

## Cassidy Smith



### Broadcast Journalism

Class of 2011

*By: Hannah Poore*

“I wanted to be able to speak to people, I wanted to be able to write, and I wanted to be able to make things,” said Cassidy Smith of her mass communication and journalism (MCJ) education. “Every step I took was toward being a communicator.” Fresno State is where Smith formed her MCJ story, and she credits the opportunities she had here as equipping her with a full suite of abilities to be attractive to employers and competent in the workplace.

Her MCJ story began with the goal of becoming an on-camera broadcast journalist, and evolved into being an expert storyteller of all types. As a Bulldog, Smith worked as a cops and crime reporter for The Fresno Bee, started the “Picture the Change” photo campaign as a Richter Center Student Leader,

interned in Washington, D.C. as a Maddy Institute Scholar, and won the George F. Gruner Award for Meritorious Public Service in Journalism for her special project reporting on the housing boom and bust of a Sanger subdivision, among other accomplishments and experiences.

After graduating from Fresno State in 2011 with a bachelor's degree in MCJ (emphasis in broadcast journalism) and minors in Spanish and media arts, Smith attended Georgetown University where she earned her master of arts degree in communication, culture, and technology (CCT).

Immediately after finishing the CCT program at Georgetown, Smith interviewed for several positions, including one at Orbitz Worldwide in Chicago. Thanks to her communication expertise, diverse experiences at Fresno State and increased knowledge from her master's degree, Smith was hired as the corporate communications specialist for Orbitz Worldwide, overseeing the internal communication for the company's 1,600 employees worldwide as well as external communication for the company's smaller CheapTickets brand.

One major part of her job is to produce the company's weekly employee newsletter, which she treats like her own newspaper. She also plans fun monthly events for Orbitz employees, where she draws experience from planning Smittcamp Formal every year as a student in the Smittcamp Family Honors College.

Smith's favorite part of her job is that she gets to move around and talk to people every day. She's excited that she can walk around in the three-story Orbitz Chicago location which holds 900 employees, and know people down every hallway. "I always have my finger on the pulse to know what's going on," she said. Smith's attention to detail and accuracy in her work— what she calls "the Dr. Gary Rice eye," as most Fresno State MCJers will understand— is invaluable in her position at Orbitz.

She uses all of her skills and experiences on a daily basis at Orbitz, and encourages people to always be learning, even things that you can't see relating directly to your role, because you will use everything, whether you think so or not. Her MCJ advice is to work with "open eyes, open heart, and open mind," learning everything you can and helping wherever you can.

A California native who grew up in the Central Valley, Smith has loved moving to Chicago, a city she never imagined herself even visiting, and immersing herself in new experiences like improv classes at The Second City. "I don't know that there are too many times in your life where you're able to just pick up and go, and I feel very fortunate to now have lived in two cities that are so different from any kind of city in California," says Smith.

"There are so many things to be appreciated where you are," she said. "You can really capitalize on your time wherever you are to really make a difference in everything you do. There are a lot of good things out there, and if you're always focused on looking for the 'shiny next big thing,' you're going to miss the opportunity that's right in front of you. That's kind of true for life, too, that's not just applicable to your career."