

MAXWELL STOLFE

Strategic Communications | Public Affairs | Agency Leadership

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A trained journalist and trusted ghostwriter to mayors and cabinet-level executives, with a decade spent building institutional communications functions from scratch, directing high-stakes crisis response, and protecting organizational reputation at its most vulnerable moments across higher education, municipal government, healthcare, and corporate environments. Expert in AP Style and equally skilled as an institutional architect and operator: builds communications practices from nothing, stabilizes organizations before leadership knows there is a problem, and consistently performs when the stakes are highest.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

CRISIS DE-ESCALATION Advised executive leaders during a public police department smear attack. Full counter-campaign drafted, approved, never launched. Department returned to the table within 8 days without a single public statement.

PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT BUILDOUT Built Direct Development's crisis practice from scratch with no playbook. Directed daily Instagram Live briefings across 6 NJ municipalities, averaging 150 viewers per session. Sustained 50%+ email engagement against a 31% government average.

2020 CENSUS ADVOCACY & COMMUNITY TRUST Built a *Privacy First* narrative anchored in Title 13 protections to overcome federal distrust within Morristown's Hispanic community. Achieved 40% increase in Census participation over the 2010 baseline, securing critical federal funding.

RUTGERS MODERNIZATION Led digital modernization, brand governance, and infrastructure serving 100,000+ stakeholders across nine subdivisions. Consolidated 23 legacy platforms, neutralized data breaches, and improved WCAG compliance by 50%.

EXPERIENCE

PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT & FOUNDER (FRACTIONAL) | LWB Strategic Communications, LLC | March 2023 - Present

Founded end-to-end consultancy advising business owners, nonprofit leaders, attorneys, and public figures on reputation management, organizational positioning, and stakeholder communications during growth and change.

- Led communications strategy for the ownership transition and relaunch of a local restaurant, helping drive a 45% increase in opening-day revenue and sustaining 25%+ year-over-year growth in the weeks that followed.
- Oversaw the strategic launch of 10+ businesses and organizations by developing communications infrastructure, digital platforms, and stakeholder engagement strategies from concept to execution.
- Built and launched nearly two dozen digital platforms and brand identities, translating organizational goals into cohesive ecosystems supporting audience growth, business development, and stakeholder engagement.

SENIOR PUBLIC RELATIONS SPECIALIST, MARCOMM | Rutgers University | August 2022 - Present

Embedded strategist and executive advisor within the university's largest division, serving 100,000+ stakeholders across nine subdivisions. Operates within the Office of the CFO/University Treasurer, advising cabinet-level and C-suite leadership.

- Serves as primary speechwriter and communications counselor to cabinet-level leadership, authoring Senate addresses, university-wide budget briefings, quarterly town halls, and executive messaging for meetings with NJ governors; has produced dozens of high-stakes executive communications.
- Discovered and neutralized active data breaches publicly exposing employee credentials and financial codes; independently mobilized IT and Communications to execute firewall restrictions, contain incidents, and build proactive security protocols before any member of leadership was aware of the exposure.
- Leading consolidation of Rutgers' Title IX digital presence across 23 legacy platforms (some dating to 2003) into a single unified compliance hub within a 12-month project window, while simultaneously onboarding an incoming VP of Title IX through the full institutional transition.
- Directed the Block-R brand identity rollout across 11 offices and nine subdivisions, personally auditing every branded asset for 100,000+ stakeholders; reduced interdepartmental coordination delays by 55%.
- Modernized crisis communications protocols and escalation frameworks, improving institutional response times by 45% and establishing clear activation criteria for high-priority reputational events.
- Governed digital modernization across 12 institutional websites, improving WCAG accessibility compliance by 50% and establishing division-wide content governance standards.
- Built a centralized shared resource hub in partnership with OIT, piloting the model across 11 offices within Finance & Administration before establishing it as the university-wide standard for secure file and budget data governance.
- Replaced legacy onboarding materials with an interactive multimedia curriculum, cutting average onboarding time by 60% and reducing materials production time by 80%.
- Streamlined the Procurement website's vendor search function, reducing a 6-10 person committee process to a two-person workflow and cutting update turnaround time by 75%.

SENIOR CONTENT STRATEGIST | Direct Development PR | September 2020 - July 2022

Promoted to senior leadership following high-profile municipal crisis communications work during COVID-19. Led communications, brand strategy, and public affairs for public, private, and NFP clients across New Jersey.

- Built the agency's first dedicated PR and crisis communications practice from scratch, writing the operational playbooks, client protocols, and response frameworks that secured the agency's first major municipal and institutional contracts.

- Directed crisis response during a politically sensitive public escalation by a police department, advising the mayor's office to hold silence and protect negotiating integrity, defusing the confrontation without a single public statement.
- Ghostwrote mayoral responses to lawsuits under active litigation; authored the widely circulated political statements; recommending live-streaming to a combined audience of 22,000 social followers, delivered without incident or backlash.
- Drove 185% increase in social impressions, 224% increase in engagements, and 144% increase in post link clicks for Morristown in 2020; sustained 50%+ email engagement rates across Morristown and Fanwood, outperforming the 31% government average; Fanwood COVID blasts reached 65% open rates.
- Developed and executed the Privacy First Census advocacy strategy anchored in Title 13 legal protections, achieving a 40% participation increase over the 2010 baseline.
- Drove new business growth by expanding client retainers into website development, social media, and crisis communications; landed the agency's largest solo-project contract to date, a \$25,000+ engagement won independently.
- Grew client social audiences by more than 500% across municipal, healthcare, trade union, and B2B accounts through consistent content strategy and audience development.
- Served as organizational anchor during a leadership transition at Direct Development; successfully retained all core team members and clients through a period where significant attrition was likely.
- Mentored junior communications professionals on writing, messaging strategy, and institutional communications; both progressed rapidly and took on independent client work within months.

COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE | Direct Development PR | June 2019 - September 2020

Led content, brand, and creative strategy serving municipal, B2B, healthcare, and trade union clients across New Jersey.

- Served as municipal liaison across 6 NJ municipalities, aligning public communications during periods of civil and political tension between leadership, law enforcement, and community stakeholders.
- Played a foundational role in building the agency's crisis communications capability during COVID-19, writing rapid-response protocols adopted across the full agency; improved average client audience engagement by 30%.
- Created the agency's first branded social content series for municipal clients; standardized across all 6 accounts and drove a 45% increase in average post engagement within the first quarter of adoption.

STRATEGIC ACCOUNT & MARKETING MANAGER | Miro Consulting | December 2017 - May 2019

Managed 25 enterprise and mid-sized client relationships across technology, healthcare, defense, and entertainment, specializing in IT infrastructure compliance auditing and licensing liability mitigation.

- Primary liaison for Tier-1 accounts including General Dynamics and Marvel, directing compliance audits across Oracle, IBM, and Microsoft environments; translated complex technical findings into executive-ready narratives for senior leadership.
- Managed a high-value client portfolio to identify and resolve multimillion-dollar licensing liabilities, driving a 25% increase in annual recurring revenue and a 15% improvement in client retention.

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS | Eliot Arlo Colon for NJ Assembly | June 2017 - November 2017

Directed all communications, stakeholder engagement, and rapid-response strategy for a competitive NJ legislative race. Collaborated with campaign treasurer on a \$175,000 budget.

- Produced a televised broadcast commercial reaching 120,000+ households; recruited, trained, and managed a 15-person volunteer field network covering 13 communities across the district.

STAFF REPORTER | Star News Group | October 2016 - June 2017

Covered local government, community affairs, and breaking news for a regional New Jersey news group.

- Produced 200+ deadline-driven AP Style articles across print and digital platforms; built direct source relationships with local officials and law enforcement that directly informed later communications strategy work.

EXECUTIVE COMPETENCIES

COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC AFFAIRS Crisis & Reputation Management | Executive Communications & Speechwriting | Issues Management | Strategic Narrative Development | Earned Media & Media Relations | Spokesperson Preparation | Public Affairs | Community & Stakeholder Engagement | Government Relations | Brand Governance | AP Style

LEADERSHIP & OPERATIONS Executive Advisory & Counsel | Organizational Change Communications | Crisis Framework Design | Team Leadership & Mentorship | New Business Development | Client Account Management | Vendor & Budget Management

DIGITAL & TECHNICAL Web Strategy & Governance | Digital Modernization | WCAG Accessibility | Analytics & Audience Insights | SEO | Drupal | WordPress | Google Analytics | HubSpot | Sprout Social | Mailchimp | Adobe Creative Cloud | Generative AI Tools

RECOGNITION

Authored award-winning advocacy submissions supporting reputation initiatives for Netta Architects and the Borough of Fanwood, NJ. Communications strategy contributed directly to a 40% increase in Census participation in targeted Morristown communities, securing critical federal funding. Crisis management infrastructure supported 6 municipalities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

EDUCATION

B.A. COMMUNICATIONS: JOURNALISM | Marist College | September 2013 - May 2016

A.S. BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT | Ocean County College | May 2011 - May 2013

CERTIFICATIONS Drupal CMS | WCAG Accessibility | Google Analytics | HubSpot Inbound Marketing | SEO & Content Strategy | WordPress CMS | Photography & Videography | Public Relations Strategy | Team Leadership & Management | Public Speaking