

# KAYLA SIEFKER

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS LEADER

Strategic communications leader who **builds trust**, **creates structure** and **gets people aligned** around complex business priorities. Deep in PR, media and analyst relations, with a track record of leading **global communications** programs across multiple products, markets and audiences in EdTech and B2B enterprise technology. **Trusted partner** to executives and **cross-functional teams**, skilled at **influencing without authority**, managing competing priorities, **building programs and processes**, and **turning business objectives into communications strategies** that drive measurable results. **Hands-on leader** known for connecting the dots, bringing clarity to ambiguity and **moving complex initiatives from strategy through execution**. Leverages **AI tools** to optimize workflows and increase productivity.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Generated a 228% spike in adult student enrollment and \$300K+ revenue** in 30 days via a targeted multichannel PR/media campaign.
- **Expanded thought leadership footprint by 64% and web traffic by 35%** through integrated media programs, generating \$152K+ in qualified sales leads.
- **Amplified youth large print brand visibility by 96% and drove \$110K+ in revenue** by securing top tier press coverage, including *The Washington Post* and *EdSurge*.

## CORE COMPETENCIES

- |                                                      |                                                 |                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ <b>Strategic Communications Planning</b>           | ✓ <b>Executive Communications &amp; Counsel</b> | ✓ <b>Communications Operations &amp; Processes</b>    |
| ✓ <b>Influencing Without Authority</b>               | ✓ <b>Integrated Communications Strategy</b>     | ✓ <b>Agency, Vendor &amp; Budget Management</b>       |
| ✓ <b>Cross-Functional Leadership &amp; Alignment</b> | ✓ <b>Stakeholder Management</b>                 | ✓ <b>Business &amp; Communications Prioritization</b> |
| ✓ <b>PR, Media Relations &amp; Analyst Relations</b> | ✓ <b>Reputation, Issues &amp; Crisis Mgmt.</b>  | ✓ <b>Performance Measurement &amp; KPIs</b>           |

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### Gale, part of Cengage Group – Farmington Hills, MI

#### Director, Media & Public Relations

**Aug 2021 – May 2025**

- **Built and led a comprehensive global PR function** across the company's **higher education, K-12, public library**, consortia and large print businesses, setting strategic priorities and aligning communications initiatives with business goals across complex, matrixed sales, marketing, product and leadership teams.
- **Managed competing communications priorities across five market segments**, partnering with business leaders to assess urgency and business impact, resolve resource conflicts, sequence initiatives and keep high-priority work moving forward.
- **Built and scaled an agency support model** by demonstrating PR impact, securing incremental funding from market leaders and ultimately establishing dedicated annual PR agency funding; created processes to allocate resources and track spend across business segments.
- Leveraged **impact study data** and **newsjacking tactics** to establish Thorndike Press as the **trusted authority** in youth large print, **increasing brand visibility by 96% and driving \$110K+ in new revenue** through top-tier earned media, including **Substack** coverage.
- Designed and executed 10+ executive and customer **thought leadership programs** using a **PESO model** strategy, **increasing industry influence by 64% and web traffic by 35%** and producing **\$152K+ in qualified sales leads**.
- Shaped the company's AI innovation narrative in K-12, **building thought leadership momentum** for an AI Leveling tool launch and creating **earned media content (contributed articles, podcasts, features, etc.) used by sales and marketing to support pre-sales**.
- Generated a **228% spike in adult student enrollment** and **\$300K+ revenue** in 30 days through a **targeted PR campaign** supported by local workforce development print and TV coverage.
- **Led high-stakes issues and crisis communications** with legal, product, government affairs and executive leadership, synthesizing complex inputs, aligning stakeholders and developing unified response protocols.
- Managed **\$300K+ annual PR budget** and **agency relationships, overseeing strategic planning, contract negotiation, multi-channel execution, and communications measurement**.
- **Coached and prepared executives and spokespeople** for media interviews and speaking engagements—developing **key messages, Q&A prep**, and refresher **media training** to ensure confident, on-message delivery.

#### Executive Manager, Media & Public Relations

**May 2020 – July 2021**

- **Amplified brand visibility** by 250%+ by implementing comprehensive **product awards and reviews programs** across businesses.
- **Increased global brand equity of Gale Primary Sources by nearly 50%** using customer voices, securing hundreds of international media placements and thought leadership content across 10+ countries, positioning the brand as a trusted partner in **academic research**.
- Drove **proactive and reactive media relations** through **external statements, rapid response** and strategic counsel to stakeholders.

- Secured **50+ local broadcast news stories** through strategic partnerships with libraries, leveraging human-interest narratives to drive brand trust, community impact, and new business opportunities.

#### **Senior Media & Public Relations Manager**

**Sept 2017 – May 2020**

- **Elevated brand visibility and revenue impact** through **integrated global PR strategies**, growing media reach by **43%**, generating **130 qualified sales leads** for a K-12 product launch and supporting **\$856K+ in revenue**.
- **Advocated for libraries** on behalf of company with annual participation in **National Library Legislative Day** where we **met with lawmakers at the U.S. Capitol** to discuss the value of libraries and why they should continue to provide IMLS funding.
- **Leveraged relationships with global, national and trade media to secure coverage across 10+ countries** for a digital archive launch with The British Library, reaching 100M+ readers and **driving 10K+ referral visits**.
- **Led high-impact cross-functional initiatives** with marketing, product, sales and creative teams, aligning communications strategies with business priorities and driving execution across multiple stakeholders and workstreams.

#### **Dynatrace – Detroit, MI & Boston, MA**

##### **Global Public Relations Senior Manager, Solution Marketing**

**June 2015 – Sept 2016**

- **Led global PR across Dynatrace product line**, aligning executives, product and marketing teams, customers and agency partners around communications strategy, messaging, launch priorities and execution.
- **Directed a global agency network across North America, EMEA, APAC and LATAM**, leading worldwide launch planning and providing strategic direction on messaging, story angles and media strategy; **managed a \$375K annual PR budget and agency contracts**.
- **Increased worldwide share of voice by 30%+ YOY** and **amplified global news impact 50%+** following the Dynatrace rebrand, securing coverage in top-tier business and technology media including *The Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes*, *CNBC* and *TechCrunch*.

##### **Senior Analyst Relations & Public Relations Manager**

**April 2013 – June 2015**

- **Led integrated PR and analyst relations across Dynatrace product line**, building strategic launch plans that sequenced analyst engagement, messaging, third-party validation, press materials and media outreach to strengthen market credibility and maximize launch impact. Coordinated participation in market research reports such as Gartner Magic Quadrants, Forrester Waves and IDC MarketScapes.
- **Managed a \$700K+ PR/AR budget** and **led communications for the Keynote Systems merger**, generating 830 global articles, 31 analyst inquiries and five analyst write-ups.

#### **Compuware (acquired by BMC Software in 2020) – Detroit, MI**

##### **Senior Analyst Relations & Public Relations Manager, APM Business Unit**

**April 2011 – April 2013**

- **Directed global PR and analyst relations across multiple APM product lines**, aligning product, marketing, executive and external stakeholders around launches, media opportunities and analyst engagement.
- **Built and deployed global PR and analyst relations processes**, guidelines and communications timelines, creating greater consistency and alignment across launches, media relations and analyst engagement.
- **Led PR and analyst relations for Compuware's dynaTrace acquisition**, generating 170 global press articles, 900+ social hits, 21 analyst inquiries and six analyst write-ups while tripling the company's news share of voice.
- **Increased customer and prospect visibility around Healthcare.gov performance issues**, generating 600+ articles and three TV interviews that positioned the company as the go-to APM expert.

##### **Communications Manager, Vantage & Cloud Computing Solutions**

**July 2009 – April 2011**

- **Led media and analyst relations for Vantage and cloud computing products**, overhauling communications for an underperforming product line to **improve press and analyst visibility by 100%**.
- **Led an aggressive analyst relations program** that helped secure recognition as a **Leader in the Gartner 2011 APM Magic Quadrant** through 349 analyst interactions; launched CloudSleuth, **increasing web traffic and awareness by 80%**.

##### **Additional Compuware Experience**

*Corporate Communications Manager, ChangePoint Solution (promoted to Manager in 2007; managed one direct report) • Corporate Communications Analyst, Quality Solutions • Corporate Communications Analyst, Professional Services*

**Earlier Career: WSJM/AM 1400 – News Reporter/Anchor**

## **EDUCATION**

**Bachelor of Arts (BA), Journalism:** Michigan State University – East Lansing, MI

## **TECHNICAL SKILLS & TOOLS**

**PR, Social Media & Digital Engagement:** Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, Snapchat, LinkedIn, BlueSky, Hootsuite, Sprout Social, Brandwatch, Buffer, UTM Tracking, Cision, Meltwater, Muck Rack, Google Analytics, TVEye, PR Newswire, Business Wire, GlobeNewswire, PRWeb, GEO

**AI-Powered Content & Communication:** ChatGPT, Perplexity.ai, Claude.ai, CoPilot, Gemini, AI search visibility, SEO, AEO, GEO, Granola

**Digital Communication & Productivity:** Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Workspace, Microsoft Office Suite, Slack, WhatsApp, AP Style, Grammarly, Webex

**Content Creation & Management:** Adobe Creative Cloud, Canva, Brandfolder, Widen, WordPress, Bloomreach, Vimeo/video production

**Marketing & Project Management:** Workfront, Tableau, SAP xSuite, Catalyst, Salesforce, Trello, JIRA