

Aaron Nichols

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Research Interests

- Organizational Communication
 - Health Communication
 - Visual Communication
 - Media Studies
 - Persuasion
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Education

Doctor of Philosophy | Communication | University of South Florida | *IN PROGRESS*

Master of Arts | Mass Communications | University of South Florida | 2021

Zimmerman School of Advertising & Mass Communications

Concentration in Strategic Communication Management

Advisor: Dr. Kelli Burns

Committee Members: Dr. Kimberly Walker and Dr. Kelly Werder

Thesis: *An Examination of COVID-19 Health Behaviors and Public Health Messaging Using the Health Belief Model and Organization-Public Relationship Quality*

Kappa Tau Alpha (KTA): National Honor Society in Journalism and Mass Communication

Recipient of KTA Top Scholar Award for highest graduate student ranking

Bachelor of Arts | Communication | University of South Florida | 1997

Member of two competitively selected internship teams from the Department of Communication.

One worked with the New York Yankees to improve the fan experience at spring training games, the other with GTE (now Verizon) on ways to retain market dominance after deregulation.

Professional Experience

University of South Florida (USF)

USF employs over 16,000 people and serves over 50,000 students across three campuses. A high-impact global research university, USF has a total economic impact of \$6.02 billion. According to U.S. News and World Report's rankings, USF is America's fastest-rising university.

Director, Communication and Engagement | May 2022 to present

- Member of the leadership team for the Office of Administrative Services (OAS).
- Leads a department responsible for communication and creative services for OAS units which include facilities management, emergency management, environmental health & safety, parking services, and a bus transit service.
- This team drives engagement with internal and external stakeholders utilizing a strategic communication approach through graphic design, written communication, public information and media relations, video production, photography, presentation design, web and social content, visual identity management, and communication and social/behavioral research.
- Responsible for developing and managing a research-based, data-driven employee engagement program.

Associate Director, Communications | May 2020 to May 2022

Received a promotion in 2020 to reflect additional responsibilities of the position.

Assistant Director, Communications | April 2015 to May 2020

- Responsible for various high-profile visual identity elements on campus like graphics packages for transit system buses, pole banners, and environmental graphics.

- Led the creation of all signage and related messaging for the university's COVID-19 response effort. Managed the selection of vendors for the production and installation of over 48,000 pieces of signage.
- Key role in developing and implementing a service philosophy program that has led to a paradigm shift in the culture of OAS and a measurable positive impact on employee engagement and satisfaction.
- Serves advisor for the OAS "Excellence Ambassadors" team, made up of employee volunteers tasked with promoting and advancing the OAS service philosophy program.
- Communication/public affairs liaison for USF's Emergency Operations Center (activations have included hurricanes, major power outages, protests, and rallies by presidential candidates).
- Coordinating closely with Facilities Management and other stakeholders, ensures the USF visual identity is correctly reflected on campuses and across university facilities through environmental graphic design, logoed signage, wayfinding, and other physical elements.
- Managed an inventory survey of all interior and exterior logoed signage and wayfinding across three campuses, created standards guidelines and designed new signage layouts. Works closely with Facilities Management on updating signage.
- Serves on various university-wide committees and workgroups focusing on brand activation, emergency management, public health communication, and facilities design and construction.
- Has served on numerous hiring committees for positions ranging from staff to executive levels.
- Recipient of Award of Excellence given by the university president as well as quarterly and annual Excellence Awards from the VP of Administrative Services.

Solar Jack, LLC

Small start-up offering a patented energy management technology to oilfield production companies.

Marketing Director | January 2014 to April 2015

- Developed the brand and was responsible for all marketing and communication efforts as well as building distributor and retail pricing models.
- Achieved earned media coverage in multiple trade outlets as well as endorsements from industry influencers.
- Represented the company at industry events.
- Worked with distributors, including large national and international electric supply companies, to develop and execute joint marketing programs.
- The technology was ultimately licensed to a venture capital-backed company.

Phillips and Jordan, Inc

Large, national, civil construction company with more than \$750 million in annual revenue and roughly 1,000 employees across multiple operating groups.

Corporate Communication Director | April 2002 to December 2013

- Was responsible for the management and execution of all aspects of internal and external communication, marketing, creative services, and brand development.
- Took the company's marketing efforts from inconsistent elements with no brand clarity or consistency to a centralized integrated marketing communication program that positioned the company's various operating groups as leaders in their respective markets while also increasing the company's overall brand equity.
- Served as the media point of contact and coordinated opportunities for feature stories, articles, and interviews with appropriate internal subject matter experts.
- Track record of successful proposal management for public and private sector projects (in excess of \$1 BN), including multiple disaster recovery contracts with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- Designed and managed the development and implementation of a project information database which generated formatted project information sheets and pushed project data to the company's public website. Prior to this database, the company had no central repository for project information beyond accounting data.
- Managed direct reports, interns, and work-study students. Regularly directed the work of cross-functional, project-specific teams in a matrix-based model.
- Provided marketing, communication, and creative services to 19 partner and subsidiary companies associated with Phillips and Jordan, Inc. In addition to construction, these companies spanned various industries including mining, oil and gas, aviation, solid waste, ranching, and software.
- From July 2011 to December 2013, served in a dual role as Corporate Communication Director for Hydrozonix, an energy sector company focused on water treatment.