

# **IGNORANCE IS NOT BLISS**



**Preparation NOW will save your  
FUTURE career**

**Written by Abby Arnett**

## **Ignorance is NOT Bliss: A Full Arsenal Will Help You Avoid Legal Pitfalls in Public Relations**

“She was such an impressive student,” says Alexis Hooley. Very impressive, that is, until she entered the workforce and “forged famous signatures for a PR campaign.” Surely, she had known better.

Hooley is a public relations practitioner, attorney and graduate from Brigham Young University. Hooley is engrossed in legal practice and PR instruction as adjunct faculty at BYU. Hooley’s experience with that former student shifted her teaching focus.

Hooley is a hero; she now uses her legal background to save her students. She offers valuable advice on how to avoid legal pitfalls in public relations. As public relations students soon entering the workforce, look no further. A little preparation now could help save your future career. Let Hooley save you, too.

### **Knowledge: The Armor Against Legal Pitfalls**

“Become familiar with the code of ethics on PRSA,” Hooley says. Writers of the PRSA Code of Ethics clearly explain the mission. “This document is designed to anticipate and accommodate, by precedent, ethical challenges that may arise.” Becoming familiar with this code provides protection.

Additionally, Hooley encourages students to familiarize themselves with the First Amendment. Public relations work deals with speech and expression. As the foundation of which all media laws are built, knowledge of the First Amendment will help you avoid small legal pitfalls. After all, knowledge is power.

### **Accountability: The Mark of a Respected Soldier**

Hooley firmly emphasizes that “what we do has a big ripple effect.” As human beings, we are all born with a sense of right and wrong. “When we feel like something isn’t right, we should know enough to push the pause button and ask for help,” says Hooley.

Rather than forging signatures to get her job done, Hooley’s former student should have taken ownership for her shortcomings. Perhaps then she would still be employed. Don’t make rash decisions to cover your mistakes. True soldiers are humble.

### **Networking: Don’t Fight Your Battles Alone**

“It is never shameful to ask for help,” says Hooley. She strongly encourages her students to build their professional networks and mentor relationships. Have people not only for professional connections, but also for ethical advice. You will run into legal and ethical challenges; when you do, have a lifeline.

### **Return With Honor**

Don't be that once "impressive student." Following Hooley's heroic advice will do your professors and mentors proud. In such a case, ignorance is not bliss.

Abby Arnett is a student at Brigham Young University studying public relations. Post-graduation in December 2022, Abby plans to take the LSAT and apply to law schools across the country.