly impacting this practice area.
  - The increasing use of electronic health records allows for greater use of nutrition informatics. Key actions have moved forward the adoption of health information technology including President Bush’s Executive Order (2004) setting a goal for an electronic health record for all Americans by 2014.
  - Health care accrediting agencies call for using aggregate data to pursue opportunities for improvement and redesigning information-related processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness, as well as patient safety and quality of patient care, treatment and services.

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**Harnessing Nutrition Informatics**

By D. Milton Stokes, MPH, RD, ADA
Delegate-at-large

—Milton Stokes is owner of One Source Nutrition—a private nutrition counseling practice—and a health communication doctoral student at University of Connecticut. Visit him at www.miltonstokes.com

For additional information & FREE professional education: www.eatright.org/HODBackgroundersFall2008
Coming up with story ideas  So how do you make sure your pitch has something of interest? At a minimum, all the experts we interviewed said to include why you are a good source, and what experience you have with the topic. Don't assume they will know! Once you've done that, think long and hard about your topic idea, and remember to keep your audience top of mind. Any information you can get on the demographics of the audience or readership for the show or publication you're targeting will be crucial. Study previous segments or issues for more information.

Once you've come up with some topic ideas, figure out how you can spin the story so that it's most interesting to the audience. As Anderer notes “Really, it’s all about the gimmick, or the ‘slant’. I did a lot of fitness segments, and you have to make them really interesting and novel. For example, you could do a million segments about fitness, but having a segment about “Five ways to get fit using the stairs in your house,” for example, is a fresh, catchy way to slant a fitness segment and draw viewers in.”

Also, if you’re doing TV or radio rather than print, think about the amount of time a given segment is, and plan your topic accordingly. “On the Today show, segments are generally four minutes,” says Anderer. “So think about what kind of information fits into four minutes, and how you could slant it to make it more interesting and topical. For example, if it was Thanksgiving, you could do ‘How to make healthy leftovers from your fridge the day after.’ If it’s Super Bowl time, you might want to do something on ‘Five healthy Super Bowl recipe makeovers.’ In general, ‘Top 5’ anything works really well. Also, success stories work really well, particularly if they are people who are more high-profile. For example, the governor of Arkansas, Mike Huckabee, lost a lot of weight. That’s an interesting story.”

Ross also notes the importance of your connections with others—connections dietitians are likely to have in abundance. “A big part of health stories are first person success stories and testimonials, so if you’re an expert on diabetes, and have a client who runs a diabetes support group, or who has had great success controlling their diabetes and is interested in speaking to the media about it, if you can connect that person to a producer, and give them everything they need, it just makes it that much more likely that they’ll pick up the story.”

Your Experience  Perhaps the biggest fear dietitians have in pitching media outlets is their perceived lack of experience. Don’t get it wrong: experience is important. But it’s crucial to remember that experience can be construed broadly. Have you done a speech at a local or regional professional meeting? Delivered presentations at wellness events or health fairs? All of these help comprise your communications experience. And don’t forget to mention any quotes in any publication, even if it was just your gym’s quarterly newsletter. As Anderer notes: “Don’t downplay any experience, ever!”

If you’re going for a national publication or outlet, be aware that a total lack of experience on the television side is probably going to prevent you from getting booked. Anderer notes this. “Keep in mind that for a national broadcast like the Today show, the first question my Senior Producer always asked me was: “Have they been on TV before?” The very first question.”

However, all the experts emphasized that even just a (good!) clip or two on local television can be enough to get you booked on a national show. Just make sure you get a tape of yourself. Ask at least two friends or family to tape the show for you. Without a tape, Anderer says, the producer “won’t just take your word for it that you’ve been on TV.”

Don’t despair, however: it is possible to just get booked on national media outlets without experience if you present yourself the right way. Riaz Patel, a producer for television shows like “How to Look Good Naked”, who has booked numerous health professionals, indicates a willingness to take a chance on someone. “I’ve repeatedly booked people for their first on-camera experience based on how noteworthy their experience was off-camera, or how passionate they were in a room. This is fairly typical of other producers I know and work with. Producers want to find the most engaging person to an audience.”

Anderer concurs with the need to show your personality and passion to get that foot in the door. “As a producer, you can sort of tell. The person has a certain ease about them, they seem relaxed and confident. But you also

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want someone who has a real fire—an obvious passion about the topic and a presence about them that commands attention."

Another great place to get both local and national media bookings without a lot of experience is radio. Marit Haahr, a radio producer for Public Radio International notes that this is in part because of the nature of the radio medium. "What makes public radio different is that we produce segments ahead of time and edit them so we have more of an opportunity to clean things up, so to speak."

The ability to clean things up, and the lack of a visual component, makes public radio shows more likely to take a chance on someone who doesn’t have media experience, particularly if they have the requisite professional credentials. "One nice thing about public radio is that we have a reputation for having guests whom we allow to talk a bit longer, or who have more of an academic or intellectual bent. And we don’t, obviously, care about what the person looks like, and the guest doesn’t have to worry about hair and makeup either!"

**The Importance of Networking**

An important point to remember is, much as dietitians network with each other, those working in media tend to connect with others in the same field. That means that if you get in good with a reporter at a wire service, and mention you’re interested in doing local TV, that person may be able to hook you up with a friend who produces local news segments and needs a dietitian. Ross notes that “Often times, I’ll email my friends, asking if anyone knows someone I can use for a particular segment.” And don’t forget that people in the media switch jobs and outlets all the time. Ross, for example, went from writing for the health and hospital beat in Chicago to producing health segments for Discovery Health in Washington, DC. Health sources she knew and respected from her wire service days were much more likely to get referred for media opportunities at Discovery Health. So, work those contacts, keep in touch, and always be as professional as possible. You never know what other opportunities those contacts can bring you.

Like so much in life, passion and perseverance can take you a long way. Anderer sums it up well. “Have a huge appetite for consumer information. Read absolutely everything you can get your hands on about hot topics in diet and nutrition. The New York Times makes it so easy—they have an entire health section right on the home page you can read. If you have expertise in [a given] area, get in touch with the writer and offer a quote for a follow-up story, or other stories this writer may tackle in the future. Also, chances are, when these stories are coming out, there’s interest in them, and you can follow up with a pitch to another media outlet taking a different slant or angle on the story, or offering your advice as a nutrition expert. There’s so much opportunity out there. You just need to take advantage of it.”

—Sheila Kelly, MS, RD is the president of Skelly Publishing, a provider of continuing education and practice resources for RDs. This article was adapted from the Skelly Publishing 14-CPE publication Booking and Acing Media Opportunities: A Dietitian’s Guide to Success in the Spotlight (2008). Visit Skelly Publishing at: www.skellypublishing.com. Contact Sheila at Sheila@skellypublishing.com.
Looking for a job can be both exciting and frustrating at the same time. I recently completed my dietetic internship and passed the RD exam. Five years of education, volunteering, and gaining work experience in the nutrition field have finally paid off and now I can begin my career as a registered dietitian. Since I have many interests in the nutrition field, I decided to keep my options open for my first job and see where it would take me. I began my job search by purchasing a subscription to JobsinDietetics.com, posting my resume on NutritionJobs.com and CareerBuilder.com, searching for clinical positions on hospital Web sites and e-mailing my internship preceptors.

But reality is setting in……. finding my dream job is tough. Not to say that there isn’t a plethora of jobs out there; it just takes patience and persistence to find the right match and location. Some jobs may sound perfect, but are too far of a commute or would require a huge move. I have found the most challenging part of this job hunting process is finding an employer who is open to hiring an entry-level dietitian. Most jobs require or prefer an experienced dietitian which makes it difficult to break into the field.

Entry-level status dietitians, like me, have a lot to offer. Since we are just beginning our careers, we are eager to do the best job we can possibly do. While we may not have years of experience, we have a skill set built from cutting edge undergraduate classes and hands on experience in a variety of settings through the dietetic internship. Because we have worked in a variety of settings, we easily adapt to new situations and work well with others.

While on this quest for the perfect job I have learned much about myself. Keys are to:
• know your particular strengths
• never sell yourself short
• be persistent

Even if you do not have all of the qualifications an employer is looking for, you may have other qualities that make you ideal for the job. From my experience creative and thoughtful cover letter and resume helps get your foot in the door. The interview is a time for you to sell your strengths and evaluate if the job is the right fit for you.

Searching for a job is a process that takes time, but remaining patient is key to finding a job that is the best fit.

Jennifer is currently working at Rebecca’s House, Eating Disorder Treatment Programs. Contact her at jenniferlynnpowers@gmail.com or 707-338-2474.
Jill Jayne, MS, RD, “Rockstar Nutritionist” • New York, New York

Rock ‘n Roll Nutrition CD for Kids Debuts at FNCE

FNCE 2008 marked the official release of the rock ‘n roll nutrition CD for kids, Get Me Goin’. A standing-room-only crowd of dietitians were the first to experience the new tunes created and performed by Jill Jayne, MS, RD, “Rockstar Nutritionist”. Get Me Goin’ is the soundtrack to the live, interactive show Jump with Jill, which teaches kids nutrition through music and movement. To date, Jayne has performed Jump with Jill for over 32,000 kids at more than 400 performances throughout the U.S. Listen to the songs (and add Jill as a friend!) at www.myspace.com/jumpwithjill. The CD is now available for purchase through www.jumpwithjill.com.

Sheila Kelly, MS, RD • Hermosa Beach, California

Sheila Kelly, MS, RD is president of Skelly Publishing (www.skellypublishing.com), an accredited Continuing Education provider for RDs and DTRs. Skelly Publishing now offers online continuing education programs, including videos and webinars, in addition to its line of printed self-study programs. Sheila started Skelly Publishing because of her interest in the convergence of business, technology, and communication with the world of nutrition. She is committed to empowering RDs to take advantage of the many opportunities in these areas, and the continuing education programs Skelly Publishing develops reflect this. Sheila will a presenter at the 2009 NYSDA and Florida Dietetic Association annual meetings.

ADA Member Benefit

ADA members now have access to free stock photos of registered dietitians in action in real work settings. Sign into www.eatright.org/adatimes and click on “Stock Photos” to download images of RDs who work in clinical dietetics, school nutrition, community programs, hospital foodservice, sports nutrition, supermarkets, government, senior health and more.

ADA members are welcome to use this collection of royalty-free professional images for community campaign materials such as flyers, signs, newsletters; educational presentations and reports; newsletters for dietetic practice groups, member interest groups and state affiliates; and other items (some restrictions apply). Visit www.eatright.org/adatimes for more information.
“All foods can fit.” This statement has often been the core of National Nutrition Month’s message. Dietitians (myself included) counsel and coach this message combined with others such as “it’s the portion size that matters” or “just a bite often satisfies a craving.” The question which has come to me lately is whether this message is truly sound. Has the message become outdated?

The choices in food today are endless. Just in potato chips alone, consider the choices. The range runs from guacamole chips to buffalo chips to flax chips to baked chips… the list goes on and on. Even chicken – skinless, boneless breasts to rotisserie chicken to stuffed chicken breasts to free range chicken to lemon pepper seasoned chicken. Food scientists and chefs alike are brilliant, making food taste absolutely fabulous. Can the consumer really make sound nutritious choices amidst all the variety and glorious flavor choices?

The question at hand is whether the consumer would be better served with a tighter list of foods from which to choose. The list would be nutritionally sound, individualized, balanced in taste, and include a few options from the “discretionary calories” category. By eliminating the extensive “choice” that consumers have today, could the confusion from too many options also be eliminated?

Is there really a downside to this approach?

“The world is flat.” “We live in a global economy.” How many times have you heard these messages? From many standpoints, it would appear to be true. But recent trends suggest the tide on a global economy in food may definitely be shifting. Packaged Facts’ Fresh and Local Outlook estimates that sales of “locally grown” products will reach $7 billion by 2011. Recent issues with melamine in infant formula and dairy products in China have consumers on heightened alert about imported foods. The new Country of Origin labeling rules that went into effect earlier this year bring back the marketing claim of “Product of USA.” The sustainability message has not yet reached the tipping point, but consumers are beginning to ask questions about the amount of energy utilized to bring food to their local grocery store. The world may be flat, but “close to home” is gaining momentum in regards to the food supply.

Speaking of locally grown… has this claim become the new organic? Is organic on the “exiting” portion of the trend curve, and if so, what’s causing the shift in this trend that was on a strong climb not more than a year ago? Savvy consumers now question the benefit of organic foods that are flown in from Brazil. Does burning all that fuel outweigh the benefit of product grown in accordance with USDA’s organic standards? With the economy tight, is the higher cost of organic forcing shoppers to be more selective about when they do and don’t opt for organics? At FNCE this Fall, there was debate on whether organic is better from a nutritional perspective, and while much research is underway in this area, there is not a clear cut answer today. The debate also included the topic of whether we could feed the world on organic product. There are many factors that weigh on the decision of whether organic products are a better choice – the food itself, the people who produce and handle the foods, the mileage it travels, the packaging, the impact on the land, the cost. Right now, the cost of organic products in a terrible economy is most likely overshadowing the other impacts on purchase decision, but the long term for organic remains to be seen.

The committee for the 2010 Dietary Guidelines is officially up and running. Sure to be key in the discussions this session are sodium, vitamin D, and calories coming from beverages. Stay tuned for more.
2008 Food & Nutrition Conference and Expo (FNCE)

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