



Houda Elyazgi, '07
Chief Client Officer, Saxum

Through hard work and dedication, Houda Elyazgi grew her career from starting as an intern at Saxum to now serving as the agency's chief client officer. The 2007 Gaylord College graduate, who had an emphasis in public relations and a minor in Arabic, most enjoys being in a role that allows her to make a difference in the world. Elyazgi recently shared more about her time on campus, what her experience has been like at Saxum, defining moments of her career so far and more.

What is your favorite memory from your time at Gaylord College?

I have too many memories to name. I must say one of the most notable was carrying the flag on behalf of Gaylord College during the university's graduation ceremony. We were awarded with the best seats, sitting on stage with the commencement speaker and university president. It was an honor to represent my college, plus there were fireworks! A win-win!

What do you consider to be the most significant moments of your career so far?

I have had many defining moments in my career from promoting the opening of world renowned parks to the Bob Dylan Center to working on global brands and with Royal Courts. Each project or initiative I work on is significant to me in its own way. I am grateful for the opportunity to work on meaningful work that is truly making a difference in the world.

I was recently recognized by PR News' Social Impact Awards as Mentor of the Year. That was an especially meaningful moment for me because I wouldn't be nearly as successful without the great team I work with every day. If each member of my team is set up for success, I truly believe we are all more successful in the long run.

How did Gaylord College prepare you for your future career?

Gaylord College always stressed the

Do you have a favorite faculty/staff member at Gaylord?

There are so many wonderful faculty and staff members who had a positive impact on my time at Gaylord College. A notable staff member who comes to mind is Dean Joe Foote. He was such a great champion of students. He encouraged me to be the best version of myself and bring my whole self to school. I have taken that with me throughout my entire career - lean in, bring your whole self to work and bring your best effort in whatever you do.

How did your career path lead you to Saxum?

I started my career at Saxum as an intern and have been with the company for nearly 15 years. It's a story of what hard work and dedication can do in driving success in one's career. I'm grateful to our founder and executive chairman, Renzi Stone, who is a great friend and mentor of mine, for giving me so many opportunities to learn and grow professionally and personally in the many roles I've held at Saxum.

Describe your role at Saxum.

I currently serve as the chief client officer. I have the great privilege of leading our full portfolio of clients and overseeing our talented client service team. We are a purpose-driven agency working with clients who are dedicated to making a meaningful impact in the world, and I am immensely grateful I work with a group of incredible people who are so passionate about serving our clients at the highest level.

importance of teamwork. Teamwork has been critical to my success as a professional. The ability to collaborate with a diverse team equipped me to problem solve more efficiently, maximize the strengths of our whole team and foster an environment that was safe and welcoming for all to contribute.

What advice would you give to current students aspiring to a career in mass communication?

Don't be afraid to FAIL. It's your first attempt in learning and the more you expose yourself to new opportunities, the more you will find yourself in a position to grow and level up in your career.

What do you do for fun outside of work?

I like spending time with my family and close friends. I also love finding ways to express myself creatively - I dabble in modern calligraphy, painting and crafting. I read when I can and spend time in nature to recharge. I'm also very passionate about serving the community.

Are there any other organizations or projects you're involved with outside of your full-time job that you want to highlight?

I serve on several boards but one I recently joined is [Global Press](#). Global Press builds and maintains independent news bureaus in some of the world's least-covered places, working to staff local women journalists who are from their coverage communities and who produce exceptional journalism.



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