

How a willingness to try new things leads one healthcare marketer from archeology to driving social media

by Dawn Ortiz

The career journey of media relations specialist and Vericom client, Toni Moore.



Toni Moore
Media Relations Specialist

Before Toni Moore began working as Media Relations Specialist at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler (UTHSCT), she would drive past UTHSCT twice a day to and from her job and think how nice it be to work there. Today, she has been an employee there for more than 10 years.

Toni had been in the newspaper business for 20 years prior to coming on board at UTHSCT. Having made the leap from one field to another twice over the course of her working life, perhaps the dominant theme in her career path is taking advantage of opportunities to grow and develop as a writer and communicator.

Initially focused on becoming an archeologist, Toni took courses at Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas. During her graduate studies, she took a part-time job at the Wall Street Journal (a regional division) as a proofreader. This job was her first experience in news, and she really enjoyed it.

Never having written a headline or laid out a paper, she was hired on good faith as a copywriter for the *Midland Reporter Telegram*. That job turned into an 8 year odyssey with Toni taking on a variety of roles, including special projects editor, associate city editor, and, occasionally, reporter. She moved on to the *Longview News-Journal* where she worked from 1995 to 2001.

She has found her work at UTHSCT to be even more exciting than working for a newspaper because there are frequent challenges that stretch her skills. Toni appreciates the fact that her supervisor, Rhonda Scoby, director of public affairs and marketing has allowed and prodded her to grow in new areas.

Toni began working on her master's degree in communications in 2008. A curious person, Toni likes to know how things work, and she is fascinated with communication theories and how people communicate. Her class assignments had her writing a blog that has given her new insight as the main driver of social media at UTHSCT. The bulk of her social media content is press releases. Toni posts content about 3 to 4 times per week to various social media outlets. She would like to post daily, but her department is small and resources are spread thin. Speaking about the challenges with social media for her, she says, "Social media requires a shift in perspective and an effort to look at information from the audience's point of view to determine what they would like to see." Toni says she reads as widely as she can and follows journalists and healthcare writers in an effort to stay on top of the buzz in social media. Her philosophy for social media is to dive into the process and try different things to learn what works for her organization.

Toni commented that the pace of technology is rapidly changing the way people get their information. Writing and printing as an industry is changing so quickly that people who are graduating with degrees in those fields may find that their intended career paths are no longer there in five years. Toni said she recently told a younger person who asked for her advice that, "One of the best things you can do is to be flexible and take advantage of the opportunities you come across. And above all, keep learning." Toni has lived that axiom over the course of her career, continuing to learn and take advantage of opportunities.

For more than 60 years, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler has provided excellent patient care and cutting-edge treatment, specializing in pulmonary disease, cancer, heart disease, primary care, and the disciplines that support them.