

Actiongram

May 2014



Getting it all done



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2013-14 LPC President

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No doubt, I'm not alone.

Each day, I eye my to-do list and make a plan for what to tackle first. Then comes the urgent e-mail. The pressing phone call. The client who takes a little more effort than expected.

Oh, yes. And the child who has that project due tomorrow morning. "Didn't I tell you about that?"

Another with a critical boo-boo on his knee.

Hold up! Let me catch my breath.

I've asked three professionals in the industry how they handle the daily tasks and prioritize the important from the urgent: Kenna Rathai, Kenna B. Rathai Communications and current National Agri-Marketing Association president; Jackie Lackey, CEO and creative director of Encore Visions; and Van Holmes, Yamaha Motor Corp., U.S.A. PR/media relations consultant.

They've shared how they manage the stress of it all, too. Good stuff right here.



Kenna

How do you prioritize what gets done first each day?

Kenna:

"I went to an excellent time-management seminar several years ago and I still use some of the tips I learned there. One was to 'survey your landscape' three times a day.

I review my to-do list, check e-mails to see if any are urgent, return phone calls. By doing this first thing, around lunchtime and before I close down for the day, it helps me prioritize items and give me a sense of my productivity and if I need to kick it in gear.

The speaker also said that while there are always a lot of things on our to-do lists, every morning circle the ONE thing you need to get done that day. It's amazing how much this helps prioritize your day."

Jackie:

"I have a running list on my desk of tasks that need to be accomplished. I add to this list as I receive phone calls or e-mails or thoughts throughout the day and then use the old-fashioned scratch-off technique when a non-billable project is complete.

If I have a project on the list that is billable, I immediately e-mail or text our project manager the details of that project so she may enter it into our project management software we use. This information is then available to me online and by e-mail, reminding me of deadlines so I can work them into my daily schedule.

Being a creative mind, I often have ideas late at night or while asleep. I sleep with my phone under my pillow and use the 'notes' app often to write myself quick to-dos or ideas so I can follow up in the morning.

I have a quick 5-10 minute meeting each morning in the office or on the phone with my project manager to make sure the list is complete, re-prioritize



Van



Jackie

any tasks that have claimed urgency and as a system to hold myself accountable.”

Van:

“I keep to-do lists and/or reminder alerts, and start each day by evaluating and reorganizing those lists/alerts. Priorities can change overnight.

It’s important to know what time of day you’re at the top of your game, and schedule around that time (if possible). Some of us are sharper in the morning, some in the afternoon. When do you do your best writing? It helps to know.”

What tips can you offer for managing e-mail and phone calls and when to respond?

Kenna:

“When e-mail gets out of control, I sort by person. It’s easier to identify message chains that can be deleted, which saves a lot of time.

I also have started using the ‘categories’ function. I customize the colors to signal me on things I need to order, invoices I need to pay, and e-mails that need a response versus just a review.

It helps to sort by category when I ‘survey my landscape’ too.

And I always try to return a phone call within 24 hours – there are rare excuses for letting it go longer than that.”

Jackie:

“I do my absolute best to return e-mail and phone calls as quickly as possible. I ask that staff members who answer the phone take detailed messages so I know the topic of expected conversation. I try to call back in the order in which received, as every call from a customer is priority.”

Van:

“I check e-mail and phone messages regularly, but prioritize when and how to respond. If possible, I try to comprehensively answer questions and anticipate future needs in a single e-mail – even if it takes a little longer to respond.

Also, set expectations. After you’ve worked with someone for a while, you typically know if they will likely respond to you right away, within a day, week or never. Be consistent and set others’ expectations of you. (Maybe check with your boss to see what his/her expectation is first.) Do unto others... if you expect people to respond quickly to you, be prepared to respond quickly to others.

Some people like to schedule a set time every day to respond to calls and e-mails, but I don’t find that to be practical. That said, everyone has to get away from the e-

mail/phone to focus solid blocks of time on projects. Find a good system that works for you (and turn off the ‘new e-mail alerts’ on your computer so you’re not distracted with every new message).”

How do you deal with "stressful" people?

Kenna:

“I try to anticipate questions that clients or colleagues might have, as well as their reactions/responses. Take the time to think through a situation from the other person’s perspective before I talk to them. That goes a long way in heading off stressful situations.

I also try to stay calm if the person I’m working with is stressing out. Sometimes it helps to step back and review decisions made, action steps needed, etc. It can help the person feel more in control.”

Jackie:

“I have found that customers, or anyone in general, just simply wants to know where we’re at in the process of work. The more they know (even if it’s not what they want to hear), the more comfortable they are with the situation.

If a project is taking too long or not coming together in the way they imagined, you must communicate with them.

Oftentimes, it is the unknown or silence that causes problems, not the work itself.”

Van:

“Be humble and try to empathize. Remember the golden rule. We can all be ‘stressful’ people to someone else at times. Set boundaries and set an appropriate tone. Be professional.

Learn how to say ‘no.’ This one can be really hard for me, but I’ve found it’s better for everyone if you can be up front, honest and direct.

If someone is being inappropriate, don’t engage.”

Any tips for stress relief?

Kenna:

I work from home, and this may sound weird, but every night I leave some housework type things until the next day. So when I need to step away from the computer or phone or just need a break, I’ll turn some music on that I can sing along to and wash the dishes or fold a load of laundry. It makes me feel productive and gives my mind a rest.”

Jackie:

“I have recently found a new obsession with sweat. It is the all-time stress relief – and healthy, too! I work out at least once, if not twice per day.

I have also found that waking up early –

“I have recently found a new obsession with sweat.”

–Jackie

at least three hours before I have to be at the office or first meeting – is great for stress relief. It allows me to organize my day, spend time with my kids, make sure my family has what they need before I start each crazy day.

If my mornings are calm, typically my day runs more smoothly.”

Van:

“Exercise regularly, eat real food, sleep enough, and play (especially with family and friends). And read something that’s not work related.

Take vacations.

Spend time with smart and honest people. Be honest, work hard, do your best, and be happy with that. Balance your responsibilities at work with your responsibilities at home.”

How to know what can wait until the next day – or week – or be deleted from your ‘to-do’ list, all together?

Jackie:

“All projects in our office have deadlines, even when it comes to managing our own company deliverables. Constant communication with our team allows every staff member to know where we’re at and how to proceed forward.

Around here, we would be lost without our production schedules that tell us what project to work on next.

I use my best judgment to move new opportunities into our schedule. If something comes up I feel we need to pursue, we simply adjust production schedules to fit that need and communicate with all who that change affects.

We also are guided by our company objectives and goals. In a creative company, we have new ideas constantly. It’s the hardest thing to manage and sometimes accept, but if an idea does not fit into those objectives, we have to pack it away for a later date.”

Van:

“Stay focused on ‘why’ you’re doing something. The ‘what’ might change, especially if you get in the weeds, but the ‘why’ should always guide your priorities. Ask for help. A good boss will help you prioritize, and it’s always better to ask for help prioritizing than to complain about being too busy.”

LPC Best of the Bunch Photo Contest at Ag Media Summit

Get your cameras out and start snapping away or find that winning photo in your files because it's time for the Best of the Bunch Photo Contest! Held each year during the Agricultural Media Summit it is named after **Paul Andre**, retired editor of BEEF magazine and long time coordinator of this contest. Cash prizes are awarded!

Rules...Read carefully!

Photo Submissions

- 1) Enter each photograph in one of four categories:
 - a) Livestock
 - b) Livestock industry people
 - c) Livestock scenic (such as a landscape)
 - d) **NEW for 2014: Digitally enhanced** (the sky's the limit!)
- 2) The photo contest committee reserves the right to reassign entries to appropriate category, if necessary.
- 3) All photographs must be mounted on lightweight stock. Minimum size for entry is 8"x10" to 10"x12". With the mounting, the maximum size of an entry can be no more than 10"x14".
- 4) All photos must be identified with your name, affiliation and category. This should be typed or printed on white paper and affixed to the back of each photo. Unidentified photos will be disqualified.
- 5) All photos must ALSO be submitted digitally for use in the slideshow presentation of winners, along with your headshot.
- 6) There is no limit to the number of entries you may enter.

- 7) There will be a small entry fee (\$5 per photo) but we have added larger cash prizes.
- 8) Entries will be taken until 9 a.m., Monday, July 28 at the registration desk.
- 9) You may enter without attending the Summit but contestants are responsible for making arrangements in getting their photo(s) returned.

Eligibility

- 1) All entries must be original un-retouched, "**straight out of the camera**" photos. (**NEW for 2014**)
- 2) Those entering photos must work for a member publication of LPC (name must appear in the masthead) or be a service member of LPC. Student members of LPC are also eligible to enter.
- 3) Any photograph that has won a division in the Best of the Bunch contest previously is not eligible for entry.

Winning Photos

- 1) Each category will pay \$100/first; \$50/second; \$25/third.
- 2) The LPC Executive Committee has the discretion to select the directory cover photo from the winners of each category.
- 3) The winner of the "Best of the Bunch" will receive a canvas print of their winning entry.

General Information

- 1) LPC retains the right to use any of the photos submitted in the Best of the Bunch Photo Contest for publishing in print or on the web.
- 2) ALL entries will go on the LPC web site and remain on there for one year with your name attached to the entry. We feel that this is a way of "advertising" for your photo(s) and then it's also like an online "portfolio" for you.

**For more information or questions contact
Carey Brown at cbrown@kycattle.org,
Carrie Heitman cheitman@angus.org
Reba Underwood rebalorena09@yahoo.com**

Spreading the ag cheer

by Jennifer Carrico

Benefiting children at the Riley Hospital for Children in Indy

For the past three years, the Ag Media Summit committee has led a community service project at each of the host cities. Those projects included shoes in New Orleans, books in Albuquerque and coats in Buffalo. This year we will be taking donations to benefit children at the Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis. When children spend time in a hospital, the Child Life program helps to minimize the stress and anxiety children often experience

during hospitalization and the Cheer Guild helps distribute donations to these children.

We think it would be great to provide these kids with agricultural-related items in the categories which the hospital is in need.

We are asking AMS attendees to donate smaller-sized books, coloring and activity books, and individually wrapped or packaged matchbox-size trucks and/or

tractors. Gift cards to iTunes, Hobby Lobby, Michael's, Walmart, Target, Amazon.com, Best Buy, Barnes and Noble and monetary donations will also be accepted.

These donations will help the Cheer Guild give out 13,000 – 16,000 items each month to in and out patients at Riley Hospital for Children. If you have any questions, contact Jennifer Carrico at jcarrico@hpj.com

2014 Midwest Regional Workshop co-hosted by AAEA & LPC

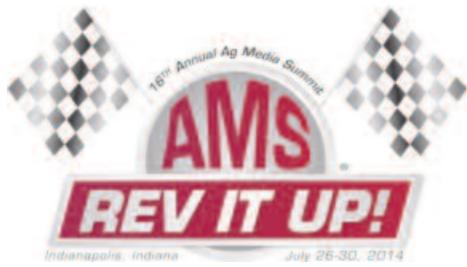


One of the speakers, **Brant Houston**, University of Illinois visits with **JoAnn Alumbaugh** and **Heidi Anderson** finished up her presentation with questions.

A great crowd gathered on May 15 in Ankeny, Iowa, for the regional workshop featuring editorial, photography and ag policy topics. Special thanks to the committee who made it happen:

**Laurie Bedord,
Cindy Cunningham, Jenn Carrico,
Karen Simon,
Mindy Williamson,
and
JoAnn Alumbaugh.**





REGISTRATION IS OPEN! Here's a teaser schedule of the program set for this year's Ag Media Summit. Go to www.agmediasummit.com for the full program with workshop descriptions. Watch for notices by joining the Facebook page and also for updates on the websites of LPC, AAEA and AMS. The event is July 26-30 in Indianapolis.

ALL EVENTS ARE AT THE MARRIOTT HOTEL DOWNTOWN

SATURDAY, JULY 26

7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. Ag Tours of the Central Indiana
7 p.m. ACT Student Social Mixer, Marriott Hotel

SUNDAY, JULY 27

8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Registration desk open at Marriott Hotel
8 - 11:30 a.m. LPC board meeting
8 - 11:30 a.m. LPC board meeting followed by PIF meeting
Noon Lunch on your own
1 - 5 p.m. Video Skills Workshop (\$90 additional fee)
2 - 4 p.m. ACT Welcome and Student Professionalism Sessions
2 - 5 p.m. InfoExpo exhibit set up at
5:30 - 6:45 p.m. First-timers reception
7 - 10 p.m. Famous Welcome Party at the Marriott Hotel

MONDAY, JULY 28

All day Registration desk open at Marriott Hotel
6:45 a.m. 5K Fun Run (open to all, no fees)
8 a.m. Golf Outing (extra fee)
7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Hot Breakfast
8 a.m. - 3 p.m. InfoExpo set up
9 a.m. - 4 p.m. ARC silent auction open for bidding
8:30 - 11:30 a.m. DEEP DIVE SESSIONS
-Writing Deep Dive: Tools of Originality
Profiles in Journalism: Putting personality in the news
-Writing Deep Dive: Blueprints for sound storytelling: structure and organization
What to put in? What to leave out? Where to put what?
-Design Deep Dive: Secrets of an InDesign pro
Tips and techniques that will turn you into an InDesign layout whiz
8:30 - 10 a.m. BLOCK 1 SESSIONS
-Generating and Executing Great Ideas
-Vision Web
-Newsmaker Panel: Agricultural privacy laws cause discussion across the country
10:15 - 11:30 a.m. BLOCK 2 SESSIONS
-Newsmaker Panel: Hypoxia: From the Microscope to the Gulf of Mexico
-Overpower the Sun
10 - 10:15 a.m. Morning coffee break
11:45 a.m. Student awards and recognition luncheon
1:15 - 4 p.m. DEEP DIVE SESSION: PHOTOGRAPHY
1:15 - 2:30 p.m. BLOCK 3 SESSIONS
-The New Breed of Seller
-Clearing the Fog: Plain Language Writing
-Making InDesign & Word Play Nice Together: Best Practices for a smooth editorial and design workflow.

2:30 - 2:45 p.m. Afternoon coffee break
2:45 - 4 p.m. BLOCK 4 SESSIONS
-Goal Setting and Achieving
-Sentences with Style
-Tweeting, Pinning and Posting for a Cause
4 - 7 p.m. InfoExpo Grand Opening followed by a free evening.
4:30 p.m. ACT Critique and Contest Awards at the Hyatt Hotel
TUESDAY, JULY 29
All day Registration desk open at Marriott Hotel
7:30 - 8:30 a.m. LPC annual business meeting
LPC Contest awards will follow LPC meeting.
Breakfast in InfoExpo
8:30 - 10 a.m. ARC silent auction open for bidding
9 a.m. - 2 p.m. BLOCK 5 SESSIONS
-Consult, Collaborate, Cooperate, Cultivate
-Form and Content
-Ready, Set, Tweet: The Journalists' Guide to Social Media
-Think Big - Act Big
11 - 11:45 a.m. BLOCK 5 SESSIONS
-Intro to your DSLR
-There's an App for That: Handy Apps for Ag Communicators
-Make Time to Dream; Plan to Meet your Dreams
-Code Words: How Journalism Ethics Become a Code to Live By
-Understanding the Evolving Media Habits of Farmers and Ranchers
12 noon - 1:15 p.m. LUNCHEON
Lighten Up and Laugh for the Health of It!
Craig Zablocki
Dessert in InfoExpo
1:30 - 3 p.m. InfoExpo teardown
3 - 6 p.m. AAEA business meeting
3:15 - 4:30 p.m. ACT business meeting
4:30 - 5:30 p.m. AAEA awards presentation
5 - 6:30 p.m. Cocktail Reception
6:30 - 7:15 p.m. Joint Dinner and Awards Banquet and Dessert Reception
7:15 - 9 p.m. After Party at the Marriott

HOTEL INFORMATION

ALL ACTIVITIES WILL BE AT THE MARRIOTT
(NOTE - THIS IS NOT THE JW MARRIOTT HOTEL)
Indianapolis Marriott Downtown
350 West Maryland Street, Indianapolis 46225
Room rate: \$145 single/double
Reservations: 800-266-9432 • Hotel: 317-822-3500
<https://resweb.passkey.com/go/AgriculturalMediaSummit2014>

