

SARA KIES

MARKETING DIRECTOR, DESIGNER, DIGITAL STRATEGIST

1607 Quail Run Lane
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

319.239.4008 | sarakies@me.com
meetsarakies.com

Award winning marketing professional with a 19-year track record of providing leadership, brand management and marketing innovation for a variety of clients in the financial, food service and higher education industries. In-depth experience in marketing and communications strategy, brand management, budget planning, digital implementation and analysis.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Marketing and creative leadership
- Media buying and placement
- Brand development and implementation
- Contract negotiation
- Budget planning and implementation
- CRM system implementation
- Financial/ROI analysis
- Strategic Planning
- SEO/Social media best practices
- Print/web/video design
- Project management
- Copywriting

EDUCATION

12/1999 University of Northern Iowa - BA; Communications, Electronic Media
12/2020 Temple University - MS; Digital Innovation in Marketing

EXPERIENCE

MARKETING MANAGER, 7/2015 - Present

University of Northern Iowa College of Business Administration | Cedar Falls, IA

Direct all marketing, communications and brand initiatives for the College of Business Administration at UNI.

- Marketing budget planning, media buying, implementation and execution
- Lead team-building initiatives and collaboration with University Relations and campus communicators
- Design, write and manage all internal and external College communications for web, print, video and social media
- Managing editor and designer of newly re-branded CBA magazine, *UNIBiz*
- Create and implement local and national strategic public relations campaigns
- Coordinate all CBA-related events including, *UNIBusiness Day*, *UNI Now* and *UNI Up Close*
- Train and supervise student employees

Key Accomplishments

- Developed the first annual CBA marketing budget which led to an integrated campaign with University Relations that resulted in a 10% increase in applications in 2017
- Re-branded *UNIBusiness Day* which led to increased attendance for three consecutive years
- Earned media placement in leading national digital publication on entrepreneurship for “You’ll never believe who has the best entrepreneurship program in the world”
- Received local broadcast coverage for faculty member’s social post on “Active Shooter Training”
- Initiated a four-year, University-wide, strategic marketing plan with collaboration from various campus communicators
- Designed nomination strategy that resulted in UNI receiving the Greater Cedar Valley Community Partner Award
- Successfully pitched topic to AACSB’s *BizEd* editorial team that resulted in a feature story on UNI’s Professional Readiness Program in the July/August 2018 issue
- Led development on creative, content and user-experience of new CBA website

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PARTNER, 8/2013 - Present

Giraffe Revolution | Cedar Falls, IA

Develop and execute traditional and digital marketing strategies for a variety of local and national contractual clients including:

- Martin Bros. Distributing - Cedar Falls, IA
- Rich Gross Solutions Higher Education Consulting - Hot Springs, SD

MARKETING MANAGER, 4/2013 - 2/2015

Martin Bros. Distributing | Cedar Falls, IA

Managed marketing team and creative initiatives for Midwestern-based food service distribution company

- Developed and managed marketing and creative plans, campaigns and budgets
- Managed team of four graphic designers, one web designer and two marketing coordinators
- Managed all outgoing marketing messaging and campaigns, including the DISH! monthly publication and DISH! series of monthly newsletters
- Managed all public relations efforts
- Managed all internal marketing communications and events including appreciation parties, recruitment and retirement events
- Researched and purchased new departmental technology including hardware and software
- Conducted employee evaluations and reviews

Key Accomplishments

- Implemented a digital marketing presence that had been previously non-existent. Online campaigns saw a 1200% increase in traffic to the website followed by a 5% increase in revenue
- Authored and presented “The Future of Marketing and What You Should Be Doing” at various company and industry-level events including the International Food Distributors Association (IFDA) Conference in New York City, NY
- Successfully implemented an educational blog which has resulted in a significant rise in SEO for keywords like “restaurant supply” on major search engines including Google and Bing
- Implemented a marketing CRM system (HubSpot) resulting in more efficiency for lead follow up and communication
- Tightened team dynamics and increased trust between members by initiating a variety of team-building activities including, group birthday celebrations, retreats and holiday celebrations

MARKETING STRATEGIST/WEB DESIGNER, 7/2012 - 4/2013

Spinutech | Cedar Falls, IA

Website design, development and social media strategy

- Designed and coded websites using CSS and HTML5
- Developed and implemented online strategy using a variety of drivers including ad words, AB testing, social media campaigns
- Wrote, produced, shot and edited internal and client videos

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DIRECTOR OF MARKETING, CREATIVE AND COMMUNICATIONS, 6/2001 - 7/2012

PFGBEST/Wasendorf Group of Companies | Cedar Falls, IA

Managed marketing, communications and creative initiatives for the Wasendorf family of companies including, PFGBEST, W&A Publishing, Traders Press and MyVerona Ristorante Italiano

- Developed marketing, communications and creative plans, campaigns and budgets for all Wasendorf companies
- Managed all outgoing communications including web, print, video and social media communications
- Creative direction, copy writing and graphic design, including SFO magazine publication design and management
- Media vendor communication and negotiation
- Created monthly ROI reports based on annual budgets and spends
- Managed brand consistency and implemented brand guidelines for MyVerona, PFGBest, SFO magazine and Traders Press
- Successfully planned and executed company re-brand transitioning from Peregrine Financial Group to PFGBest
- Conducted employee appraisals and reviews

Key Accomplishments

- Developed and managed \$3M annual marketing budget that included outdoor, broadcast, print, radio, and paid social placements
- Successfully collaborated with NADEX futures exchange on a \$500,000 binary options partnership campaign
- Developed an organic social media strategy that produced over 2,000 new leads per month
- Directed a redesign of a direct mail campaign that resulted in \$3.50 cost/lead ratio – down from \$54.95 cost/lead on previous campaign
- Led media relations efforts during construction and grand opening of PFGBest headquarters in Cedar Falls
- Directed a team of award-winning marketing professionals including, three graphic designers, two marketing specialists and two student interns

AWARDS

- 2006-2019 American Advertising Federation Addy award winner
- 2018 AAF Cedar Valley MVP Marketer award recipient

CERTIFICATIONS

- 2020 Google Ads Video Certification
- 2020 Hootsuite Certification
- 2019 Google Analytics Individual Qualification

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REFERENCES

Leslie K. Wilson | 319.273.6240

leslie.wilson@uni.edu

Dean

University of Northern Iowa College of Business Administration

Cedar Falls, IA 50614

Relationship: Current supervisor at UNI

Paul Farmer | 319.231-0567

PaulDF@VeridianCU.org

Director of Continuous Improvement

Veridian Credit Union

Cedar Falls, IA 50613

Relationship: Former supervisor and contract client

Angela Dark | 319.553.0451

adark@martinsnet.com

Marketing Director

Martin Bros. Distributing

Cedar Falls, IA 50613

Relationship: Former employee and contract client

Sarah Judisch | 319.239.7504

sarah.judisch@uni.edu

Graphic Designer

UNI Office of University Relations

Cedar Falls, IA 50614

Relationship: Former employee at PFGBEST and current colleague at UNI