

ELIZABETH TAGGART | WRITER & CREATIVE STRATEGIST

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Resourceful | Collaborative | Deadline-hitting

Versatile and accomplished writer, editor and marketing professional with 20 years of experience producing dynamic communications for diverse audiences, including 13 years as a strategic and visionary leader of communications programs in complex, matrixed nonprofits. Proven track record of successfully defining and managing business and organizational brands.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Content Creation & Editorial: Blogs, social media, website, magazine articles, interviews and video scripts, copyediting, proofreading

Marketing and PR: Advertising copy, creative briefs, direct mail, brochures and related print collateral, press releases

Project Management: Art direction, design, front end web development, print and online production

Business Communications: Annual reports, RFP and proposal development, presentations, speech writing

Branding: Brand audit, development, naming, storytelling, implementation and management

EDUCATION

Master of Fine Arts, Creative Writing | University of Arizona | Tucson, AZ | 1994

Bachelor of Arts, English Literature | Northwestern University | Evanston, IL | 1988

RECENT POSITIONS

Writer & Strategist | [etcreative](http://etcreative.com)

Provides a wide range of writing services and marketing communications for nonprofits, Fortune 500 companies, boutique firms and publishers.

Clients have included Plano Molding, Newell Brands, Starbucks, Sun-Times Media Group, Encyclopedia Britannica, Ferguson Publishing, Associated Publications, American Association of Medical Assistants and McCormick Theological Seminary.

Sr. Director of Marketing & Communications | Jewish Child & Family Services, JVS Chicago | Sept 2014 –2017

Shaped vision, messaging and branding efforts for two Chicago nonprofit agencies for children, adults and families with combined annual operating budgets of \$38 million and more than 30+ program and service areas. Agency spokesperson for crisis communications and media inquiries.

Collaborated with stakeholders in both organizations to guide strategic internal and external communications across all available channels and forms.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Generated a dramatic 85% increase in social media reach by developing customized digital media plans and fresh, original content.

- Secured 125-year-old agency's first Board-mandated capital investment to establish its organizational brand.
- Launched organizational rebranding from strategic planning phase through brand audit, RFP and discovery process.
- Debuted five SEO-optimized, dynamic Drupal 8 websites in under 24 months—including new design, content, navigation and Board microsite.
- Increased agency's annual campaign net revenues by 35% from previous years.
- Streamlined departmental and agency-wide communication via innovative, cloud-based tools and collaborative/project management software.

Director of Marketing | Music of the Baroque | Mar 2012 – Feb 2014

Developed and executed marketing and sales strategies for Chicago's top classical chamber orchestra and choral group with an annual operating budget of \$2 million. Utilizing a mix of digital and social media, print, radio and telemarketing channels, planned and produced annual subscription and single-ticket sales campaigns.

Thoughtfully leveraged the organization's brand across its website, social media presence and promotional materials, including brochures, advertising, feature stories and interviews and concert program books. Worked with local and national media to promote awareness of the organization, its performances, conductors and individual musicians.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Achieved annual concert attendance and ticket revenue goals despite increased competition for patrons in a challenging, industry-wide slump and sharp decline in charitable dollars.
- More than doubled website traffic with fresh, original content and site redesign, transforming its functionality, user-friendliness and visual appeal.
- Increased patron engagement by 35% with patron-appreciation events and social media interaction.
- Tripled the number of prospects for new subscribers and single-ticket buyers through successful lead generation efforts, such as audience engagement activities at concerts.

Marketing & Communications Manager | CJE SeniorLife | Aug 2004 – Mar 2012

Planned and implemented comprehensive, integrated marketing strategies in print and electronic channels for a Chicago nonprofit agency for older adults with an annual operating budget of \$56 million. Responsible for promoting more than 40 business areas, including cultural and educational programs, applied research, health care, residential and community services.

Created award-winning content and design for promotional materials and publications (website, annual report, video, newsletters, advertising, brochures and tour/admissions materials) and major fundraising efforts (annual gala, donor cultivation events, quarterly appeals and special projects).

Worked closely with Board and senior leadership to direct agency's communications goals and successfully achieve annual campaign goals.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Rebranded CJE SeniorLife, including a name change from Council for Jewish Elderly, to reposition it as a leading provider of services for older adults age 55+ and their families. Successfully rolled out brand to both external and internal stakeholders.
- Developed communications strategies and training module used to educate 200+ staff about new agency brand, logos and collaterals.

- Established an in-house design team to provide timely, cost-efficient and highly professional creative services across multiple channels.
- Slashed production time by 75% and achieved dramatic cost savings by bringing all design projects in-house (for example, cut cost of annual report in half, from \$30K to \$14.5K)
- Introduced cost-saving and efficiency measures, including:
 - An inventory and distribution process/system (Central Supply) for marketing materials
 - A customized online ordering site for business cards, letterhead and other standardized marketing collateral
 - Intranet-based photo and document libraries for all marketing materials and promotional items

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Writing Instructor | University of Illinois-Chicago | Aug 1999 – June 2000

Taught freshman composition courses and the critical analysis of fiction, nonfiction and media using rhetorical models.

Writer & Columnist | Chicago Sun-Times | Jan 1997 – Dec 1999

Wrote feature articles for Digital Chicago, a Chicago Sun-Times Media magazine (formerly Hollinger International) that covered developments and trends in digital communications and new media. Interviewed prominent Chicagoans about their online activities and favorite sites.

Editorial Assistant | TriQuarterly | Mar 1996 – Aug 1997

Reviewed fiction submissions at international journal of writing, art and cultural inquiry published at Northwestern University and recommended manuscripts for publication.

Editor | Ferguson Publishing | Sept 1994 – June 1997

Wrote, edited and supervised production of career reference books, encyclopedias and dictionaries. Additional responsibilities included book design, development of marketing materials and monthly newsletters. Supervised assistant editor in addition to freelance writers, editors and indexers.

Copy Editor & Proofreader | Altheimer & Gray | Aug 1994 – Dec 1994

Copied and proofed legal documents and other materials for review and approval by attorneys.

Managing Editor | Sonora Review | June 1992 – June 1994

Edited fiction, nonfiction and poetry manuscripts for national literary journal. Managed staff, supervised production and successfully increased subscriber base through direct mail campaign. Wrote grants which garnered the most public funding for the journal since its inception in 1980. Created “InsomniYAKathon,” a 48-hour marathon of prose and poetry readings by nationally and internationally recognized writers to benefit area’s literacy coalition.

AWARDS & HONORS

Health Information Resource Center

- Gold Award, Annual Report | 2011
- Silver Award, Web Design | 2010
- Gold Award, Annual Report | 2009
- Merit Award, Logo Design | 2008
- Bronze Award, Annual Report | 2008

- Bronze Award, Fundraising Video | 2008

Ragdale Foundation

- Winter Fellowship, Writing | 1999

University of Arizona

- Three-year, Full-tuition Scholarship | 1991-1994
- Outstanding Writer of Fiction | 1994
- Minnie M. Torrance Award in Fiction | 1993
- John Weston Award in Fiction | 1992

Northwestern University

- Edwin L. Schuman Fiction Award, 1994

TECHNOLOGY, ETC.

Design & Production: Adobe Creative Cloud (InDesign, Acrobat Professional, Photoshop, Illustrator)

Content Management Systems: Drupal 7 and 8, WordPress

Office Software: Microsoft Office/365 (Word, Excel, PPT, Publisher, Outlook, Access, InfoPath, SharePoint)

Project Management: Basecamp, SharePoint and similar collaborative software

Style Guides: Associated Press Style Guide, Chicago Manual of Style