

Emily G. Abbas, APR

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Bankers Trust

Chief Marketing Officer – April 2015 to present (promotion, while keeping Chief of Staff duties)

Chief of Staff – September 2014 to present

- Partner with CEO and Executive Committee to accomplish bank goals by planning and directing key projects, including the bank's strategic plan, while ensuring the organization is positioned for growth and capable of fulfilling the needs of the communities served.
- Contribute to the bank's vision by overseeing the planning, development and execution of marketing and communications initiatives that position Bankers Trust as the industry leader.
- Align with and support business units to achieve company sales objectives through the creation of innovative products and services, while constantly improving the customer experience.
- Develop and enhance long-term business and community relationships, while overseeing bank-wide philanthropic giving of \$1 million+ and employee volunteerism efforts that total 14,000+ hours.
- Lead and develop a high-functioning team of marketing professionals responsible for communicating the bank's value proposition and maintaining its impeccable reputation and focus on customers, community and employees.

Strategic America (with company one year before being recruited away)

Executive Director of Public Relations / PR Department Head – August 2013 to September 2014

- Advanced the SA mission by leading PR efforts and working collaboratively to provide communications counsel and service to SA clients and the agency. Led team specializing in media relations and training, strategic planning, research, corporate social responsibility, crisis and issues management, employee engagement, community relations and philanthropy. Grew PR team to seven members, generating \$1.25 million in annual billings.
- Led marketing campaign for the Governor's STEM Advisory Council, increasing public awareness from 26 to 41 percent in one year. Client described effort as "outperforming the Council's urgent expectations by delivering a top-quality product ahead of our own breakneck pace."
- Other clients included Broadlawns, Iowa Network Services, Pella Windows, Iowa Select Farms, Kum & Go, Brownells, Wendy's, Stoney Creek Hospitality, Des Moines Home + Garden Show, Iowa Sleep and more. Significantly grew PR business and earned 100 percent voluntary client retention.
- Contributed to the agency's best revenue year in its 34-year history, with 12 percent top line growth.

Drake University and Simpson College

Adjunct Professor of Public Relations Writing at Simpson College – 2013 to 2016

Adjunct Professor of Master's Level Workshop on Internal Communications at Drake – September 2013

Professional Advisor/Co-Instructor for Drake's PR Senior Capstone Course – 2012 to 2013 school year

- For Simpson class, received the highest possible student ratings in the following categories: Instructor had a genuine interest in students; course helped me grasp the connection between the subject and other areas of study; course clearly met its stated purposes and objectives; overall, course was a worthwhile learning experience, and instructor was effective in helping me learn.
- At Drake, graduate student feedback included, "Emily understands her students and makes great use of classroom time. She provided ideas and techniques for use in the workplace. She did a great job with the subject matter, delivery of the material and encouraging discussions. The only thing that could have made the class better would have been more classroom time with her."

Aviva USA (with company 4 years)

Director of Customer Value Management – June 2012 to August 2013 (promotion)

Marketing Director / CMO Business Manager – Sept. 2011 to May 2012 (leadership development role)

Director of Internal Communications – July 2009 to August 2011

- Led U.S. effort to become the Most Recommended Insurance Company. Defined the initiative and gained business buy-in to align the organization behind this effort. The project was consistently singled out as leading the way for Aviva globally, with employee awareness increasing five-fold and Aviva product sales to employees doubling.
- Embedded the company's business strategy to help employees understand the connection between their daily jobs and the successful achievement of Aviva USA's goals. Survey results showed a 21-point increase in two years (seven points above the North American norm) related to employees seeing a clear link between their work and company objectives.
- Helped jump-start Aviva USA's Diversity & Inclusion program, earning a global Diversity Award.
- Developed a comprehensive communications plan to support Aviva USA's move of 1,400 employees without interruption to customers. This presented an opportunity for the re-birth of the company's culture, with a heightened focus on collaboration, engagement and teamwork.
- Planned Grand Opening Ceremony for Aviva USA's new LEED-gold certified headquarters – attended by the Governor, Mayor, Aviva's global CEO and CFO from London, community leaders, agents and employees. Employees and attendees rated the week of events 9.4 on a 10-point scale.
- Served on the Marketing Leadership Team to help align, develop and execute regional marketing and communication efforts across North America that supported the global business strategies. Created marketing plans and developed effective reporting systems.
- Served on a cross-functional team that took employees on a "Customer Immersion Excursion" to increase customer empathy through understanding. This effort contributed to a 19-point increase in Aviva USA's consumer Net Promoter Score (NPS) – the largest across all Aviva countries in 2011.
- Worked to retain high-value customers, while migrating others to profitability by executing intelligent preventative, proactive and reactive retention campaigns using front-line call center efforts, direct mail and focused field support. The effort saved the company more than \$62 million in 12 months.

GuideOne Insurance (with company 10 years)

Corporate Communications Manager II – 2005 to 2009 (promotion)

Corporate Communications Manager – 2002 to 2005 (promotion)

Senior Communications Specialist – 2000 to 2002 (promotion)

Communications Specialist – 1999 to 2000

- Provided integrated, comprehensive communication support and strategic leadership to the communications and marketing team, as well as ongoing public relations guidance to GuideOne's commercial and personal lines business units, company executives and the organization's sales force for issues such as product launches, technology enhancements, data security and the sale of GuideOne's life insurance company.
- Implemented targeted media relations and brand advertising programs for local, national and trade publications to leverage subject matter expertise and position the company as a thought leader. Launched media relations campaigns to generate coverage of the company's FaithGuard auto and home insurance products for churchgoers – generating placements on Fox News Live, Paul Harvey, Glenn Beck, *Kansas City Times*, *National Underwriter*, *Best's Review* and more. Served as the company's primary media contact and created/maintained its online newsroom. Jumpstarted GuideOne's social media efforts.
- Helped differentiate GuideOne by leveraging the company's world-class risk management resources. This included launching the comprehensive SafeChurch Web site and online training programs, creating Church Safety and Security Month and America's Safest Churches awards, publishing *The Missing Ministry* book, and educating audiences about risk management issues.
- Helped launch a new corporate mission, vision and tagline to employees at an offsite kickoff event. Following the rollout, 96 percent of employees reported they understood GuideOne's strategic plan.

- Oversaw GuideOne Foundation grants and coordinated company involvement in community events and sponsorships attracting approximately two million visitors each year, including GuideOne ImagineEve, Des Moines Arts Festival, Iowa Prayer Breakfast, Iowa State Fair, national MADD programs, United Way campaigns, and a school partnership with Iowa Christian Academy.
- Implemented an award-winning employee and field agent communications program that encompassed writing and editing, Web site content, utilizing new technologies, producing publications and videos, planning all-employee meetings and managing feedback mechanisms such as surveys and focus groups. Nearly 98 percent of employees reported being satisfied with the company's internal communications.
- Supported the Human Resources Team in order to enhance GuideOne's corporate culture. This led to a decrease in voluntary employee turnover from 14.8 percent in 2003 to 4.8 percent in 2009.

Iowa State Fair Blue Ribbon Foundation (with company 2 years)

Assistant Director – 1998 to 1999 (promotion)

Communications Manager – 1997 to 1998

- Oversaw the creation, implementation and evaluation of Foundation giving programs that generated \$17 million for Fairground renovation projects in two years.
- Designed and produced newsletters, media kits, brochures, direct mail pieces, grant proposals and Web sites in order to increase brand visibility and tell the Foundation's story to stakeholders. Served as the primary media contact.
- Engaged a group of 500+ volunteers, hired/mentored Foundation staff members and interns.
- Created the Corn Dog Kickoff Benefit Auction in 1997 and led the event for its first three years. Since its inception, the Kickoff has raised more than \$4 million for fairground renovations. Also planned Iowan of the Day recognition program and all fairground ribbon-cutting ceremonies.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- **Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa**
 - B.A. in Journalism and Mass Communication; 3.8 overall GPA, 4.0 in major sequence (1997)
Public Relations major, Business Management and Marketing concentrations
 - Master's Degree in Communication Leadership; 4.0 GPA (2009)
(Half MBA classes and half classes focused on improving leadership/communication skills)
- **Accreditation in Public Relations (APR)** by the Public Relations Society of America (2002)
- **Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute** Community Leadership Class (2003 to 2004)
- **Aviva North America Leadership Foundations** – 2% of employees selected to participate (2011)
- **Drake University Executive Roundtable Leadership Program** (2014 to 2015)
- **Net Promoter Score (NPS) Certification** (2015)
- **GDMLI Community Connect** – Program Mentor (2016)

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Recognized as one of the "Top Women in PR" by *PR News* (2016), first ever from Iowa
- Voted 2015's Best Up and Coming Business Leader (Runner-Up) in the *Business Record*
- Invited to join the NEXUS Executive Women's Alliance (member 2016 to present)
- Named one of *The Des Moines Register's* "14 People to Watch in 2014" (2014)
- Recipient of Drake University's national "Young Alumni Loyalty Award" (2013)
- National PRSA Silver Anvil Winner for the planning/execution of employee communications supporting Aviva's U.S. headquarters move (2011) – This is the highest national honor in PR
- Member of first and only U.S. employee team selected to the "Top 10/Grand Finals" of Aviva's global "Customer Cup" Competition in Gstaad, Switzerland (2011)
- National PRSA Bronze Anvil Winner – "Best Internal Magazine" (2003) and Runner-up (2006)
- "Forty-Under-40" leadership recognition from the *Des Moines Business Record* (2005)
- Voted "PR Professional of the Year" (2011 & 2014), "Outstanding Chapter Member" (2005) and "Outstanding New Member" (2001) by peers/members of the Central Iowa PRSA Chapter
- Recipient of more than 50 Public Relations Mark of Excellence (PRIME) Awards – Including "Best of Show" multiple times and "Best Newsletter" for 10 consecutive years (1999 to 2008)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- **Drake University, 2010 to present**
Board of Trustees (2016 to present); National Alumni Board Chair (2016 to present); National Alumni Board President (2014 to 2016); Presidential Inauguration Committee (2015 to 2016); Director of Alumni Relations Search Committee (2016); VP of Student/Alumni Relations & Advisor for Student Alumni Association (2012 to 2014); Downtown Networking Event founder (2011); Tri-Chair of the All-Greek Reunion (2015); Drake Diva (2014 to present)
- **Des Moines Community Playhouse Board of Directors, 2011 to present**
Board President (2013 to 2015); Executive Committee (2012 to 2015); Board Member Recruitment Co-Chair (2016); ACT TWO Capital Campaign lunch host (2016); Marketing Chair (2013); Hollywood Halloween Chair (2011 & 2012); Capital Campaign Major Gifts Committee Co-Chair (2012); Sip, Savor, Switch (2013 to 2014, Co-Chair in 2013); Mz. Wick event committee (2015)
- **Governor's STEM Advisory Council, 2014 to present**
Appointed by Governor Branstad following work for the Council at Strategic America; STEM and the Arts subcommittee (2014 to 2015); STEM Conference subcommittee (2014 to 2015)
- **Greater Des Moines Partnership, 2003 to present**
Board of Directors member (2008 to 2009; 2016 to present); Communications Board Chair (2016 to present); Executive Committee member (2016 to present); ART RTE Committee and marketing plan lead (2015 to present); Downtown Events Group Oversight Board (2015 to present); EDGE – Education Drives our Great Economy (2014 to present); GDMLI Class Member (2003 to 2004); Advised senior PR students at Drake in their efforts to create a civility initiative for Capital Crossroads (2012 to 2013)
- **Robert D. and Billie Ray Center Advisory Council (Character Counts in Iowa), 2015 to present**
Advisory Council member (2015 to present); 2016 All-Star Evening Auction Chair; 2016 Gala Fundraising Committee member
- **United Way of Central Iowa, 2000 to present**
Member of the 2015 & 2016 Workplace Campaign Cabinets; 2016 Chair's Group Cabinet member; 2015 & 2016 Co-Chair of the Media/Communications Segment; Volunteer Cabinet (2015 to present); Tocqueville Society (2015 to present); Women's Leadership Connection (2011 to present); Live United Awards judge (2014 & 2015); Business Volunteer Council (2015 to present); ELI member (2009 to 2010); Helped create United Way's initial social media plan (2008)
- **Bravo Greater Des Moines, 2014 to 2016**
2015 and 2016 Bravo Gala Fundraising Call Committee member
- **American Heart Association Heart Ball, 2015 to present**
Executive Leadership Team (ELT) member (2016)
- **NAACP's 100-Year Celebration Freedom Fund Banquet, 2015**
Event Planning Committee member (2015)
- **Des Moines Symphony "Pops" 4th of July Viewing Party, 2011 to present**
Event Co-Chair (2012 & 2013); Planning Committee member (2011 to present)
- **Central Iowa Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), 1997 to present** Various chapter leadership roles including President, Drake PRSSA Liaison, Institute Chair, Scholarship Chair, Membership Chair, accreditation coach, student mentor, speaker
- **Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, 2012**
25th Anniversary Gala Planning Committee member
- **ChildServe, 2012 & 2013**
Bubble Ball fundraising event Decor Committee member
- **Delta Gamma House Corporation, Alumni Association, Advisory Team, 1997 to present**
Recruitment Advisor (2006 to present); House Corporation President and VP (2000 & 1999)
- **Plymouth Church**
Confirmation guide (2014 to present)
- **Hanawalt Elementary School, 2006 to 2015**
Fundraising auction committee member (2011 to 2013); school volunteer (2006 to 2015)
- **Iowa Prayer Breakfast (formerly the Governor's Prayer Breakfast), 2000 to 2008**
Invitation Chair and planning committee member
- **Waterbury Neighborhood Association, 2003 to present**
Board Member (2005 to 2006); Newsletter Editor (2005 to 2006); member (2003 to present)