

Megan E. Hayes, M.B.A.

Summary

Demonstrated history of increased responsibility and experience as a senior leader of a centralized communications and marketing team for an institution of higher education. Proven track record of success developing marketing plans and sales strategies for diverse populations across demographic and psychographic customer segments, brand management, program positioning and product development, particularly in higher education, with additional experience in cultural tourism and the performing and visual arts. Extensive experience as lead spokesperson, managing press conferences and developing and implementing strategic media relations plans. A strong reputation for identifying and solving problems expeditiously and diplomatically, and building and maintaining strong professional relationships. Trusted senior advisor in the areas of marketing, reputation management, public relations, strategic planning and crisis communications.

Specialty Areas

- Critical and crisis communications, including reputation management.
- Brand management and positioning in regional and national college markets.
- Comprehensive executive communications strategy development and execution.
- Developing and executing strategic organizational marketing plans and content management strategy.
- Internal and external communication strategy and implementation.
- Results-oriented media relations, digital and social media communication strategy and KPI development.
- Extensive marketing and public relations work with corporate, civic and government leaders, particularly as related to student recruitment, regional economic development and town-gown relations.
- Team development and project management for maximum productivity, efficiency and employee morale.

Experience

Director, Chancellor Communications

March 2025 - present

Appalachian State University, Boone, NC

Senior strategic advisor to the Chancellor and executive leadership on internal, external and crisis communications, reputation management, and executive communications, including speech writing, media relations and developing and implementing briefing materials and communications plans for universitywide initiatives and budget, policy and legislative updates.

Sr. Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Communications Officer July 2018 - March 2025

Appalachian State University, Boone, NC

Led a dynamic and centralized team of communications professionals who manage media relations, critical and crisis communications, marketing and public relations for Appalachian State University. Areas of responsibility included comprehensive marketing, brand management, web services, social media strategy and management, media production, internal communications, executive communications, critical/crisis communications, media relations and content strategy. Served the Office of the Chancellor and the university leadership team as the chief advisor for communication strategy and implementation. Responsible for unified marketing plan and brand management for the university, coordinating across multiple departments and divisions. Developed communication strategies and provided leadership on content and design concepts related to internal and external communications. Oversight of \$7 million department budget. Served as spokesperson and critical/crisis communications lead.

Director, University Communications

Mar 2015 - June 2018

Appalachian State University, Boone, NC

Managed communications team for master's comprehensive, public university in the mountains of Western North Carolina. Our in-house team of award-winning communications professionals included content development specialists, information architects, graphic designers, photographers, videographers, writers, web developers and designers, social media managers, illustrators, creative and marketing/PR specialists. Managing editor for university magazine and host of SoundAffect podcast.

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Adjunct Instructor

Aug 2006 - present

Appalachian State University, Boone, NC

Principles of Marketing instructor, Walker College of Business.

Aug 2014 - present

An introductory study of the marketing process in advanced market economies. Includes: consideration of psychological theories and determinants of buyer behavior; a background in the elements of the marketing mix; the product distribution structure, the price system, and promotional activities; survey of marketing in special fields; planning and evaluating the marketing effort; marketing data analysis; quantitative aspects of the marketing function.

First Year Seminar instructor

Aug 2006 – Dec 2016

A general introduction to the processes marketers use to engage consumers into a guided thought process.

Utilizing the theory and principals of marketing, the course explored interdisciplinary connections as a means of understanding the contexts for the promotional messages we encounter in our everyday lives and analyzing the persuasive tools that influence our decision-making processes.

Director, Marketing and Public Relations

Jan 2014 - Mar 2015

Appalachian State University, Boone, NC

Managed marketing and public relations for public, master's comprehensive university in the mountains of Western North Carolina. Direct supervision of in-house team of award-winning marketing/PR professionals (graphic designers, photographers, videographers, writers, web developers and designers, social media managers, A/V tech, creative and marketing specialists). Managing editor for university magazine and host of SoundAffect podcast.

Director, Marketing and Communications Design

Jan 2010 - Jan 2014

Appalachian State University, Boone, NC

Led the in-house marketing enterprise, supervising marketing specialists and a creative team (graphic designers, photographers, videographers and web development and designers) for the university. Led marketing efforts for enrollment and advancement divisions, including all materials for the university's comprehensive fundraising campaign. Managing editor for university magazine.

Marketing/PR Director, Arts & Cultural Programs

Aug 2005 - Jan 2010

Appalachian State University, Boone, NC

An Appalachian Summer Festival

ASU Performing Arts

Turchin Center for the Visual Arts

Managed branding and sales strategies for three arts series, including developing advertising plans, on-site promotions, media buys and positioning and placement decisions for print, internet, radio and television advertising, with direct responsibility for budgets exceeding a quarter of a million dollars. Annually developed and cultivated media and corporate sponsors, resulting in contributions totaling more than 17% of the annual operating budget of university's summer arts program. Active participant on the Arts in Watauga County Economic Impact Committee in Boone, NC to measure and analyze economic impact of arts in Watauga County. Participant on regional marketing team that analyzes primary and secondary market research data, and utilizes information and networking to increase economic development in a five-county area. Developed press release distribution list exceeding 400 national, regional and local media outlets. Planned and executed product launch; managed brand development and promotional strategy for largest art museum in Western North Carolina, Southwestern Virginia and Northeast Tennessee region. Extensive public relations work with area corporate, civic and government leaders, particularly as related to regional economic development, positioning in college markets and the local tourism economy. Developed student attendance to performing arts events to comprise 40% of total audience, increased attendance to visual arts events by 450% in 4 years, and to new fundraising socials by 300% from 2002 to 2006.

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Management/Marketing Consultant

2003 - 2006

Brown Toes, LLC

Member of a five-person team that developed a comprehensive market analysis, business plan, product to market strategy, marketing plan and sales strategy for a fledgling retailer of infant layette keepsakes. Brown Toes' current product line was picked up in October 2004 by USA Baby.

Owner/Operator

1999 - 2002

Hayes Art

Sole proprietor of a private art gallery that represented local and regional artists.

Additional Consulting Experience

- 2004-2024, Strategic Planning Consultant, Parent to Parent/FSN of the High Country, a not-for-profit parent support organization in Boone, NC. Executed complete analysis of current programs, developed strategic plan including specific staffing, public relations and fundraising goals, with tasks and timelines that are currently under implementation.
- Aug-Dec 2002, Management/Marketing Consultant, Koger Air, a manufacturer of blowpipes and dust collection systems in Martinsville, VA. As a member of a six-person team, executed complete evaluation of established family business that was suffering from loss of business due to economic paradigm shift in manufacturing industry. Analyzed organizational chart, personnel, annual operating budget, facility, operation plan, client mix and marketing efforts. Developed turnaround management and strategic marketing plan designed to grow business. Koger Air picked up several new accounts and reduced its dependency on the furniture manufacturing industry.

Education

Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC

Master of Business Administration, Babcock Graduate School of Management, December 2003.

Appalachian State University, Boone, NC

Bachelor of Arts, Interdisciplinary Studies, December 1997, summa cum laude.

Certifications

- 2018 - Accreditation in Public Relations, Public Relations Society of America (reaccredited 2021, 2024)
- 2012 - Certification in Crisis Management and Media Training in Crisis Interview and Response

Additional Skills & Experience

- 2025 - present, Chair, Emergency Communications Council, University of North Carolina System
- 2022 - present, Advisory Board member, Mountain Alliance
- 2016 - 2024, Community Advisory Board member, WFDD Public Radio
- 2006 - 2016, First Year Seminar instructor for Appalachian State University. Nominated for Outstanding Faculty Award and Freshman Advocate Award.
- 2006 - 2009, member at large of the Board of Directors of High Country Host, a membership marketing organization serving five counties in Northwestern NC.
- Spring 2005, served as Chair of the Cultural Events Subcommittee on the Chancellor's Installation Committee.
- 1998-99, Founding member and volunteer, Appalachian State University Women's Resource Center
- Prior to 1998, three years as a travel agent in both in-house and leisure agencies, and three years in healthcare employee recruitment.
- Since 1994, active volunteer in the community and on university campus, including community arts coordination, advisory board member to student women's center, conference planning and experience as a trained mediator.