

Time Out for Education



When **Parisnicole Payton** (BBA '08, MBA '10) decided in 2002 to take her 10-year-old company in a different direction, she knew it would require extensive networking, and a college education. She had years of experience as a publicist and manager for unsigned artists and entertainers, but her plan to represent professional athletes required formal training in business and leadership.

Payton enrolled at Strayer University and began volunteering on the host committee for Super Bowl XXXVI. Both ventures opened doors for her—to the National Football League and to her new career. “In the sports industry, athletes need a visual—they need to see you in action, producing results—and my involvement with the host committee was an opportunity to prove myself, to study the game and to meet the players,” she says.

“But I also needed to have the credentials to be taken seriously by my clients and colleagues.”

Today, the PNP Agency is a successful public relations and management firm for athletes and entertainers, but Payton has not forgotten the impact of her education. “I try to instill the importance of higher learning in my clients, and to develop the players off the field,” says the Strayer University alumna. “I stress that their athletic careers will not last forever and that education will be the rock they can rely on.”

This approach has earned Payton a reputation as a professional who represents her clients from the heart, which shows in her nonprofit work. “I connect my clients with nonprofits where they can make a difference through sponsorship,” she says. “Often, companies are willing to match a player’s donation. Sometimes just bringing a player to an event can increase contributions.”

In addition to giving back to her own community, she helps her clients make a difference throughout the country. “When a player comes to me and says, ‘I want to start a foundation,’ I am well prepared to help him put together the best team to do so,” says the Philadelphia native. “I am always learning and looking to improve myself as a publicist, a leader and an advocate.”

— By Courtney MacGregor Coder, Senior Editor