



NEWS FROM THE PERKINS PARTNERSHIP

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Strategic Communications

Lessons Learned from My Dog



If you follow me on Facebook or Instagram, you know that I recently became owned by a dog: Stanley Van Dogg (that's Dogg with 2 g's, because he's no ordinary Dogg). Stanley is a 7-year-old rescue who's either Havanese, Shih Tzu, or a little of both.

In the four weeks he's been with me, he has already taught me a lot. Some of it is all about him and taking care of his basic needs, and he has trained me well. He has been quite clear about where he likes to sit (beside me); sleep (on the bed, not next to it); and what he likes to eat (the "Stanley Stew" I make for him with all natural ingredients).

But I'm also learning important lessons from Stanley that are applicable to both my business and to my personal life:

- **Bad PR can be deadly.** I learned about Stanley from a Sunday night email blast that read "Stanley is a BITER." My first reaction was that this was not likely to create an avalanche of people rushing to take him in. Accuracy and honesty are absolutely necessary -- but you don't have to lead with the bad news.
- **Trust your gut.** After reading about Stanley's situation -- in a home with four kids, three dogs, and five cats -- I sensed that he might just be feeling overwhelmed. Since he was scheduled to be put down, I reached out quickly to let them know that I would meet Stanley and see if this might be a match.
- **First impressions count for a lot.** When I met Stanley, he jumped into my lap, rolled over for a belly rub, and trotted to the door when I picked up the leash to see if he wanted to go for a walk. Yep -- I was hooked.
- **Get the unpleasant stuff over with fast.** Stanley's not a fan of snow and ice, but nature's calls can't be ignored. I'm impressed by how quickly he can move when he wants to, just to rush back inside a nice warm house. Similarly, I've seen that deadlines *can* be met well before they arrive, and work goes more smoothly when the to-do list has the worst checked off first.
- **Sleep, food and play are good.** Stanley's priorities may be somewhat different than mine, but he is a constant reminder that we need balance in our lives. I have yet to see Stanley stressing out over -- well, actually over *anything*. I attribute this to his having met all of his basic needs, which enables him to face any challenge!

For the record, Stanley has growled or snapped a few times since he's been here, but that can be attributed to being afraid in a new situation. Other than that -- and one very unfortunate incident which involved chewing on a Tory Burch ballet flat -- he's been pretty perfect. Whenever someone tells me how good I was to take on a rescue dog, I point out that I may have saved Stanley's life, but he enriches mine immeasurably every day.

I hope your February is full of good things!

Upcoming Dates

RWJ University Hospital Somerset will host a community forum on **Friday, February 13, 2015 from 9 am - noon in Fuld Auditorium at RWJ Somerset, 110 Rehill Avenue, Somerville, New Jersey.** The forum seeks community input on Somerset County's health needs, and is the first step in developing a Community Health Improvement Plan. For more information, please call 908.685.2814.

Rebecca Perkins will participate in a panel discussion on "Communication That Makes a Difference" at the 4th Annual Women's Leadership Conference hosted by Rutgers Association of Planning and Public Policy Students on Friday, February 27, 2015 at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. For more information, see <http://policy.rutgers.edu/news/events/wlc.php>.

For more information about **The Perkins Partnership**, visit our website at www.perkinspartnership.com.

President and CEO
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Rebecca Perkins, a public policy and communications strategist whose career crosses the public, private, and academic sectors, formed The Perkins Partnership in 2004.

The firm offers support for public policy objectives through: Issue Advocacy; Stakeholder Engagement; Strategic Planning and Board Developments for Non-Profits; and Strategic Communications.

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