

BEVERLY JAMES

Skills

- Project Management
- Crisis Communications
- Strategic Planning
- Collaborative Leadership
- Spokesperson
- Media Training

Work History

Principal Owner, BJ EDITORIAL

2000 TO PRESENT

BJ Editorial has over 20 years of experience in media relations, strategic planning, content creation, editing and crisis communications. Specializes in positioning clients as thought leaders and project management.

- Digital content creator.
- Expert in Associated Press style, copy editing, pitching and building media relations plans. Integrate human input into AI learning cycle (reinforcement learning from human feedback).
- Top clients include Outlier, Florida Courier/Daytona Times, Georgia Charter Schools Association, the University of Florida, Spelman College, Black Health Matters.

Director of Advocacy Communications

04/2022 to 4/2023

Georgia Charter Schools Association – Atlanta, GA

- Built and executed advocacy and communication advocacy strategy (with measurable goals and benchmarks), with a focus on Atlanta.
- Developed communications and advocacy messaging and assets, and executed trainings for charter school parents and key stakeholder for Charter Champions program.
- Wrote speeches and provided media training for top agency and charter school administrators to position them as educational thought leaders.
- Supported GCSA's work to set a communications strategy that supports organization's advocacy priorities, as well as all internal and external communications, public relations, and marketing efforts.
- Developed a core group of Atlanta-based member schools to build storytelling capacity, increase positive charter school coverage and mobilize on communications and issues.
- Kept schools informed (e.g., polling data, most effective messaging, school and state data, etc.) and engaged (e.g., legislative calls to action) in GCSA's communications and advocacy efforts.
- Managed existing, and built new relationships with Atlanta elected officials, stakeholders, partners, and member schools; fostered these relationships to stay abreast of new developments, opportunities, and threats that will impact charter public school issues and initiatives.

- Created, tracked, and reported out on goals, outcomes, and performance metrics; provided regular progress updates to the Executive Vice President of Policy and External Relations.
- Acted as Association spokesperson as needed/appropriate.

Director of Public Relations

04/2015 to 02/2019

University Of Florida, IFAS – Gainesville, FL

- Positioned faculty and top administrators as thought leaders in major publications, including The Washington Post, NPR and The Chronicle of Higher Education.
- Spokesperson for Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.
- Prepared weekly analytics report to track daily earned media hits using TrendKite.
- Increased social media engagement by 25%.
- Increased number of press releases from 500 annually to 1,200 annually.
- Utilized software to create materials such as press releases and brochures to increase media hits by 50%.
- Directed community engagement efforts to include dignitary visits to research and education centers.
- Created and managed communications strategies for programs established by 67 Extension offices. Monitored marketing content for quality, accuracy and impact.
- Managed a team of writers and a digital content specialist to raise awareness of UF/IFAS via earned media.
- Implemented content editorial calendar to plan all media relations campaigns and manage content.
- Communicated with media weekly to build relationships and optimize press coverage.
- Generated and implemented media pitches, such as op-eds and commentaries.

Director of Communications

08/2013 to 03/2015

Bethune-Cookman University – Daytona Beach, FL

- Spokesperson for university.
- Increased media hits by 100%.
- Created and launched marketing campaign that resulted in a 10% increase in enrollment.
- Planned and directed major events for donors, alumni, and community and government leaders.
- Coordinated, created and managed publications, including faculty look book and annual report.
- Developed and implemented strategic and crisis communications plans for internal and external audiences.
- Coordinated with Director of the Odessa Chambliss Center for Health Equity to raise awareness of programs with traditional and new media.
- Coordinated and managed a crisis communications plan, press conferences, and media tours.

- Evaluated program effectiveness to determine return on investment.

Assistant Director

11/2006 to 08/2013

Georgia Perimeter College – Decatur, GA

- Spokesperson for college.
- Managed all external communications efforts, including events, press releases, PSAs and pitches.
- Created and implemented community engagement to include events for the public, donors, and other stakeholders.
- Trained top administrators and communications staff on crisis communications.
- Served on six executive committees to establish college's vision, mission and goals.

Education

Master of Arts: Professional Writing

Kennesaw State University - Kennesaw, GA

Bachelor of Arts: Journalism

Howard University - Washington, DC

Associate of Applied Science: Dental Hygiene

Hostos Community College of The City University of New York - The Bronx, NY

Community Involvement/Awards

- 2022-present Howard University Alumni Club, Atlanta Chapter mentor
- 2017-2019 Take Stock in Children volunteer mentor
- 2007-2013 Decatur Book Festival volunteer
- 2017 ACE Gold Award for Crisis Communications
- 2017 ACE Outstanding Professional Skill Award for Crisis Communications
- 2014, Vice President of Community Engagement, Florida Public Relations Association, Daytona Beach Chapter