



Grace Leong

CEO

Hunter Public Relations

When and where were you born?

October 19 in Scotch Plains, New Jersey.

Where do you live?

Hoboken, New Jersey.

To which medium do you turn for breaking news?

MSNBC and The New York Times.

Which media outlet is the most influential in your world?

The New York Times. I read the newspaper in print every weekday, and online for breaking news.

Which politician do you respect most?

Abraham Lincoln. He led us through the most divided time in our history and governed without concern for political gain.

Which business/brand (other than your employer) do you most admire?

Tesla Motors and Elon Musk are building a great product that delivers on the promise and a dream, breaks with convention, and has a chance to impact the world.

What is your favourite comms campaign of the past year (not one of your own)?

Two really stuck with me this year. CVS's choice to stop selling tobacco products meant a potential \$2 billion hit to the bottom line but went further in rebranding them as a health and wellness company than any advertising campaign could have achieved. Major League Baseball leveraged the retirement of Derek Jeter to celebrate the game through a player who embodies sportsmanship, right down to the last hit.

In what respect has your job changed most in the past five years?

The increase in importance of managing and retaining talent. This industry requires incredibly hard work and dedication; for smart people there are easier routes for better reward. Rather than a lifelong career in PR, now we're experiencing an "internship" mind-set where young talent spends a few years in PR right out of college and uses the varied experience they gain as a launchpad into other industries.

What is the biggest single challenge facing the profession in your market?

See above.

What is the best piece of advice you ever received?

My father always used to say, "Know where you are going." This has turned out to be great advice both literally and figuratively. I never go anywhere without looking at a map and familiarizing myself with my local surroundings, and having a clear sense in my mind of "where I want to be" is the best way I've found to forging a path to get there.

Who is your favourite fictional PR character (in a movie/TV show/literature)?

There aren't many to chose from unfortunately, but I'd have to say C.J. Cregg, played by Allison Janney, on The West Wing. Her message delivery was flawless - a study in media training 101.

If you weren't in PR what would you do for a living?

I would like to serve as the brand manager for the State of New Jersey. Combines my love for my misrepresented home state with my business background and MBA.