

Valerie Reynolds, MBA, MS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Communications Director | Community Affairs Manager | Nonprofit Executive

Established executive professional with a 20-year successful track record within the non-profit communications, marketing and public relations field. Develops and executes strategic marketing communications and media plans. Collaborates with key stakeholders and cultivates sustainable business relationships. Manages media affairs including pitching, media cultivation, and fielding media requests. Affiliated with several well-known, worldwide universities, organizations and institutions. Oversees all aspects of organizational event production from beginning to end. Writes and facilitates distribution of promotional kits, press releases, fact sheets, media advisories, and other public relations materials. Drafting of grant proposals and applications for state, federal, and private funding mechanisms including HRSA and Healthy Start. Exceptional supervision skills with established ability to lead, manage and train large groups, small groups, as well as, individuals. Driven and loyal employee with great negotiation and influencing skills. Respects and adheres to confidentiality. Recipient of Ohio State University's School of Continuing Studies Southern Africa Summer Fellowship.

EDUCATION

Master of Business Administration (MBA) Marketing
American InterContinental University Schaumburg, Illinois
Completed: August 2013

Master of Science (MS) Journalism with specialization in Public Relations
Roosevelt University Chicago, Illinois
Completed: January 2003

Bachelor of Arts (BA) Communications, Minor: African American & African Studies
The Ohio State University Columbus, Ohio
Completed: June 2000

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS/ACHIEVEMENTS

Bronzeville Museum	(Women's Board Member)
Chicago Defender	(Women of Excellence Award)
Chicago Foundation for Women	(Willie T. Barrow Fellowship)
Chicago Says No More	(Steering Committee Member)
Chicago Urban League	(Metropolitan Board Member)
National Black Public Relations Society	(Member)
Publicity Club Chicago	(Diversity Committee Member)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The University of Chicago (CI3) **Chicago, Illinois**
Communications Director **August 2015 - Present**

- Enhances brand awareness, research dissemination, and organizational positioning for three laboratories. Develops, manages and executes strategic communications and external affairs plans.
- Leads all organizational content including blog posts, press releases, annual reports, web content, and quarterly newsletters - to engage target audiences. Writes and disseminates press releases and other marketing materials.
- Oversees organization's local, national, and international media relations campaign. Cultivates media and vendor relationships.
- Collaborates with university-wide, senior-level communications staff to ensure organizational brand alignment with UChicago and UChicago Medicine.

Notable Achievements: Led media relation team securing media placements and organization features in outlets and publications including NPR, CNN, Slate, The Guardian, The Conversation, Outlook India, Hindustan Times, Rewire, WTTW Chicago, Tonight, ABC7 News Views, The Chronicle of Higher Education, Crain's Chicago, and Chicago Magazine. Drove the development and implementation of digital marketing communications plan increasing social media engagement by more than 100%. Created and led organization-wide "communications boot camp" to overhaul organization messaging and collateral. Launched the Ci3 Community Relations Committee to develop authentic community engagement of our research programs.

EXECUTIVE PROFESSIONAL

EXPERT-LEVEL SKILLS

Agile Supervision
AP Writing Style
Budget Management/Forecasting
Business Administration
C-level Suite
C-level Suite Collaboration
Community Relations
Conflict Resolution
Consulting
Content-Creation
Contract Negotiation
Customer Cultivation
Customer Service
Event Planning
Executive-level Cultivation
Extensive Fundraising
Human Resource Management
Integration
Marketing
Media Relations
Microsoft Office Excel
Microsoft Office Word
Microsoft PowerPoint
Networking
Nonprofit Management
Operations Management
People Skills
Program Development
Program Monitoring
Promotions
Proposal Review
Proposal Writing
Public Affairs
Public Outreach
Public Speaking
Solution Implementation
Staff Training & Coaching
Strategic Development
Strategic Execution
Team-building
Training/Teaching

VOLUNTEERISM

Liberty Baptist Church
Feed the People Food Ministry

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
Young Women's Mentorship

TEDxGrandBoulevard
Lead Organizer and Curator

Chicago, Illinois
June 2019 – March 2020

- Identified, recruited, and managed a diverse team of professionals to support the successful execution and growth of the inaugural TEDx Grand Boulevard event
- Developed and managed a detailed work plan and schedule that included established goals, anticipated requirements, deadlines, and budget monitoring and analysis
- Oversaw all logistics - event management, speaker curation, marketing, promotion, corporate partnerships, budgeting - through the planning and direction of all functions of TEDx Grand Boulevard
- Collaborated and communicated with community organizations to establish a diverse lineup of speakers and representation
- Enforced strong leadership skills to ensure efficient implementation of strategic work plans
- Continuously updated and monitored work plan to ensure objectives are accomplished and deadlines are on schedule
- Led the production management and planning for the day of the event

Notable Achievements: Launched the first TEDx event on the South Side of Chicago. Secured media placements and organization features in outlets and publications including Block Club Chicago. Successfully fundraised close to \$10,000 in corporate sponsorships.

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
Manager, Brand Experience and Communications

Chicago, Illinois
March 2013 - August 2015

- Developed organization's communication plans and marketing collateral including the organization's annual report and quarterly donor newsletter. Oversaw media relations and corporate partnership for events and programs.
- Designed and launched YWCA's Business and Entrepreneurship program. Implemented an annual "shark-tank" event. Oversaw all stages of the event life cycle, organization events/programs including: *Annual Leader Luncheon Celebration*, *The Persimmon Brunch* and the *New Look of Leadership Fashion Show*.
- Prepared keynote addresses, presentations, thought-pieces, and event decks for C-level executives and other staff.
- Managed strategic social media campaign using social media platforms Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

Notable Achievements: Secured media placements and organization features in outlets and publications including, but not limited to: Crain's Business Chicago, Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, Fox News 32, CBS-2 Chicago, NBC Nightly News, and the Chicago Defender. Led organization's integrated marketing communications initiatives. Successfully negotiated corporate sponsorships up to \$100,000 and managed program deliverables, resources, timelines and budgets.

Chicago Family Health Center
Community Affairs Manager

Chicago, Illinois
January 2010 - August 2012

- Managed organization's community engagement and public affairs initiatives. Acted as a liaison between the health center and community, government, and civic institutions including: aldermanic offices; schools; hospitals; social service agencies; and state/federal health agencies.
- Led marketing and community affairs initiatives including campaign creation, proposal development, partnership cultivation and memorandum of understanding/agreement execution management.
- Supervised/managed an eight-member outreach team with an \$800k budget, and developed and implemented several new monitoring and evaluation programs that saw a 60% increase new patient recruitment in the first year.
- Led organization's event management including *Annual Healing Hands Celebration*, *Back to School Health Fairs*, and several new facility groundbreaking ceremonies that each included production management and planning for the day-of the event

Notable Achievements: Secured media placements and organization features in outlets and publications including, but not limited to: The Chicago Tribune, Medill Reports Chicago, Crain's Chicago Business, Chicago Social, Chicago Reporter, and the Journal of Healthcare Contracting. Launched and administrated social media presence with the creation of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn pages, directly attributing to 200% online follower increase and 38% online influence increase within first six months of launch.

Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Public Affairs Specialist

Chicago, Illinois
June 2008 - January 2010

- Promoted non-partisan legislative reform through print, electronic, and online media. Positioned organization as a national expert in poverty law and advocacy.
- Established daily digital marketing channels, brand messaging, and public relations on behalf of the organization.
- Promoted the agency's agenda to advance laws and policies that improve opportunities of people living in poverty.
- Oversaw a communications audit that identified the strengths and weaknesses of internal and external communications and marketing collateral.
- Developed and implemented integrated marketing communications strategies that supported organizational goals and increased organizational visibility among internal and external audiences.

Notable Achievements: Wrote and edited first organization-wide newsletter, *The Shriver Wire*. Launched the organization's digital blog, *The Shriver Brief*. Positioned organization as a national expert in the poverty law and advocacy. Launched organization's first social media campaign with new Facebook, Twitter and Flickr accounts.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTIVE EMPLOYMENT

Chicago Foundation for Women	(Former Communications Associate)	2002 - 2004
Nordstrom	(Former Assistant Manager)	2006 - 2008
Roosevelt University	(Former Public Relations Associate)	2001
Urban Dove	(Former Communication Development Associate)	2004 - 2006