**Experienced Strategic Communications Professional and Journalist**

Over 20 years of progressively responsible strategic communications, media relations and journalism for a diversity of scientific research and media organizations. Published journalist and experienced public information and content manager adept at engaging a range of audiences and stakeholders. Proven ability to work as an individual or as part of a team to drive results-oriented communications outcomes.

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Long Term Ecological Research Network Office**,Albuquerque, NM | May 2004 - present |
| *Public Information Officer* |  |
| * Served as the primary public interface for the Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) Network, largest and longest-lived ecological network in the United States. * Managed all media relations across the 25 site, multi-disciplinary Network of over 2,000 scientists and graduate students, including organizing press interviews, authoring press releases, and conducting media coverage tracking and measurement. * Served as the primary LTER public relations focal point, developing public information activities and events, and managing LTER exhibits at meetings, workshops and conferences. * Managed LTER web (e.g., <http://www.lternet.edu>) and social media presence (e.g. Facebook, Twitter), which meet the ecological information needs of a diversity of researchers, educators, students, media professionals and law makers, ensuring the content and tone are consistent with LTER strategic focus, leadership messaging, and reflect the breadth of Network activities. * Managed publication of the quarterly LTER Newsletter (<http://news.lternet.edu/>), establishing timelines, soliciting and authoring articles, and editing to deliver a consistent, quality product. * Authored, edited and managed LTER Annual Report (<http://bit.ly/1pO4dXY>). * Coordinated a network of communication points of contacts across 25 LTER sites to streamline efforts, reduce duplication, and maximize the use of communications resources. * Authored key portions of reports, grant applications and proposals to support continued LTER Network funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and various federal government agencies, contributing to the Network receiving over $22M in funding. * Provided key editorial input and guidance in the development of a LTER Strategic Plan for Communication, which governs communications strategy across the LTER Network. * Standardized communications policies and procedures related to the publication and release of scientific information within and outside of the LTER Network to ensure consistency and appropriate vetting of releasable information. * Applied communications measurement methodologies to assess and validate communications strategy, tool and product effectiveness, drawing on data-driven conclusions to refine and improve future LTER Network communications efforts. | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| International Centre for Research in Agroforestry, Nairobi, Kenya | Jul. 1995 – Dec. 2003 |
| Public Awareness Officer |  |
| * Served as the primary International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) focal point and media contact on agroforestry issues, successfully increasing ICRAF media coverage by over 300% from 1995-2001. * Managed and oversaw the production of media and public awareness and information products, including press kits, press releases, feature articles, booklets, newsletters, fact sheets, brochures, and TV and radio spots used by the media or in public fora (e.g. events) to inform stakeholders. * Lead the proposal and development of media and public information campaigns and events, undertaking research, defining audiences, authoring content and remarks, organizing press conferences, and editing collateral to manage the full lifecycle of approved campaigns. * Authored speeches on behalf of the ICRAF Director-General and the Chair of ICRAF Board of Trustees. * Supervised 10+ ICRAF student interns in support of ICRAF communications. | |
| University of New Mexico Communications & Journalism Department, Albuquerque, NM | Aug. 2001 – Dec. 2002 |
| Graduate Teaching / Research Assistant |  |
| * Taught undergraduate classes in Writing for the Mass Media and Public Speaking. * Assisted three professors in teaching and handling special undergraduate course, providing integrated teaching of Physics, Communications and Political Science. * Researched and co-authored with a professor and a fellow graduate student an academic paper for publication and a report for funders on the diffusion of clean indoor air ordinances in the southwestern United States. | |
| Various News Media Publications, Kenya, London, Boston | 1990 – 1999 |
| Staff Writer /Reporter, Correspondent or Contributor |  |
| * Originated, researched, and authored news and feature stories on science and technology, specializing in health, agriculture, environment, wildlife conservation, development, and science and technology issues for *The East African* newspaper and *The Weekly Review* magazine in Nairobi, Kenya. * Served as the Africa Desk lead, originating and managing article development from a variety of writers and authoring regular articles and features – often cover stories – on important events in Africa, and conducted interviews with visiting African and foreign dignitaries for *The Weekly Review*. * Researched and authored articles on agricultural science, development and environmental issues for *The World Paper*, published in Boston and distributed on five continents. * Researched and authored news and feature articles on environment and development issues in Kenya for *PANOSCOPE* Magazine, a publication of the *Panos Institute* in London. * Originated, researched and authored feature articles about products engineered and/or manufactured in Kenya, as well as sub-editing and proofreading copy for *The Kenya Export News* magazine in Nairobi, Kenya. * Generated, researched and authored science and technology trade stories, including reviews of industrial products, technology and scientific books and publications for *The Industrial Review* magazine. | |

**EDUCATION**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Executive M.B.A. | 2011 |
| *University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM* | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| M.A., Communication | 2003 |
| *University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM* | |
| B.S., Science (Physics/Mathematics) | 1990 |
| *Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya* | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | Certificate in Social Media & Social Media Analytics | 2014/15 | | *Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, University of Texas - Austin* | | |

**TECHNOLOGY**Microsoft Office **▪** Adobe Desktop Publishing (InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, Dreamweather) **▪** SPSS

**SELECTED PUBLICATIONS**

|  |
| --- |
| * Waide, R.B. & McOwiti, O.T. (2012). Long Term Ecological Research Network. In Robert Meyers (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Sustainability Science and Technology.* Springer. * McOwiti, O. T. (2003). Communicating agricultural innovations through the mass media: Assessing community readiness to adopt agroforestry innovations in Western Kenya. Master's thesis, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM. * Rogers, E. M., Peterson, J. C., & McOwiti, O. T. (2003, May). Diffusion of clean indoor air ordinances in the Southwestern United States. Paper/poster presented at the Health Communication Division, International Communication, San Diego, CA, May 23-27, 2003. * McOwiti, O. T. (2002, February). Use of the mass media as a means of diffusion of agroforestry innovations. Unpublished manuscript presented at the Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professorate communications workshop at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM. * McOwiti, O. T. (2000). What is public awareness? In [Paul Mundy, ed.] Public awareness: A Manual for agricultural NGOs and research institutions. The Hague: Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation. |
|  |

**PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, NON-PROFIT & VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

|  |
| --- |
| * Associate, Albuquerque chapter of RESULTS, a non-profit grassroots advocacy organization based in the United States and with chapters internationally (2007-present) * Treasurer, South Valley Organic Acres Cooperative (2013-2015) * Patron, Wambusa Primary School, Siaya County, Kenya (1999-present) * Patron, Ayweye Women’s and Youth Groups, Siaya County, Kenya (1999-present) |