

JEFFREY DEGRAFF

Atlanta, Georgia | C: (281) 705-0173 | jdegraff2@gmail.com | www.jdegraff2.com | [linkedin.com/in/jeffdegraff](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jeffdegraff)

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

Media Relations Manager, Norfolk Southern Corp, (Atlanta, GA) Feb 2020 - Present

Class I railroad operating in 22 states across the eastern half of the country. This position manages and coordinates all external communications and media interactions.

- Respond to all media inquiries from local, regional and national outlets
- Proactively pitch media placements and opportunities
- Prepare and train company leaders for media interactions and interviews
- Assist Corporate Communications department with internal communications and policies
- Develop crisis communications plans, policies and strategies for deployment across company
- Formulate and coordinate messaging across departments for external use

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, including monitors site traffic and comments
- Generates content for blog posts that include the design and creation of graphics and other media

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Experience *(continued)*

Strategic Communications Lead, HDR, Inc, (Houston, TX) Sept 2019 - Feb 2020
International engineering firm serving clients in the public and private sectors. This position leads strategic communications efforts for projects across the Texas Gulf Coast, specializing in public engagement.

- Act as freight rail specialist for communications projects across entire practice
- Coordinate public meetings and outreach efforts for projects, including along and across Mexican border
- Prepare media and communication strategy proposals for a variety of infrastructure projects
- Assist in developing department protocols and procedures for growing Strategic Communications practice

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

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
- Led the creation of the Community Outreach Department
- Managed all public relations events, meetings and trainings
- Coordinated participation in expos, workshops, statewide public meetings and celebratory events

Education

Mass Communications - Public Relations Louisiana State University — Baton Rouge, LA, USA Minor in Spanish / Completed Internship with University Relations Department	2001
Leadership in Crisis - Crisis Communications Harvard University — Cambridge, MA, USA	2011