

Kathryn Karnell, M.A.

Communications Strategist and Content Developer

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Strategic and versatile communications leader with proven experience translating complex health, policy, and technology initiatives into high-impact messaging that informs, engages, and drives results. Trusted partner to executives and cross-functional teams to align voice, vision, and audience strategy — **strengthening reputation, enhancing digital experience, and driving impact**. As your **human in the loop**, I am always adapting and evolving with the latest technology to optimize content development and quality, accelerate workflows, and achieve measurable success.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Communications Strategy & Leadership

- ❖ Executive Messaging
- ❖ Project Management
- ❖ Cross-Functional Team Lead
- ❖ Vendor Management & Budgets
- ❖ Process Improvement
- ❖ Data: SEO/ Data Annotation / Google Analytics

Content Development & Optimization

- ❖ Digital Multichannel Content
- ❖ Storytelling (Health/Policy/Programs)
- ❖ AI-Enhanced Workflow
- ❖ Campaign Design
- ❖ Video Production
- ❖ UX Optimization

EXPERIENCE

Freelance Marketing and Communications Consultant

July 2025 – present

- **Designed 3-month marketing plan for Private Chef Amanda Pilkington (Modern Luxury “Top Ten Private Chefs”)**: developed branding and client acquisition systems (referrals, partnerships, lead capture) to build predictable income and grow high-end event bookings.
- **Emergency Evacuation Plan for EmoEmu LLC**: created a tailored comprehensive plan for a high-profile production filming on location. Same-day delivery. *IMPACT* – Concept to delivery time decreased by estimated 70% due to using AI tools.
- **Marketing Proposal & Press Release for Recreation/Entertainment Startup Company**: aimed at securing major cruise line partnership, leveraged AI tools (ChatGPT, Gemini, Amazon Nova, Perplexity) for deep research, multimodal processing, image generation, and content drafting. *IMPACT* – successfully secured cruise rep engagement.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

June 2020 – July 2025

Communications Strategist

Leadership: advised C-suite executives on brand strategy and managed vendors for the department that invests over \$1Billion in maternal and child health programs. *IMPACT* –

- **70% increase in newsletter subscriptions** after rebranding and optimizing content strategy.
- **Trained 300+ staff** on storytelling, clear language, and clearance processes, improving internal communication efficiency and alignment.

Project Management: executed the **company website overhaul**, coordinating cross-functional teams to integrate best practices, use data analytics, and refine user experience through iterative optimization. *IMPACT* –

- Streamlined content by **70%**, leading to a **10% increase in engagement rate**.
- **503% increase in “clicks to calls”** and **488% clickthrough rate** for the Maternal Mental Health Hotline through targeted **SEO** strategies and website redesign, enhancing customer engagement and conversion.

Campaign Design & Execution: pioneered social media campaigns for major health observances; produced videos, written stories, toolkits, and managed complex clearance processes. *IMPACT* –

- **1.2 million views** and **500% increased engagement** on Instagram for campaigns such as Black Maternal Health Week and Child Health Day.
- **400 federal, state, and local partners engaged** in a vaccine campaign.

AI-Enhanced Workflow: leveraged AI tools (ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, Claude) to tailor communication products (e.g. talking points, summaries, media responses, regulatory announcements, training materials), for audience needs. *IMPACT* –

- Increased **clarity**, **reduced prep time**, maintained **compliance**.

Ulster University – United Kingdom
Communications Strategist

October 2017–April 2020

Leadership and Engagement: developed and led the communications strategy for a multinational digital health project (key stakeholders included WHO, CDC, and Latin American Hospitals) to enhance the adoption of a mobile **birth defects surveillance app** in low-resource countries. *IMPACT* –

- **Analyzed outreach effectiveness**, finding that **direct marketing** yielded a **47% higher success rate** in engagement compared to social media or other outreach methods.
- Achieved a **80–91% satisfaction rate** from participants of a public engagement training.
- Promoted the app at an international conference; **finalist** in Digital Commonwealth Awards.

Digital Multichannel Content: produced on-demand instructional videos, managed social media, and updated the CMS for web-based resource inventory. *IMPACT* –

- **Saved an estimated \$15K** by producing instructional videos in house.

U.S. Department of State – Mexico
Community Engagement

December 2014 – June 2017

- **Contributed to a \$1.2 million savings** through efficient tracking and processing of background checks and **reduced case resolution time by 75%** through creating an electronic tracking system.
- **4.57/5 client satisfaction rating** achieved, far exceeding regional averages, through tailored communications and stakeholder engagement.

ADDITIONAL RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Global Health & Development Consultant – Clients included **Deloitte, CDC, USAID, Peace Corps, Johns Hopkins University, University of Washington**. *Example work* – Led communication strategy for the **\$30M U.S. Operational Plan** for HIV/AIDS in Tanzania; Directed/Wrote/Edited educational videos and commercials, managed budgets, wrote white papers, conducted research, drafted speeches.

AWARDS

Hubert H. Humphrey Award for Service to America (2024), **HRSA Honor Award for Innovation** (2023), and other awards related to healthcare content, documentary filmmaking, and social media campaigns.

TECHNICAL

AI Tools: ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, Claude, Amazon Nova

Analytics & Optimization / UX: Google Analytics, SEO Tools, Data Annotation, Figma

Content Development: Canva, Adobe Creative Suite, Drupal, Camtasia, GitHub

Project Management: Agile & Scrum, Jira, Teams, Slack

EDUCATION and RECENT TRAINING

M.A. Communications, Syracuse University – Newhouse School

B.A. Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara

UC Davis Extension – Certificate in Big Data, AI, and Ethics

Google – Prompting Essentials, Speed Up Data Analysis

IBM – Introduction to Agile & Scrum

UPenn – Viral Marketing & How to Craft Contagious Content

Colleague Consulting, LLC – Leading Organizational Change