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Harlan Teller

Professional Summary

Senior marketing and communications executive with a proven track record of driving strategy, building organizational capacity, and enhancing brand visibility and acceptance. Extensive experience in providing strategic guidance to senior leadership on mission-critical issues. Skilled at leading cross-functional teams to execute impactful marketing campaigns that align with business objectives. Advocate for data-driven decision-making, creative problem-solving, and fostering collaborative environments to achieve measurable results. Proficient in managing client relationships, both external and internal. Demonstrated success in identifying, retaining, developing, and mentoring key talent.

Work History

Northern Arizona University - Chief Marketing Officer

08/2019 - 11/2024

- Led a 70+ staff that charted overall marketing strategy for the university and aligned closely with Enrollment Management to deliver results
- Oversaw complete reorganization of the marketing function to align with the university vision and mission, in the process reimagining our strategy and priorities for paid media
- Partnered with the Strategic Communications unit to develop the university's first proactive, strategic approach to earned media
- Member of the president's senior cabinet
- Under my leadership, our team won more than one hundred marketing industry awards and saw our staff and budget double to better meet the increasing challenges posed by a highly competitive higher ed environment
- Advocated for greater alignment across marketing and communications disciplines and oversaw a revamp of the university's website and digital marketing initiatives

APCO Worldwide - Executive Director

Chicago, United States

11/2017 - 07/2019

- Responsible for business development for Midwest region, development of the firm's corporate practice client base, as well as providing senior counsel to C-Suite clients



Skills

- Strategy development
- Alignment of strategy and organizational capacity with mission, vision and values
- Ability to counsel senior leadership on mission-critical issues and situations
- Collaboration and relationship building
- Depth of experience across virtually all communications and marketing disciplines
- Ability to think creatively about organizational structure and program development
- Coaching, mentoring and developing high performance teams.

Education

06/1973

Northern Illinois University

Dekalb, IL

Bachelor of Arts: English

Northern Illinois University - Interim Vice President, Enrollment Management, Marketing and Communications

DeKalb, United States

06/2014 - 08/2017

- Asked by the University president to realign the resources and personnel of the Marketing and Communications Division to better address the University's mission, build a leadership team and initiate a new approach to branding and reputation management
- Conducted a full-scale reorganization of the Division and created a new Divisional mission and set of principles
- Led a university-wide branding effort, beginning with the University's first-ever comprehensive brand benchmark study
- Oversaw the development of a new digital communications strategy, the creation of an award-winning news and information website and provided high-level strategic counsel to the president, senior cabinet, and Board of Trustees on a variety of university issues ranging from regulatory investigations to campus incidents to issues of student conduct
- Asked in my final past six months to integrate the Enrollment Management function with Marketing to achieve greater integration and positively affect recruitment, an organizational structure that persists to this day
- Managed communications around the transition to new presidential leadership in the final two months of my tenure

FTI Consulting, Inc. - Senior Managing Director

Chicago, United States

03/2005 - 06/2014

- Hired in 2005 to launch the Midwest operation of FD a global financial and corporate consulting firm, which was sold to FTI in 2007
- Turned a profit in the first four months of operation and for the first full year and was a member of the senior equity leadership team that helped prepare FD for sale
- Ultimately became FD Vice Chairman prior to the sale to FTI
- Also provided advisory services to senior level corporate clients, particularly in strategic planning and development of executive presence, under the name Teller Consulting

Hill and Knowlton, Inc. - President, Worldwide Corporate Practice

Chicago, United States

07/1996 - 03/2005

- Hired in 1996 to be part of a new senior leadership team charged with turning around H&K after years of financial issues
- Redeveloped the firm's US corporate practice and took on Chicago general manager duties on an interim basis twice
- While general manager, the office achieved its highest operating income and margins in a decade
- As head of the worldwide corporate practice, oversaw regional practices and global corporate accounts

- Developed specialty capabilities in litigation communications, corporate social responsibility, and employee change management

Burson Marsteller - Chairman, US Corporate Practice

Chicago, United States

04/1976 - 07/1996

- Began as an assistant account executive in 1976 and rose to become first chairman of the US Corporate Practice in 1995
- Oversaw a cross section of major clients, such as Duracell, McDonald's, Ameritech, ComEd, Deere and United Airlines
- Served as Chicago general manager prior to taking on national responsibilities and was a member of the firm's global executive committee

Carl Byoir and Associates - Account Executive

Chicago, United States

04/1979 - 02/1980

- Ran the Borg Warner account, one of the firm's largest worldwide corporate clients
- Returned to Burson Marsteller as account supervisor to head up the Beatrice Foods account, at the time Burson's largest corporate client

Awards

PR Strategist of the Year (Inside PR- 1996)

PR Professional of the Year (Chicago Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America- 2017)

Distinguished Alumni Award (NIU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences)

Alumni Award for Business and Industry (Northern Illinois University)

Volunteer work

Board Member, NIU Foundation (2021- present)

Member, Philanthropy Council, Embry Riddle Aeronautics University (2024-present)

Board Member, Gateway for Cancer Research (2009-2018)

Board Member, WTTW/11 (2005-2014)

Board Member, Center for Economic Progress (2004-2013)

Chair, Client Services Committee, Council for PR Firms (2000-2006)