

# Cassie Nielsen

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## Executive Summary

Results-oriented senior executive with more than 20 years of successful marketing and communication experience in the educational publishing industry. Strong leadership skills with a proven track record for building teams and motivating others at all levels in the organization toward the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Demonstrated success in developing market strategies and driving incremental sales in new markets with sustained profitability and growth. Strategic thinker with the proven ability to identify emerging trends and business opportunities, to develop successful new products, and to be an effective and responsive communicator. Areas of expertise include:

- ♦ Marketing and Sales Management
- ♦ Market Research
- ♦ Advertising and Public Relations
- ♦ Interactive Marketing
- ♦ Internal and External Communications
- ♦ Strategic Marketing Plans
- ♦ Brand Management
- ♦ Trade Show and Event Marketing

## Experience

### **Chief Marketing and Communications Officer**

Florida Virtual School, 2009 - Present

- Lead marketing and communication initiatives for staff of 22
- Accountable for marketing and communication balanced scorecard departmental goals that align with organization-wide goals
- Strategically built new communications team
- Navigated change management in the area of strategic marketing and proactive communication strategies
- Responsible for efficacy studies and research

### **Principal**

Strategic Business Communications LLC, 2008 – Present

- Leading the market research strategy for an educational publishing company, including the development and launch of an all new textbook series
- Partnering with Rollins College, Crummer Graduate School of Business to develop and pilot a Business Writing program for MBA students
- Developing a multi-year launch plan for the sales and marketing of effective leadership and training products
- Creating a customer communication plan for a national non-profit organization to build customer outreach and strengthen organizational ties

### **HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT PUBLISHING COMPANY 1985 – 2008**

#### **Vice President of Marketing**

Chief Sales and Marketing Office, 2007 – 2008

- Led corporate re-branding of the nation's largest educational publisher, following the merger of Houghton Mifflin and Harcourt School Publishers
- Created integrated marketing campaign to launch the new brand to PreK-Adult educators through print, interactive, and targeted promotion collateral as well as cohesive event and exhibit strategies

- Directed corporate strategies and activities of eight divisions to respond to more than 45 national educational associations, including synergistic exhibit space, signage, promotions, space advertising, and customer events
- Led a team of grant professionals to assist educational customers in winning federal, state, and foundation funding for innovative educational programs
- Managed corporate initiatives to pursue specialized markets, including online K-12 schools, consumer educational market, and home school market

### **Vice President of Product Management, Marketing Department**

Harcourt School Publishers, 2007

- Led a team of product managers responsible for creating and executing multi-year marketing plans to research, develop, and launch national and state-specific PreK-6 educational programs
- Worked extensively with sales teams and customers to ensure that market feedback and competitive advantages were interwoven in product development
- Directed completion of state and district requests for proposals for educational programs, including overall structure of the narrative and final presentation
- Created integrated marketing campaigns for national and regional sales, including print and interactive materials, presentations, space advertising, customer events, and national exhibits
- Led national telemarketing campaigns to increase sales in targeted segments, providing scripts, letters, collateral, and training and supervising ongoing operational support structure

### **Director of Marketing**

Harcourt Religion Publishers, 2003 – 2007

- Created and implemented strategic, cohesive marketing plans to build company image and product awareness and to significantly increase sales – including market analysis, product marketing campaigns, sales training, national and regional conference plans, product differentiation and pricing strategies, customized selling strategies, and competition analysis
- Worked with senior executive team to develop and initiate an aggressive business plan to elevate the company to number one status in the market
- Developed and conducted comprehensive quantitative and qualitative market research plans for all new products
- Ensured that all newly developed products addressed customer needs and reflected both sales staff and customer feedback, from concept through prototype and final production stages
- Directed ongoing development of all internet resources, including new product previews, training materials, and the online catalog, increasing online sales by 49.5% in 2006
- Managed all telemarketing strategies, including targeted campaigns which increased telemarketing sales by 32% in 2005 with incremental gains in 2006 and 2007

**Director, Creative Marketing Services** [previous positions: Associate Director, Marketing Manager, Assistant Promotion Manager, and Senior Promotion Editor]

Harcourt School Publishers, 1985 – 2003

- Developed and managed annual national marketing budget in excess of \$1.3 million to produce print, video, and online promotion materials

- Led a team of in-house copywriters, designers, and production staff to schedule and produce more than 120 marketing pieces for K-8 educators annually
- Coordinated in-house development and placement of space advertisements for both national magazines and conference programs
- Identified and applied new technology, such as interactive CD-ROMs, online catalog and brochures, and specialized print techniques within the scope of a comprehensive marketing plan

**Director of Marketing**

McDonald's Restaurant, 1980 – 1984

- Developed strategic marketing and public relations campaign for which the business received the Ronald Award, McDonald's Corporation's most prestigious national marketing achievement
- Established and nurtured partnerships with local businesses, government agencies, and civic organizations to strengthen community relations

**Adjunct Professor**

St. Leo's College, Little Creek, Virginia, 1977 – 1980

- Developed and taught introductory and intermediate level Composition and Writing courses with emphasis on creating well constructed, grammatically sound written presentations and strengthening written communication skills
- Developed and taught upper level American Literature, English Literature, and World Literature courses

**Educator**

Lejeune High School, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, 1975 – 1977

- Initiated successful grant request to develop and teach innovative skills-building programs for students who were performing significantly below grade level
- Taught secondary courses, including Grammar and Composition, Creative Writing, English Literature, and American Literature

**Education** Duke University, Durham, North Carolina  
Master of Arts in Teaching  
Bachelor of Arts in English and Psychology

**Professional Development** Stanford University – Strategic Planning for Publishing Executives  
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt – Accelerated Leadership Program