

BENJAMIN D. LEWIS
President & Founder
Perception, Inc.

With more than 14 years of public relations experience in the financial, political, and non-profit industries, Benjamin Lewis, president and founder of Perception, Inc., has the experience necessary to effectively develop and maintain strategic publicity efforts on behalf of client companies.

A graduate of Bradley University in Peoria, IL, Ben served as the Deputy Press Secretary on a United States Senate campaign in New Hampshire in 1996, then worked as Manager of Media/Public Relations for the SAE Fraternity and Foundation in Evanston, IL. After spending three years in the Chicago-area, Ben went to work as the Director of Communications for The Scarborough Group, Inc. – one of the country's premier 401(k) advice providers.

During his time with The Scarborough Group, Ben produced a weekly radio show, *Financial Fitness*, airing in the Baltimore/Washington, DC market, and publicized Michael Scarborough's book, *The Scarborough Plan: Maximizing the Power of Your 401(k)*. He was able to successfully garner significant media coverage of the company in hundreds of national media outlets, including *CNBC*, *Bloomberg Television*, *NBC Nightly News*, *Time* magazine, *US News & World Report*, *SmartMoney*, *BusinessWeek*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The Chicago Tribune*.

As President of Perception Inc., Ben has appeared as a guest columnist for the *Washington Business Journal*, *ProducersWeb*, and *HOARD Clients System*. He has been interviewed by *Financial Planning Magazine*, *Research Magazine*, *Financial Advisor*, *Advisor Today*, *The Career Advisor*, *The Wall Street Letter* and *PR News* discussing the importance of media relations for financial service companies. Ben is a member of the Public Relations Society of America and is affiliated with the National Capital Chapter. He was on the Executive Board of PRSA's Association Section from 1999-2001 and served on the Executive Board of the Financial Section from 2002-2003.

Ben has received the APEX Award for Communications Excellence for his work on the SAE Foundation's donor newsletter program and has been a featured speaker on public relations issues at the Royal Alliance Associates National Education Conference, the 2006 NAPFA National Conference, the 2006 NAPFA Cutting Edge Conference, the Financial Planning Association Alliance Forum, and the Financial Planning Association – Northeast Ohio, Georgia, National Capital, Tampa Bay, Massachusetts, Minnesota and Michigan Chapters. Ben has also presented a variety of public relations and marketing topics for the Alliance of Cambridge Advisors, Maryland Society of Association Executives and Virginia Society of Association Executives.

Ben hosts a weekly podcast radio show titled, *30 Minutes of Personal Finance*, where he discusses hot issues and trends in financial services with industry leaders that can be heard through the web and at iTunes. He is also writing *Perfecting The Pitch: Creating Publicity Through Media Rapport* – scheduled for national release in May 2007.

In his spare time, Ben enjoys volunteer work. He has served as Chairman of the Harbour School Golf Classic to raise capital for The Harbour School, which helps children with

learning and multiple disabilities. He is also Chairman of the SAE Leadership School Planning Committee – a program for collegiate undergraduates dedicated to teaching valuable personal and professional life skills. Ben is also a Board Member of the Metro Area Entrepreneurs Club in the Baltimore-Metropolitan area.

Ben lives in Clarksburg, MD, with his wife, Wendy, and their yellow lab, Norman.

JESSICA "JD" SMITH
Creative Director
Perception, Inc.

With a keen eye for detail and a strong background in developing corporate identities and brands, JD Smith brings over ten years of graphic design experience from her freelance company, Ninety Degrees North Design, LLC in Boyds, MD.

JD has worked as a graphic designer for two of Washington, DC-metro area's well-known and respected communication design companies. While a designer with RCW Communication Design Company in Falls Church, VA, JD handled aspects of corporate identity with a variety of client organizations, including Smithsonian, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Celera, National Institute of Standards and Technologies (NIST). Then, while working for Rabil & Bates Communication Design Company in Gaithersburg, MD, JD served as the senior graphic designer and worked on client accounts, including Penton Media, US Navy, Intertec Exhibits, Legum and Norman, and American Bankers Association.

JD's most recent position was as the graphic designer for Global eXchange Services (GXS) in Gaithersburg, MD. During her time with GXS, she headed up a one-person design team in charge of all graphical aspects of internal and external communications for the large, global company. In her role at GXS, she performed a multitude of duties, including tradeshow graphics and brochures, collateral, HTML newsletters, illustration, banner ads, web graphics, web application graphics, windows-based application graphics, posters, explanatory graphics, presentations, marketing, proposal covers, proposal graphics, client interaction, usability engineering, and web content management.

JD is a graduate of the Maryland Institute, College of Art where she received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in graphic design, cum laude. She has received certifications in Advanced HTML and Javascript from Montgomery College and in Macromedia Flash from EEI Communications. JD also brings a vast knowledge of many state-of-the-art design programs, including Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Digital Pre-Press, HTML, Macromedia Dreamweaver, Macromedia Fireworks, Macromedia Flash, Macromedia Freehand, Quark XPress and Microsoft Office.

Besides being an avid artist, JD's free time is spent with her husband and their three kids, Jaidon, Kyra and Laylie.



TROY SMITH
Business Manager
Perception, Inc.

With a knack for number crunching, research, and an amazing eye for detail, Troy is a unique asset to the Perception team.

Troy has worked in a variety of fields dealing with the day-to-day aspects of highly effective businesses. Troy proudly served in the United States Navy after graduating high school. For the past ten years he has been the business manager and account executive for Ninety Degrees North Design, where his responsibilities included bookkeeping, business management and all other financial tasks.

In the past he served as a liaison between patients and the doctors at HeartCare Imaging, Cardiac Consultants, Chartered and Potomac Pediatrics. Troy has an Associates Degree from Montgomery College, focusing on finance and business. He is currently pursuing a Bachelors of Science in Business Administration with a minor in Accounting and Finance.

In addition to being avid fan of the Denver Broncos and Oklahoma Sooners, Troy spends his free time with his wife and children.

CHRISTEN RICE
Account Executive
Perception, Inc.

Christen joined Perception, Inc. in 2005 after graduating from Radford University in Radford, VA, where she earned a B.A. in Communication, with an emphasis in Public Relations, and a minor in Media Studies. As an Account Executive, Christen's talents for effective media relations, staff management and event coordination shine on a daily basis.

Christen started at Perception, Inc. by working as a Junior Account Executive for Financial Planning Association (FPA) chapters across the country. In October 2005, she was given her first solo task of handling media relations and event coordination for the FPA chapters Financial Planning Week. Following her success, she was tasked with coordinating media relations for additional clients, to which she secured significant local and national coverage.

Christen continues to promote the financial planning industry through her public relations efforts with other clients.

Prior to joining Perception, Inc., Christen worked as a government contractor with MRPI, Inc for the U.S. Army Installation Management Agency (IMA). While at IMA she was the Assistant to the Director of Protocol for the agency and helped coordinate the departing two star General's retirement ceremony and events.

Christen lives in Falls Church, VA, and is an avid football and baseball fan.

RAJ SHARAN
Associate Account Executive
Editor, Perception Publications
Perception, Inc.

Following an internship with Perception, Inc. in 2005, Raj began working as a Communications Associate with company in 2006 after graduating Cum Laude as a College Scholar from Marietta College, Marietta, OH, with a B.A. in Organizational Communication and certification in Leadership and Oral Communication.

As a Communications Associate, Raj gained valuable experience in aiding with the 2006 NAPFA Focus on Fiduciary campaign, assisting with the launch of *Getting Started: The Financial Guide For A Younger Generation* by Brian T. Jones, CFP® and managing the bi-weekly eZine newsletters of Vestment Advisors.

In November 2006, Raj became an Associate Account Executive, managing the daily accounts of the Financial Planning Association of Georgia (FPA GA) and Maryland Society of Accountants, Inc. (MSA), in addition to helping the Perception Account Team with other clients.

Relying on his copywriting talent and organizational skills, Raj has also undertaken the role of Editor of Perception Publications. He is responsible for *Perception Is Reality*, the company's online newsletter. In addition, he handles many of the company's internal and external copywriting projects.

Raj currently resides in Clarksburg, MD. He is a passionate sports fan who avidly follows his beloved Denver Broncos and Denver Nuggets. He also spends time traveling with family both nationally and internationally, most regularly to Colorado and India.

PAOLA J. CANALES
Associate Account Executive
Perception, Inc.

Paola recently graduated with honors from the University of Maryland University College (UMUC) with a B.A. in Communication Studies. She first became involved in communications when she worked for the U.S. Department of Justice and its 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund, where she provided assistance with media inquiries and other compensation issues.

Paola obtained more experience with press and other media-related assignments when she interned at the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Hispanic Communications & Outreach. In addition, she worked as the Media Relations Executive for a radio and print communications company that concentrates on nationwide Hispanic-related issues.

Presently, she resides in Gaithersburg, MD and will be featured on the fall 2007 schedule for UMUC as an outstanding graduate. Paola has a passion for the Hispanic community and is actively involved in organizations that provide services to this growing demographic in the Washington, D.C. area. She also enjoys spending time her family and friends.

ASHLEY SAUERS
Communications Associate
Perception, Inc.

Ashley joined Perception, Inc. as a Communications Associate in 2007, two years after graduating from Slippery Rock University in Slippery Rock, PA, where she earned a B.S. in Communication, with an emphasis in Public Relations, and a minor in Marketing.

Ashley gained Public Relations and Marketing knowledge working as a Marketing Intern for the Pittsburgh Steelers from 2004-2005, by being an active member of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) and also the American Marketing Association (AMA).

Prior to joining Perception, Inc., Ashley worked as an Executive Assistant at Haddad's Inc. in Pleasant Hills, Pa, where she strived to keep the daily life of the President and owner of Haddad's Inc. in above average organization. Ashley also mastered the entire accounts payable system of the organization, and worked solo as the accounts payable "go-to-girl" for months.

Ashley has recently relocated from Pittsburgh, PA to Germantown, MD. She is an avid sports fan, enjoying all sports in general, but does admit to focusing most of her attention to Pittsburgh sports, most important to her is her passion and devotion to the legendary Pittsburgh Steelers. Ashley also enjoys exercising, and traveling to new and exciting places with family and friends.