

REBECCA S. MURPHY, MBA

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Accomplished executive marketing and communications leader, strategist and collaborator with over 20 years of experience in **brand stewardship, crisis communications, enrollment marketing, digital strategy, collaborative partnerships, creative development and media relations**, with the qualities and skills to provide motivational leadership and innovative ideas in a team environment.

EXECUTIVE EXPERIENCE:

Kent State University, Kent, Ohio - January 2013 - Present

Home to nearly 40,000 students and where Flashes Take Care of Flashes, Kent State University is a premier public research institution in Northeast Ohio with eight campuses across the state and four international hubs.

Interim Vice President, University Communications and Marketing January 2020 – Present

Interim Vice President, University Relations January 2016 – January 2017

As Interim Vice President for University Communications and Marketing, I lead the Division of University Communications and Marketing and serve as the executive marketing and communications officer of the institution. I oversee the central marketing and communications team of the university (UCM) and serve as point executive for the management of the university's WKSU partnership with Ideastream Public Media. In total, the division comprises 36 full-time staff members and 17 part-time employees.

Here are highlights of my successes and responsibilities as interim vice president:

- Serve as a member of the President's Cabinet and report directly to the President.
- Serve as the lead communications advisor for senior leadership on university-wide initiatives including crisis communications.
- Set the overall strategic direction of the university's branding, marketing, and communications efforts constant with the university's strategic plan and core values.
- Partnered closely with the President's Office and Provost's Office to develop and orchestrate the presidential communications platform to share the university's *Strategic Roadmap to a Distinctive Kent State*, a comprehensive plan that outlines the mission, vision and priorities of the university.
- Served as point with external agency for our rebranding effort, *Undeniably Kent State*, and developed the marketing and communications plan to launch the refreshed brand to internal and external

audiences. The effort included on-campus events and signage, tool kits, brand guidelines, web redesign, advertising campaign, and integrated creative throughout the eight-campus system.

- Transitioned brand work from an outside agency to the internal team resulting in a savings of \$1.24M.
- Evolved the Kent State brand representation to align with university priorities and created a student-ready positioning platform to highlight the university's deep commitment and success in providing access and degree attainment for all students.
- Successfully managed numerous crisis communications situations such as the pandemic, hate speech on the Rock, the May 4 speaker, the Field Hockey matter and legislator demands to remove reading materials.
- In partnership with the VP of Enrollment Management, created a one-team approach for close coordination of strategic marketing and communications activities to support enrollment. This new culture has borne much-improved coordination with communications and enrollment efforts across the university resulting in several successful initiatives.
- In consultation with Enrollment Management, created fall and spring advertising campaigns to raise awareness of Kent State and drive interest with prospective students and families. These campaigns were conceived, scripted and produced entirely in-house featuring Kent State students, staff and faculty. The campaigns featured direct, bold messages that highlighted specific points of pride and underscored Kent State's commitment to access, affordability and student success.
- Collaborated with our student support team to create the Go4IT Initiative, a comprehensive, step-by-step process for graduating on time with less debt. Covering such topics as grades, finances, advising, course load planning, internships, connecting with friends and embracing the university life, Go4IT helps students stay focused on their degree paths.
- Worked closely with university leadership and Ideastream Public Media (IPM) leadership to finalize and implement a Public Service Operating Agreement for IPM to manage the WKSU Stations, where WKSU will be the sole public news station and Kent State will continue to have on-air and website recognition.
- Serve on Pandemic Leadership Committee as lead expert on pandemic-related communications strategy, creating and coordinating communications efforts across the eight-campus system and navigating the complex situation of ever-changing information. The American Council on Education recognized our COVID "one-stop shop" hub as a model for others to follow.
- In partnership with the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), developed communications to engage the university community in the DEI strategic plan effort and to establish and convey our commitment and actions to eradicate systemic racism at Kent State.
- Continue to work in partnership with DEI to create a dedicated visual identity tool kit for representing inclusion and belonging at Kent State in internal and external communications. This tool kit will be used by communicators across the university.
- Coordinated closely with the President's Office to develop and implement a marketing and communications strategy and campaign for the 50th Commemoration of the May 4, 1970 shootings at Kent State - a sensitive and often controversial topic.
- Serve as division point for Town/Gown and government relations communications needs in support of university efforts.
- Serve as a leading communications advisor on the Inter-University Council of Ohio, a voluntary educational association of Ohio's public universities that engages in government liaison work on behalf of its members.
- In partnership with the Office of Global Education, developed a positioning platform through research and competitive audits to raise awareness of the university in international markets.
- Oversaw the Center for Corporate and Professional Development (CCPD) whose high-quality workforce development programs are sought after by prominent corporations and organizations across the nation. In FY 20, CCPD delivered more than 150 on-site, tailored employee training and

leadership development programs for 2,700+ employees. Revenues generated from the center's on-site program offerings exceeded \$650K.

- Manage an operating budget in excess of \$7M.
- Continued to serve as point with media buying agency to create and manage the media placements.
- Instituted new crisis communications procedures including new call center, pre-crisis site planning and preparation of off-site contingency plans.
- Developed the *Unleash* campaign for Athletics as an extension of our new brand. Produced in-arena launch celebration and an on-campus digital and social media campaign to drive excitement and attendance for the basketball season.

Senior Associate Vice President, Strategic Communications and External Affairs
January 2017 – January 2020

Associate Vice President, University Communications and Marketing
January 2013 – January 2016

As the “number two” executive for the division, I led the UCM team of talented professionals in telling the compelling and unique stories of Kent State through brand management, content strategy, creative services, strategic communications and digital media. I also served as division lead on projects in collaboration with WKSU and the Center for Corporate and Professional Development.

Here are highlights of my successes and responsibilities as second in command:

- Served as lead executive for brand and advertising agency relationships, providing strategy and direction to align work with university priorities, conducting market research and planning media buys.
- Served as point executive with branding agency and Division of Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement to develop the theme and supporting materials for *Forever Brighter*, the university's comprehensive campaign.
- Developed and launched the look and communications for our internal *Flashes Take Care of Flashes* campaign, celebrating and reinforcing our culture of caring and creating a strong sense of community.
- Worked closely with the President's Office to create the communications and creative plan for the Presidential Listening Tour, an internal and external stakeholder engagement effort with 55 tour stops.
- Planned and orchestrated an integrated, multi-platform marketing and communications effort to communicate the university's strategic visioning process.
- Created internal and external communications plans and creative for *Gateway to a Distinctive Kent State*, the university's 10-year facilities master plan.
- Served as lead communications point for external sponsorship opportunities including as the LeBron James Foundation partnership launch and the Pittsburgh Penguins audience engagement plan.
- Launched the “Todd Tries It” video series where President Diacon experiences hands-on learning in Kent State's signature programs and activities. The immersive experiences are shared through videos and social media posts.
- In partnership with Athletics, the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Student Accessibility Services, the team led a university-wide autism awareness initiative including a sensory-friendly basketball game, an autism awareness basketball game and a jersey design competition with the Fashion School, all receiving widespread regional publicity.

- Guided, informed and integrated efforts with over 100 other campus communicators and marketers who support schools and units across the university.
- Directed the *Foundations of Excellence, Building the Future* campaign events and communications including campaign concept and creative, internal and external communications and 15 groundbreaking and grand opening events.
- Oversaw transition to Drupal content system in concert with full redesign of the kent.edu website.
- Led creative for successful Visit Kent State advertising campaign to support enrollment goals by driving visits to campus.
- Created the university's first dedicated content development area and launched a new digital content hub for both external and internal audiences to engage stakeholders through storytelling.
- Established dedicated resources for the Kent State Magazine and directed complete reimagining of the publication to increase alumni and stakeholder engagement.

Case Western Reserve University, Weatherhead School of Management, Cleveland, Ohio - November 2007 - January 2013

Case Western Reserve University is one of the nation's prominent private research institutions enrolling over 10,000 students from more than 100 nations.

Assistant Dean, Marketing and Communications, Enrollment and Student Services October 2010 – January 2013

Lead executive responsible for planning and executing the school's marketing, communications and brand management efforts; directing the recruitment and admission of graduate programs; and delivering related student services including registration, programming and student affairs. Together, these areas included a staff of 17 full-time employees, an annual expense budget of approximately \$2.5M, tuition revenue in excess of \$16M and the allocation of approximately \$4M in scholarship funding.

- Directed brand development, advertising, media relations, digital initiatives, social media campaigns and publications.
- Managed relationships with external public relations, design and media planning agencies.
- Drove strategic process to refine value proposition, visual identity and message platform.
- Restructured previous student service functions to create a team properly aligned to reach admissions, student experience and registration service goals.
- Developed and implemented the first comprehensive recruiting plan, including a domestic and international prospect search effort, that resulted in an incoming class with an average GMAT increase of over 6% and an increase in applications of over 100%.
- Worked with the Dean's office to create a dedicated committee focused on key ranking indicators for the purpose of improving measurables to raise rankings. This strategy led to a jump of 28 spots in the *U.S. News* rankings.
- Redesigned the scholarship award process resulting in a student body of higher academic achievement and diversity.
- Led the revamping of the registrar function to enhance the student experience.
- Spearheaded key improvements in admissions software, application process and reporting.
- Designed new student welcome area for engaging current and prospective students.
- Directed the management of academic records, academic integrity, student conduct issues and grievance processing.

**Senior Director of Marketing, Communications and External Relations
November 2007 – October 2010**

Lead executive and senior staff advisor responsible for the planning and execution of all strategic marketing, communications and brand management efforts. Appointed to overhaul the entire marketing and communications function.

- Launched successful brand repositioning effort for the school to align with the Design Thinking effort, including the conception and development of a new visual identity and unique message platform.
- Directed the development of all publication materials to promote Weatherhead to internal and external constituents, both domestic and abroad. These vehicles included the award-winning magazine, *The Weatherhead Collection*, the first comprehensive school-wide sales kit, program-specific publications and development communications.
- Launched the redesigned website, weatherhead.case.edu, and the companion e-newsletter, Weatherheadlines. This redesign achieved a 17% increase in total visits to the site and an increase in the email open rate of 6%.
- Directed all interactive and multi-media initiatives including the initiation and continued growth of YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook.
- Directed the external design agency in the development of creative vehicles to showcase the Weatherhead brand personality and visual identity.
- Orchestrated local, national and international public relations efforts including oversight of external public relations agency. These efforts resulted in hits in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Businessweek* and CNBC.
- Realized an increase of 34% in applications after the launch of new strategic marketing and communications initiatives.
- Planned, executed, and monitored a budget in excess of \$1M.

Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio - November 2003 - November 2007

The Cleveland Museum of Art is one of the most distinguished, comprehensive art museums in the country and northeastern Ohio's principal civic and cultural institution.

Associate Director of Marketing

Recruited to revamp the marketing efforts with a focus on branding, visual identity, advertising and external partnerships.

- Researched, developed and launched new logo and positioning campaign.
- Created and executed all marketing and media plans related to the museum's overall branding, exhibitions, events and performing arts.
- Designed and implemented largest corporate promotional partnership in museum history, incorporating permanent collection, special exhibitions, educational programs and audience development.
- Conceived marketing and media plans for the Phillips Collection exhibition resulting in the highest attendance of an exhibit in the previous eight years with over 100,000 visitors.

- Directed content and advertising creative for web, print, promotions, direct mail, e-newsletters, social media, brochures, outdoor, radio and television.
- Coordinated consumer focus groups designed to increase ticket sales for exhibitions and membership and implemented on-site consumer surveys for the gathering and analysis of visitor data.
- Constructed pricing structures and attendance projections for all exhibitions.
- Instituted new preferred hotel partnership program with prominent Cleveland area hotels.
- Negotiated media agreements resulting in a 45% increase in comparable value over the previous year.
- Originated first-ever consignment ticket program with major retail outlet to increase exhibition ticket sales.

Six Flags Worlds of Adventure, Aurora, Ohio - November 1996 - June 2001

Previously, the world's largest regional theme park company with 19 parks across the United States, Mexico and Canada.

Director of Marketing and Communications

Directed all aspects marketing and communications including brand strategy, creative, advertising, pricing strategy, public relations, crisis communications, community relations, publications, promotions and events, group sales, corporate sponsorship and the season pass program.

- Led the transition from Geauga Lake to Six Flags through newly-developed brand platform, extensive communications and integrated advertising campaign.
- Broke the attendance record for Six Flags Ohio at over 1.7 million guests.
- Managed 11 full-time and 10 seasonal staff members.
- Cultivated and secured largest group outing account resulting in over 35,000 visitors.
- Executed annual expense budget of over \$7M including \$4M in advertising.
- Led sponsor efforts with corporate partnership marketing department which generate a record \$900K in revenue.
- Created annual marketing plan including pricing strategy, promotional discount strategy, group sales plan, season pass plan and public relations efforts.
- Conceived advertising creative and media plans in conjunction with corporate advertising agency.
- Led branding and communications efforts for the Six Flags Hotel of Ohio and Silverhorn Camping Resort, both sister properties.
- Served as press event and on-camera spokesperson for Six Flags Worlds of Adventure.
- Successfully managed crisis communication efforts including a near drowning in the Wave pool.

EDUCATION:

Master of Business Administration – University of Akron

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Marketing – University of Akron

AFFILIATIONS and RECOGNITIONS:

- Public Relations Society of America
- American Marketing Association
- Inter-University Council of Ohio Media Relations Committee Member
- Mothers, Mentors and Muses Award - Kent State, 2018
- Western Reserve Public Media Board Member - 2016, 2017
- Outstanding Leader Award - Six Flags, 1998
- Standard of Excellence Award - Six Flags, 1997