

MARY TERRELL

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS, ADVANCEMENT & ENGAGEMENT EXECUTIVE

mterrell703@gmail.com | Las Vegas, NV | [LinkedIn](#) | 703.728.8984

Professional Summary

I help mission-driven organizations strengthen relationships, shape compelling narratives, and turn strategy into engagement and measurable results. My work brings together strategic communications, philanthropy, executive leadership, and stakeholder engagement, partnering with leaders, fundraisers, donors, volunteers, and community stakeholders to expand reach, communicate impact, and build support for organizational priorities. My experience spans strategic communications, advancement, donor stewardship, executive communications, storytelling, brand strategy, organizational change, and complex cross-functional initiatives. Throughout my career, I have combined strategic leadership with hands-on communications work, developing donor proposals, cases for support, impact reports, stewardship communications, executive messaging, campaign narratives, event strategies, and engagement programs. With more than 25 years of experience across higher education, nonprofit, and association sectors, I quickly master complex technical, policy, research, and institutional topics and translate them into clear communications tailored to specific audiences.

Core Expertise

- Strategic Communications & Organizational Positioning
- Advancement Communications & Fundraising Support
- Executive Communications & Thought Leadership
- Brand Strategy & Reputation Management
- Stakeholder Engagement & Relationship Management
- Storytelling, Editorial & Content Strategy
- Donor Engagement, Stewardship & Impact Communications
- Change Management & Organizational Communications
- Cross-Functional Leadership & Team Development

Impact Highlights

- Developed integrated advancement communications and donor engagement strategies that led to a 38.5% increase in UNLV philanthropic support, raising annual giving from \$52M to \$72M by connecting targeted messaging to donor interest and university priorities.
- Orchestrated strategy, communications, and programming for the UNLV Foundation Annual Dinner; these contributed to a 15% increase in table revenue and a 152% rise in silent auction proceeds between 2023 and 2026 by optimizing event experiences and donor outreach.
- Directed communications, vendor and staff coordination, and adoption efforts supporting implementation of fundraising technologies, including Salesforce CRM, Marketing Cloud, and GoFundMe Pro. This contributed to a 53% increase in online giving revenue by ensuring seamless digital transition and user adoption during the first comparable operating period.
- Collaborated with Government Affairs on strategy and communications for the largest “UNLV Day” during the Nevada Legislative Session, mobilizing alumni, students, faculty, and leaders for high-level engagement, including a keynote with the Governor, strengthening state-level support and visibility.
- Revitalized donor engagement and stewardship initiatives with the Donor Relations team, resulting in 28%–47% higher attendance at donor recognition events such as the Palladium Society Reception, Spirit of Giving, and Art of Scholarship, through targeted invitations and personalized outreach.
- Used analytics to update website frameworks, keywords, editorial strategy, and project workflows, which resulted in a 40% increase in web traffic and tripled readership of IFDA publications by aligning content to user interests and search patterns.

Career Experience

University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) | Division of Philanthropy & Alumni Engagement | Las Vegas, NV
Associate Vice President of Advocacy, Communications, and Donor Relations | 2023 – 2026

Led a multidisciplinary team of 12 across communications, donor relations, advocacy, and stakeholder engagement functions, aligning priorities, resources, and performance goals across business units. Collaborated with development officers and university leaders to design donor-focused proposals, cases for support, editorial pieces, impact reports, and stewardship plans to drive major fundraising and institutional initiatives. Served on the division leadership team to identify obstacles, improve processes, foster collaboration, and maximize initiative effectiveness.

- Developed communications and engagement strategies for donor cultivation events, stewardship programs, legislative advocacy initiatives, and signature alumni gatherings, coordinating executive messaging, vendor partnerships, stakeholder outreach, and post-event stewardship.
- Partnered with division and university leadership to develop aligned executive messaging, talking points, speeches, media materials, and other outreach and engagement strategies.
- Helped develop campaign strategy, messaging frameworks, engagement tactics, and donor-facing communications for major fundraising initiatives.
- Developed donor proposals, stewardship, and communications strategies for philanthropic investments exceeding \$5.8M for academic programming, leadership support, and student scholarships for the Kerestesi Center for Insurance and Risk Management.
- Contributed to strategy and case development efforts supporting a \$60M fundraising campaign for UNLV's new Lee Business School facility following successful advocacy for state funding approval of \$80.9M.
- Partnered with the Annual Giving team to lead strategy, messaging, and outreach efforts for UNLV's annual Rebels Give campaign, contributing to a 36% increase in donor participation and a 115% increase in funds raised between 2024 and 2026.
- Advised on organizational AI governance initiatives, helping develop usage guidelines, training resources, and workforce modernization strategies.
- Led the integration and launch of Salesforce Marketing Cloud and GoFundMe Pro, modernizing digital engagement infrastructure and preventing a potential disruption to online giving during a critical CRM transition.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) | Division of Philanthropy & Alumni Engagement | Las Vegas, NV
Director of Communications | 2022 – 2023

Oversaw communications programs and four staff members for the UNLV Foundation, Alumni Association, and Division of Philanthropy & Alumni Engagement, managing social media, photography, graphic design, email marketing, event registration, and copywriting. Strengthened partnerships with vendors, agencies, alumni groups, donors, and community stakeholders to boost visibility, event success, and revenue.

- Oversaw editorial strategy and content development for publications, campaigns, annual reports, newsletters, and digital platforms, using audience analytics and content optimization strategies to significantly expand readership and engagement.
- Built and led a collaborative internal communications agency providing strategic communications, content development, social media, photography, graphic design, and copywriting support for multiple institutional clients.
- Implemented a project management system to streamline and track 1,500+ projects and events annually, ensuring efficiency across competing priorities.
- Optimized content storytelling, earned media, brand awareness, and marketing messaging in support of the university's philanthropic mission and engagement goals.
- Developed a division brand guide, an event planning calculator, gift announcement procedures, and other tools to ensure consistency among the division's 90 employees.

International Foodservice Distributors Association (IFDA) | McLean, VA**Communications Manager | 2018 – 2022**

Led content strategy and developed print and digital communications, websites, videos, presentations, executive speeches, newsletters, email, web, and social content for the national association. Supervised and refined e-newsletters, email communications, website, and social media engagement, and continuously adapted communications and marketing based on analytics and goals. Foster productive cross-functional relationships with IFDA members, industry partners, and media.

- Developed brand management and social media strategies to engage new audiences, drive membership growth, and enhance organizational recognition.
- Partnered with event, programming, advocacy, and executive teams to plan and execute conferences, advocacy fly-ins, executive meetings, and member events, from concept through post-event follow-up, coordinating messaging, creative assets, vendor deliverables, executive speeches, and attendee engagement.
- Spearheaded a redesign of IFDA's website to reinforce brand presence and expand target audience reach. Resulted in a 40% increase in site traffic.
- Amplified subscribership of daily newsletter from 4,156 subscribers to just under 13,000 while maintaining an above-average open rate and engagement rate.

George Mason University | College of Visual & Performing Arts | Fairfax, VA**Publications Manager | 2016 – 2018**

Directed a team of four in-house and freelance graphic designers and copywriters to develop marketing materials and communications across email, direct mail, grassroots, and social media platforms. Established detailed production schedules, set operational budgets, and managed vendor bidding, selection, and payments.

- Led strategic planning and execution of integrated marketing campaigns supporting academic programs, performances, fundraising, special events, and institutional visibility.
- Established asset management databases, comprehensive schedules, and cost-tracking systems to guarantee on-time completion of projects within budgets.
- Directed a team of in-house and freelance graphic designers and copywriters in a shared-services agency setting, developing marketing materials and managing targeted cross-platform communications via email, direct mail, grassroots efforts, and social media platforms.

Convenience Distribution Association (CDA) | Fairfax, VA**Digital Communications Manager | 2012 – 2015**

Launched all social media accounts and boosted engagement and following within the first two years through consistent, quality content development and distribution. Produced content for Convenience Distribution Association (CDA), Convenience Distribution Magazine, and Marketplace & Solutions Expo, including articles, web content, press releases, and promotional copy.

- Oversaw central website redesign and played an integral role in CDA's website SEO management by repurposing content from the magazine and newsletter as well as applying an automated system for posting news to the organization's three sites.
- Used Google Analytics and other data measurement tools to track engagement and implement improvements to future campaigns.
- Increased readership of newsletters by 10% and ultimately organizational engagement and awareness amongst target audiences with development and distribution of digital newsletters across all social platforms.
- Managed communications and creative production for national conferences, trade shows, advocacy events, and member meetings, developing marketing campaigns, program materials, presentations, daily updates, and on-site branding.

National Concrete Masonry Association (NCMA) | Herndon, VA

Communications Manager | 2007 – 2012

Established an annual communications and marketing plan, strategy, and budget for the association and fostered trusted relationships with coworkers, NCMA members, industry partners, and media outlets—building a reputation of integrity and accountability.

- Supported communications initiatives tied to building code modernization, safety advocacy, and industry coalition efforts focused on strengthening construction standards in disaster-prone regions.
- Served as Editor-in-Chief and Lead Designer for two national magazines (CM News and Concrete Masonry Designs) and a weekly e-newsletter, overseeing editorial calendars, contributor relationships, and visual storytelling.
- Developed multi-channel marketing campaigns, presentations, attendee materials, and exhibit graphics for conferences, advocacy fly-ins, executive meetings, and member events, ensuring consistent messaging across high-visibility engagements.
- Collaborated cross-departmentally to write and design annual projects such as technical publications, membership directories, annual reports, educational materials, conference marketing, trade show displays, and website content.

Additional Experience

Marketing Project Manager | Newsletter Holdings/KCI Communications | 2000 - 2007

Project Manager | Arnold Advertising | 1998 – 1999

International Marketing Project Manager | Nomadic Display | 1996 - 1998

Education & Credentials

Bachelor of Science, Child Development & Family Studies | West Virginia University

Publication Specialist Certification | The George Washington University

Technology & Platforms

Marketing Automation & CRM: Salesforce (Education & Marketing Clouds), GoFundMe Pro, Blackbaud Raiser's Edge

Email & Digital Marketing: Anthology Encompass, Magnet Mail, Constant Contact

Web Development: WordPress, Drupal, SharePoint, Kentico, Google Sites, Siteimprove.

Analytics & Social Media Strategy: Google Analytics, Google Keywords, Google Ads, Buffer, Hootsuite.

Communications & Creative: Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Creative Suite (InDesign, Photoshop, Acrobat, Illustrator, Adobe Express), Canva.

Project Management & Collaboration: Monday.com, Smartsheet, Basecamp, Slack, Microsoft Office Suite.

Research & Insights: Qualtrics, AI platforms.