

JEFFREY DEGRAFF

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Professional Summary

An experienced bilingual (Spanish & English) communications professional capable of conveying key messages in circumstances ranging from national crisis coverage to local human-interest stories. Possesses extensive knowledge in messaging, crisis communications, media production, and traditional and digital dissemination techniques. Career spans a variety of industries, a testament to adaptability and quick learning.

Skills

Strategic & Crisis Communications | Governmental Affairs & Public Policy | Executive Communication | Community Outreach | Media Relations | Social Media Management | Event Planning & Coordination | Bilingual Communications

Select Accomplishments

- Fortune 150 media spokesperson, covering eleven of company's twenty-three states
 - Directed proactive and reactive media activities
 - Advised leadership across departments on communications strategies
 - Coordinated with Public Affairs on initiatives focused at securing regulatory or legislative advantages
- Extensive experience and training in crisis communications
 - Specialized crisis communications training from Harvard Kennedy School of Government
 - Consistently recognized for outstanding crisis communications and pre-emptive communications
 - Led communications for natural disasters, industrial accidents and law enforcement activities
 - Media interactions at all levels, from local to international outlets

Experience

Owner/Editor, www.jdegraff2.com (Houston, TX) Oct 2018 - Present

A multi-media website that houses professional work samples, links to publications and a regularly updated blog discussing public relations, communications, management and life.

- Developed overall website design, assisted in the initial creation of the site, and continue to perform regular maintenance and updates for all aspects of the site
- Generates content for weekly blog posts that include the design and creation of graphics and other media
- Continuously promotes the site and its content through multiple social media channels
- Monitors site traffic statistics and moderates comments

Senior Director of Media Relations, Union Pacific Railroad (Houston, TX) July 2014 - Oct 2018

A Fortune 150 company that operates across twenty-three states. This position served as the primary media and communications lead for eleven states.

- Monitored communication needs, identified opportunities for outreach, and secured executive participation to support strategic corporate communication goals
- Coordinated responses to all inbound media requests and inquiries, and prepared, pitched and placed proactive stories and content in local outlets and trade publications
- Led on-the-ground crisis communications responses, and directed efforts to mitigate potential crises
- Provided strategy, input and content to internal projects, social media efforts and overall communications positioning
- Regularly interfaced with the CEO and other senior executives, provided communications insight and logistical support
- Worked with the Government Affairs team, provided messaging and analyzed legislation and policy response

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Experience *(continued)*

Public Information Director, Louisiana Housing Corporation (Baton Rouge, LA) Sep 2007 - July 2014

A state agency tasked with providing housing opportunities for low to moderate income individuals and families. The Public Information Director leads all public relations, media responses and marketing activities

- Regularly interacted with media (local/state/regional) through the issuance of news releases, crafted statements and acted as spokesman in interviews
- Member of the Leadership Team during the transition to the newly formed Louisiana Housing Corporation
- Led the creation of the Community Outreach Department
- Helped stand up the legislatively mandated Housing and Transportation Planning and Coordinating Commission
- Managed all public relations events, meetings and trainings
- Coordinated participation in expos, workshops, statewide public meetings and celebratory events

Project Manager, BPM, LLC, (Baton Rouge, LA) Sep 2005 - Sep 2007

A small business-consulting firm that helped Louisiana entrepreneurs achieve success. The Project Manager was the lead director of day-to-day activities and marketing efforts.

- Directly assisted small businesses and franchisees with start-up and growth
- Management of more than 12 rental properties
- Developed the business plans and market studies that secured financing for the construction of 7 quick-service restaurants

Public Outreach Coordinator, Louisiana TIMED Managers, (Baton Rouge, LA) Feb 2005 - May 2005

A joint venture of GEC Inc., Parsons Brinckerhoff, and THE LPA GROUP INCORPORATED and was contracted to lead the single largest transportation infrastructure improvement program in Louisiana history. The Public Outreach Coordinator was key to the promotion of construction activities and interaction with communities.

- Coordinated outreach activities to publicize the rebuilding of the Huey P. Long Bridge in New Orleans
- Planned and conducted public update meetings between the construction teams and the local business leaders
- Designed newsletters and other publications to keep the residents of the impacted areas informed
- Set up a satellite office for future outreach use

News & Media Relations Manager, LA Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, (Baton Rouge, LA) Nov 2001 - Feb 2005

A large state agency that oversees conservation efforts. This position played a vital role in the department's community outreach and communications efforts.

- Handled all media relations that included the writing and distribution of over 350 news releases per year
- Maintained the media database and also prepared feature stories for publication in a regional magazine
- Assisted with audio/visual productions, including an award winning promotional video for a national conference
- Member of the coordinating team for an annual celebratory event that attracted over 10,000 people

Education

Mass Communications - Public Relations 2001

Louisiana State University — Baton Rouge, LA, USA

Minor in Spanish

Completed Internship with University Relations Department

Leadership in Crisis - Crisis Communications 2011

Harvard University — Cambridge, MA, USA