

# Advice to 'raise your hand' pays off for Roberts graduate



Photo by Kate Melton

**Meg Hartman**

By **NICOLE SHELDON**

**M**eg Hartman can confidently say that, unlike many professionals, her career has followed a linear path. In middle school her computer fascination was Oregon Trail. In high school she taught herself HTML code to change her MySpace appearance.

"When my husband and I got married I created a wedding website and installed Google Analytics because I wanted to track the traffic coming from my personal posts," says Hartman, 34. "Then during my internship at (American) Zippo (Manufacturing Co.) in Pennsylvania I discovered I loved marketing, so all of that led me to digital marketing."

Hartman adds that digital marketing's constant evolution has been appealing to her as a lifelong learner, always sticking her nose in a book or reading a blog or listening to a podcast. Plus, she's always been fond of writing, but she didn't know how to fit that passion into her work life—until she found digital marketing.

Hartman is the director of web experience and social media at Roberts Wesleyan College. It was a brand new position when she filled the role over seven years ago and, at the time, nobody was leading the charge on Roberts' social media presence. She stepped in and was integral in launching the college's YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest and Snapchat pages.

One of her initial goals stepping into this role at her alma mater was giving the college's website a face lift. At the time the website lacked visual appeal and it wasn't mobile friendly. Hartman got right to work.

"My first day here I was like this website has

got to go; I wanted to burn it down and start over," says Hartman. "I did some benchmarking and researching and we carved out some budget," and Roberts ended up hiring Hartman's previous employer, local marketing agency Butler/Till, to research and interview stakeholders across the campus to determine who the website should cater to.

"At that point, the website was everything to everyone, which was really nothing to everyone because people weren't getting what they needed," she says. "Having Butler/Till back me up in what I had been saying was helpful."

After six months of diligently going through every page in the website and updating content, Hartman says the Roberts' website revamp was a massive accomplishment. Along the way she has tweaked the home page to keep it modern and relevant.

Hartman oversees a team of two employees, a digital marketing specialist who focuses on email campaigns, SEO (search engine optimization) and Google AdWords, and a multimedia designer who handles web design, photography and videography.

Hartman says that her boss, Donna McLaren, associate vice president of brand and marketing communications, has served as a mentor, encouraging Hartman from the beginning to run with her position. A mom of two young children, Hartman says McLaren has shown her how to be a successful working mother, as well as how to be a productive leader and how to appropriately handle conflict.

Fifty percent of Hartman's time is spent monitoring, responding and managing the college's social media, while the other half of her time is focused on web experience, which

involves overseeing website content and user experience.

Hartman, a Riga resident who grew up in Bradford, Pa., before moving to Pittsburgh in high school, graduated from Roberts in 2007 with a bachelor's degree in communication. After college she spent four years at Butler/Till, where she started as an entry-level media assistant and moved her way into the digital media planning and buying realm.

"I loved it, but I was frustrated that I couldn't see the whole picture. I loved being able to plan campaigns and provide analytics, but then I couldn't tell what clients were doing with the leads we gave them and it really bothered me," says Hartman. "Throughout that process, I realized I needed to move to the client side. That's where my passions really lie."

She moved next door—literally—to SpectraCom, a niche manufacturing/engineering company where she positioned herself in digital media. A year later, the job at Roberts popped up in her email inbox. She wasn't looking to leave SpectraCom, but her first thought when she read the job description was that it was her dream job, tailor-made for her.

In 2013 Hartman decided to take advantage of the perk of working at a higher education institution and pursued her master's degree in strategic marketing. She graduated in 2015 and soon after started working as an adjunct professor in the master's program teaching advertising and strategic digital marketing. Hartman also co-teaches three undergraduate courses—advertising, consumer behavior and integrated marketing communication—with McLaren.

"I've really been enjoying teaching and I would like to move into a full-time professor role in five-to-10 years," she says. "Maybe I'll continue to freelance with digital marketing to keep my skills and my knowledge up to date, but I'm feeling more and more of a calling to teach and spend time with students."

She adds that one of the most meaningful aspects of teaching is watching her students connect ideas with practical applications and hearing about how students have used the concepts she teaches in their careers.

Outside of the halls of Roberts Wesleyan College, Hartman and her husband, Bob Hartman, are foodies who love to try local eats on their date nights, though those are few and far between with two children under four. The Hartmans are also Rochester Broadway Theatre League season ticket holders, so they're immersed in the local arts scene.

Recalling all that she's gathered in her career so far, Hartman will never forget the advice that she received from Tracy Till, co-founder and former co-CEO of Butler/Till: "Raise your hand. Always sign up for opportunities that people don't want. Stay late and work hard."

Hartman says that advice got her to where she is today, and when opportunities arise she hears Till's voice in her ear nudging her to give it a shot.

*Nsheldon@bridgetowermedia.com / (585) 363-7031*

*#Team PXY with Corey James and Breezy on 98PXY is a partner with Fast Start. Go to <https://98pxy.radio.com/98pxyp> to hear interviews with Fast Start subjects.*