
KAREN DEAL HORNFECK

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Dynamic communication professional with over 25 years of experience supporting nonprofit organizations. Excellent written and oral communication skills that translate into effective brand messaging over multiple platforms, including print, video, podcasts, website design, and social media. Creative problem-solver with strong relationship building skills and a deep understanding of Guilford County's community.

SKILLS

- Strategic communication planning
- Website design and optimization
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Video production
- Podcast production
- Strategic fundraising
- Social media platform utilization
- Strong media relations
- Grant writing
- Project management
- Nonprofit management
- Strong research skills

WORK HISTORY

Chief Public Information Officer shift_ed - Guilford County

Feb. 2025 to Present

- Oversee the development and implementation of a comprehensive communications strategy for both internal and external audiences.
- Manage website redesign and upkeep.
- Act as a liaison with local media, including producing a monthly series with WFMY.
- Work in partnership with Guilford County Schools to develop awareness and advocacy tools around public education in Guilford County.
- Serve on the shift_ed leadership team to develop overall organization strategy.
- Manage a board communication committee that outlines messaging and strategy.

Interim President

Nov. 2023 to Jan. 2025

Guilford Education Alliance – Greensboro, NC

- Supervised a staff of nine for an independent nonprofit organization.
- Managed a county-wide sales tax campaign during the 2024 election year.
- Served on planning teams for targeted community initiatives, including school-based telehealth and Build S.M.A.R.T Schools, part of Guilford County's \$2 billion investment in school improvements and construction.
- Managed board relationships to ensure that members are well-equipped to meet organizational goals.
- Guided and executed strategic communication planning, including branding, content design, public relations and marketing.
- Managed strategic financial planning, include efficient use of funding through careful budgeting.
- Guided and executed targeted fundraising initiatives to meet yearly goals.
- Maintain an awareness and understanding of state and local education issues and develop advocacy strategies to share related data and stories with public.
- Represented organization at various community events.
- Built and managed partnerships with other key community organizations to enable more effective action.
- Maintained close relationships with key Guilford County Schools leaders.
- Served as the primary liaison for local print, radio, television and online media.

Vice President, Campaigns & Communications

2016 to 2023

Guilford Education Alliance – Greensboro, NC

- Raised organization's brand awareness through targeted communication efforts and fundraising campaigns.
- Maintained key messaging for the organization.
- Wrote regular e-newsletters to educate the public about education issues as part of GEA's advocacy efforts. Increased email open rate by 20%.
- Managed organization's advocacy efforts, including creating regular publications and managing community events that focused on relevant education issues.
- Increased community attendance at organization's signature Education Summit by 60% for a total attendance of approximately 500. Managed all event logistics and messaging, as well as day-of event production.
- Developed innovative marketing and PR strategies to meet organizational goals. Devised and managed content calendar to align with organizational strategic plans.
- Managed social media portfolio, growing audience by 75% across platforms.
- Leveraged technical resources to design, create, and distribute campaign deliverables, including e-mails, impact reports, and news articles. Created and executed dynamic social media campaigns.
- Redesigned and maintained website using WordPress content management system and associated plugins.
- Maintained media relations with regular outreach, including media alerts and press releases.
- Partnered with WFMY to produce a long-term monthly story series highlighting school bond improvements.
- Produced GEA's first podcast series.
- Oversaw production of regular video content.
- Managed stewardship strategies to deepen relationships with donors.

Marketing Communication Consultant

2014 to 2016

Center For Creative Leadership – Greensboro, NC

- Collaborated with product teams to design campaigns and communications.
- Directed full-cycle marketing and advertising strategies including cost estimation, resource allocation and KPI monitoring.
- Produced videos and wrote articles to highlight new initiatives.

Marketing and Admissions Director

2010 to 2014

Our Lady of Grace Catholic School – Greensboro, NC

- Increased school registrations by 25% with improved promotional approaches, outreach strategies and parent engagement efforts.
- Redesigned and maintained school website.
- Served as the primary liaison for local print, radio, television and online media.

Freelance Journalist/Contributing Writer

1998 to 2010

Various – Greensboro, NC

- Applied understanding of public opinion, social media, and traditional media to create engaging and attention-grabbing stories for local newspaper and national publications, including Pace Communications, the News & Record and the Home Furnishings Association's RetailerNow magazine.

Marketing Communication Associate

1995 to 1998

Center For Creative Leadership – Greensboro, NC

- Increased revenues and supported business goals by developing marketing communication strategies and campaigns for leadership products.
- Developed brand-consistent communication materials using sourced contractors and vendors.

Community Education Coordinator

1993 to 1995

UPLIFT, Inc. – Greensboro, NC

- Developed communication strategies and designed aligned materials.
- Managed conference planning logistics, including site selection, registration, and site management for 300+ person events. Developed all written materials for conference.
- Maintained proactive media relations by distributing news releases for placement, building strong relationships, and monitoring all forms of media.

- Assisted with state and federal grant writing.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts: BA Communication (magna cum laude), **University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

COURSEWORK

Executive Leadership Academy, Class of 2024

Foundations of Leadership, Center for Creative Leadership

Technology of Participation (ToP) Project Management

Benchmarks Feedback Facilitator, Center for Creative Leadership

Other Voices, Class of 2022 Racial Equity Workshop, Racial Equity Institute (REI)