

Wendy L. Cullitan

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SUMMARY

As a Marketing Communications Leader, I create innovative internal and external brand strategies, that move people to act whether it's to purchase, participate, or give. Having worked in education, healthcare, and non-profit organizations, I have a track record of successful "cause marketing." By crafting powerful stories that incorporate strategic messaging, I grow an organization's visibility, community engagement, and donations.

With expertise across website development, print and digital, media relations, project management, and events, I'm known for translating vision into the most impactful multi-media campaigns. Through my interviews with stakeholders, I bring a deep understanding of the target audience's concerns and build messages that leverage their individual motivations.

EXPERIENCE

ILLINOIS ACTION FOR CHILDREN, CHICAGO, IL

Jan 2022 – present

Leading non-profit advocating for families and transforming childcare and early learning in Cook County and Illinois.

Director of Marketing & Communications

Lead team of three to develop impactful marketing strategies across 26 diverse program areas, including Public Policy, Advocacy, Research, and Development. Execute 300+ projects annually in a dynamic, high-demand setting, encompassing website development, email marketing, social media, digital and print production, media relations, video production, advertising, and donor relations.

- Increased by 15% target area site visits through a comprehensive website redesign to elevate user engagement that align with long-term objectives.
- Rebuilt the marketing department post-pandemic. Led seamless project continuity and operations despite staffing challenges.
- Increased by 120% engagement on social media.
- Streamlined process management to deliver 100% projects on time and within budget.
- Created high impact videos for events that moved participants to give.
- Expanded newsletter production and enhanced tactics, driving stronger stakeholder engagement.

MATHER, EVANSTON, IL

2020 – 2021

High end senior living facilities across Illinois, Arizona and Virginia, serving active older adults.

Senior Marketing Communications Manager

During the height of COVID, developed and executed marketing strategies, implementation, and budgeting to drive lead generation and occupancy. Collaborated with sales and operations to achieve occupancy goals.

- Surpassed 2021 Q1 lead generation goal by 25% by launching "Find Your Place" campaign, including print and digital advertising, email marketing, direct mail, and brochures.
- Increased caregiver referrals by 20% by communicating with a new target group of adult children.

BAKER DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL, WILMETTE, IL

2018 – 2020

Private, independent progressive school – Junior Kindergarten through 8th grade

Director, Marketing & Admissions Outreach

Provided strategic direction, expanded brand awareness of organization. Served as key writer, editor, and photographer.

- Expanded brand presence and visibility, increasing inquiries by 57% and applicants by 50% in one year.
- Achieved effective social media marketing campaigns (*while spending 50% less on service fees*).
- Created engaging donor communications materials that boosted parent participation in the annual fund.
- Established brand recognition and first admissions brochure and collateral in 7 years. This involved a refreshed logo, templates, colors, fonts, and content messaging across multiple channels including website design and content refresh.
- Expanded name recognition through a comprehensive grassroots marketing campaign, admissions outreach events, and community partnerships.
- Participated in DEI training to inform internal and external communications.

THE FRANCES XAVIER WARDE SCHOOL, CHICAGO, IL

2016 – 2018

Private, independent Catholic School – Junior Kindergarten through 8th grade

Director, Marketing & Communications

Recruited to work with senior leadership; facilitated interdepartmental and external communications. Hired and managed Digital Communications Coordinator.

- Amplified school inquiries by ~15% by creating the Discover FXW: Your Pathway to Wonder campaign.
- Increased Likes/Follow by 60% by establishing a robust social media presence.
- Developed a marketing plan boosting student diversity, with a Chicago 'L' ad campaign driving a 50% site visit increase and doubling event attendance.
- Launched FXW's first alumni magazine, strengthening donor connections and increasing alumni contribution.
- Established brand guidelines to deliver a consistent look, tone, and feel for all internal/external communication pieces. Process included an audit of print and online communications, consultations with designers.
- Partnered with IT to launch a new website in four months, integrating competitor analysis and administrator input for engaging, user-friendly content.

WORDSMITH COMMUNICATIONS, CHICAGO, IL

2009 – 2016

Senior Consultant/Owner

As a marketing communications consultant, writer, and editor, provided brand messaging and strategy. Highlights included:

- **InventTrust Properties:** Consulted for an \$8B REIT, partnering with the CEO on rebranding, ensuring trademark viability, and leading the SharePoint intranet redesign with engaging internal communications.
- **Sunset Ridge School District 29:** Managed design and wrote content for a Capital Improvement brochure, helping secure community support for a \$25M school project. Produced quarterly Board newsletters, earning praise for engaging content and improved design.
- **Usher III Initiative:** Worked directly with the founder. Interviewed Class A Scientists from top Universities such as Case Western Reserve and Duke. Translated *complex medical research allowing the layperson to understand and empathize* with the critical need to find a cure. Wrote website content and donor appeals.
- **Kenilworth School District 38:** Boosted brand awareness over three years through strategic communications, content creation, website management, and faculty training to enhance parent engagement.

LAKE FOREST COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL, LAKE FOREST, IL

2006 – 2009

Private, independent school – age 2 through 8th grade

Director of Communications

Recruited to establish first Communications department. Worked with board members, administrators, teachers, parents, alumni, donors, and the community to increase enrollment. Hired and supervised in-house designer.

- Leveraged relationships with regional media to publicize the unveiling of a new state-of-the-art school with a feature in Chicago Magazine, leading to increased awareness and expanded enrollment.
- Partnered with the Director of Admissions and Director of Development to plan special events, fundraisers, professional lectures, and school videos, exceeding fundraising goals and increasing enrollment.

NORTH SHORE COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL, WINNETKA, IL

2003 – 2006

Private, independent, college-prep school - Junior Kindergarten through 12th grade

Director, Marketing & Communications

Founded the first Marketing & Communications Department. Hired and supervised staff. Led advertising campaigns and media relations, handled vendor and supplier contracts, managed budgets, and supervised events to a successful conclusion.

- Supported Development & Admissions by producing collateral, such as event invitations, direct mail, donor appeals, and annual reports.
- Conceptualized and launched the “Seven Reasons to Take a Closer Look” campaign, resulting in *20% enrollment growth*.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Hadley School for the Blind, Winnetka, IL

- Director of Communications – developed event marketing expertise.

North Shore University Health System

- Associate Director of Public Relations – developed media relations and feature writing expertise.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts | Barnard College of Columbia University, New York, NY

Professional Editing Certification (in progress) | University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Management Certification in Social Media Marketing | College of Lake County, Grayslake, IL

Certified Yoga Teacher, 500-hour E-RYT | Blue Sun Yoga School

AWARDS

Publicity Club of Chicago's Golden Trumpet for Annual Report

Public Relations Society of America 1st place award for Annual Report

INSPRA Silver Awards of Merit for Annual Report, Website Redesign & Parent Handbook