

THE COMMS AVENUE CHAT WITH A COMMS PROFESSIONAL



The
Comms
Avenue

HIGHLIGHTS FROM FAITH SENAM'S SESSION

After my degree education, I decided to go into PR but it didn't come easy because I was working as a Cashier in a Telecommunications company. No company was ready to hire me because I didn't have experience in PR.

When I made a decision to work in PR, I quit my job as a Cashier to stay home and hone my skills. In PR, writing is important and I knew I had a challenge with that. I created a fashion PR Blog to hone my writing skills.

I also took up pro bono jobs, one of which was to manage PR for a friend who was a Fashion Designer and Model. Eventually, I secured a feature on Facetoface Africa which got me a job at one of the leading Communications firms in Ghana, Global Media Alliance.



EARLY DAYS OF MY CAREER AS A PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONAL

At Global Media Alliance, I was the Account Manager for Unilever's product (Vaseline re-launch into the Ghanaian market). After the contract ended, I was moved to a cement brand. It was a tough one for me but I took up that challenge and managed that account for a year alongside other projects.

I left Global Media Alliance in 2016 to work with a fashion brand because we didn't have a client in that industry. Although it was an emerging fashion brand, I knew I'd have the flexibility to reach out to new clients and establish myself in the industry.

I registered my fashion PR firm E'April Public Relations in 2012 when I was doing pro bono work and I had my first paying client in 2015.

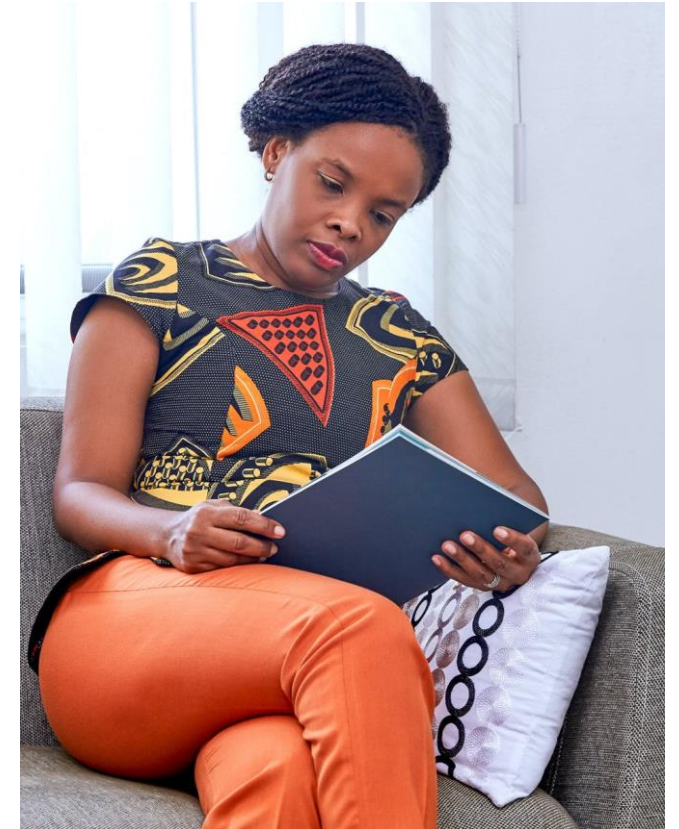


WHY I STARTED MY PR FIRM

I grew up with my mum who is a seamstress and I was quite knowledgeable and fascinated about fashion. I thought I would create my niche in PR with fashion. Through research, I found out that in developed countries, fashion PR was a big thing but it was missing in Ghana.

After University, I found a gap within PR for the Fashion, Beauty and Lifestyle industry. I knew young and smaller businesses won't be able to afford the services of big agencies so I came in to fill in the gap. I did a self-assessment and mapped out what I wanted to do. I then tasked myself to make a difference.

I merged my interest in fashion and my skills to create a niche in Fashion PR in Ghana.



STEPS I TOOK TO ACHIEVE A SUCCESSFUL NICHE IN PR

- ❖ Networking for me is key. I realized early enough that I won't survive if I'm not connected. I need to know people and be known.
- ❖ I worked my way into the PR, Fashion and Media industry. I would attend related events, and participate in online conversations around my interest. Today, many of these connections have gone beyond online.
- ❖ I was consistent and intentional about my career decision. It's easy to be carried away or frustrated when starting out in an untapped space. I knew it would take consistency to be known for what I do.
- ❖ I also realized I needed to have a voice through my blog, guest contributions, online chats, and being a columnist.



THE VISION BEHIND WOMEN IN PR GHANA

I realized many young PR professionals like myself were hungry to connect and network, most especially young female PR professionals. At the time, they were hiding behind big companies making magic but people didn't know who they were.

I established Women in PR Ghana in 2017 as a community to connect, empower, mentor and create opportunities for women in Public Relations, and to also use the platform to bridge the gap between the professionals and students.

This is achieved through our Annual Summit which attracts over 200 participants and the Industry vs classroom program which takes female professionals into the classroom to establish role models and empower students. We also have professional networking events which offers opportunities for new jobs, leads, and consultancies etc.



CHANGES I'D LIKE TO SEE IN THE INDUSTRY

- ❖ We should be more disruptive and adaptive to new trends. Due to the nature of our job, we tend to hide behind the scenes. It's time for us to get out of our comfort zones, be proactive and make impact.
- ❖ We need PR professionals who are specialized. If we want to stand out, we need to find a niche or a sector where we can make an impact and specialize there.
- ❖ We also need PR platforms that will give us a voice to tell our story - this could be through organisations, new media channels and community building. We want people, clients and our bosses to appreciate what we do by sharing our works. Let's PR ourselves.
- ❖ I want PR Professionals across the continent to connect more.

