

Patrick Cassidy

Patrick Cassidy is an alumnus born in Houston, who was an undeclared major at UH and worked three part-time jobs while at university. He started in an editorial position and now works in financial communications. Patrick has worked in different fields such as Oil and Gas, Consumer, and Agencies, specializing in communication project management, media relations, crisis communication, investor relations disclosure, and employee communications. With an amazing and rich experience in communications, Patrick has some advice for new graduates and current students.

Interview Q&A

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

What would you like to hear if you were a student?

30 years ago, I did not see myself working in investor relations. I worked in advertising before graduating. At that time, you couldn't get a degree, but you could take classes. I worked in an agency, and they gave me the knowledge. Since it was their daily job, the exposure and experience gave me a wide perspective. I started in an editorial position, and where I am today is more focused on financial communication. Between financial and communication was a big challenge. I think a greater understanding of financial statements and the norms around it would have been beneficial. When we go to work in an agency, corporation, or non-profit, those financial reports will tell a story, a compelling story. If you can't generate income, you won't be around for long.

How do you typically approach networking and building relationships?

There is a lot out there, so you need to be selective. The way I determine value is understanding who is inviting me and who I would invite to join me. I think about what these people can contribute and what I can contribute. Networking events can be a little more transactional, business relationship, short term or long term. Building relationships, to some degree, can provide a safety matter when facing a problem at work. For example, if I have a colleague who has been in a similar situation in the past, I can share thoughts to determine how to move forward.

How have you continued to learn and develop professionally since graduating?

It gets easier; the more you do, the easier it becomes. I have participated in professional organizations such as NIRI and PRSA and continued to read fiction and non-fiction. Non-fiction has been more helpful, of course. I have gone to seminars and taken courses that were not necessarily complementary to what I need, but new areas, like photography and art. I have also stayed connected to the university so I could see what was happening in the professional world of communication.

What advice would you give to current students and recent graduates who are just starting their careers?

I have come across other majors like journalism and communication, and they many times are intimidated by numbers, and immediately anything can be intimidating. So I think you can't let that freeze your actions. You need to go in, write the story, don't be done when coerced by others, understanding that you will be better next time and pursue success. I had my "aha" moment when applying for a job and realized that the person who will make the hiring decision is looking for

someone who will make their job easier, and it is not about me. You need to know what the job is going to give you and what you can give to the organization.