

LIZ FINCH

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Seasoned communications and nonprofit leadership professional with 30+ years of experience driving mission impact through strategic marketing and storytelling, 20 of which were in the animal welfare/sheltering field. Proven track record of developing multi-channel communications strategies that achieved 40% growth in program participation. Demonstrated success managing \$4M+ budgets and leading cross-functional teams. Oversight of multiple programs, including Safe Humane Chicago, community cat program, humane education, Canines with Careers, Best Friends Network and Animal Help hotline. Passionate advocate for animal welfare with extensive experience in nonprofit communications and donor engagement.

WORK HISTORY

Dec 1995 - Current

Freelance Communications Professional

Self-employed - Remote

- Evaluate and provide guidance on communications/marketing strategies, social media, lifesaving programs in shelters, conversion of data to strategic priorities.
- Develop innovative strategies for clients, resulting in increased revenue and business growth.
- Streamline internal processes to enhance team efficiency and improve overall project outcomes.
- Collaborate with cross-functional teams to successfully deliver comprehensive solutions for clients.
- Write/repurpose content from reputable sources for use online and for fundraising projects (donor/supporter correspondence, email campaigns, grants).

Aug 2024 - Dec 2024

Interim Director of Marketing and Communications

Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center - Scottsdale, AZ

- Led integrated marketing campaigns including 30th anniversary gala generating \$170K in revenue
- Developed comprehensive communications strategy reaching 12,000 supporters
- Implemented tiered loyalty program with personalized engagement for 700 top-tier members
- Creation of annual magazine for top-tier members, year-end appeal content
- Managed brand/style consistency across all communication channels

Aug 2005 - Jan 2024

Senior Director (Multiple Departments)

- Directed multiple concurrent projects across 15 departments, managing \$4M annual budget portfolio

Best Friends Animal Society (BFAS)
- Remote

- Developed and executed data-driven content strategy increasing program participation 40% over two years
- Led cross-functional teams in optimizing program benefits and communication channels
- Created compelling donor-centric materials for major gift officers, enhancing cultivation
- Managed crisis communications during natural disasters and large-scale animal rescue operations
- Developed Best Friends Network Partner website content strategy, which included writing weekly blogs/editorials on current issues in the field.
- Optimized project timelines by effectively delegating tasks and prioritizing workload among team members.
- Developed strong relationships with key industry partners, fostering collaboration and mutual growth opportunities.

EDUCATION

Sep 2023

Masters: Interdisciplinary Studies

Southern Utah University | Cedar City, UT

Non-Profit Management / Contemporary Animal Services Leadership

May 1992

Bachelor of Arts: English

University of Iowa | Iowa City, IA

SKILLS

- Emergency response: connecting rescue organizations with animals during Hurricane Katrina response, caregiving during the Reno Rabbit Rescue and Pahrump Great Kitty Rescue, coordination of 150-dog-rescue from Gabbs, Nevada; emergency response/shelter director during response to Hurricane Harvey
- Public speaker at Best Friends National Conference (multiple presentations on storytelling, Best Friends programs, community cats, hoarding); 6th annual Community Cats Podcast Online Conference (hoarding); Humane Society of the United States Annual Expo (breed labels); Petco cat conference (hoarding). Multiple internal presentations (How to Start a Sanctuary workshop; strategic updates on Best Friends Network Partner program, Community Cats Program; use of new software/data management systems)
- Proficient in computer and web applications, including Microsoft Office Suite, Google suite, ADP, Sharepoint, OneDrive, Trello, Fetch, Slack, social media platforms (FB, Instagram) and Hootsuite, Adobe, PowerPoint, Asana, Canva, Wix, WordPress, SEO, web analytics, and familiarity with PetPoint

VOLUNTEER

Tour guide; Sept 2020 – Present

Wildlife hotline volunteer; Sept 2023 - Present

Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center, Scottsdale, AZ

Educate the public about coexisting with local wildlife, maintaining native species to support healthy ecosystems. Troubleshoot and provide resources and rescue for injured or orphaned animals.

Board of Directors, Vice President; Oct 2021 – Present

Partners for People, Aztec, NM

Provide animal behavior consulting and resources to keep people and their pets together.

Client Support; Jan 2019 - Jan 2020

Homeless ID Project, Phoenix, AZ

Assist people experiencing homelessness with acquiring replacement identification documents (e.g., birth certificates).

Board of Directors; Sept 2019 – Oct 2023

Fearless Kitty Rescue, Fountain Hills, AZ