

ADAM BENSON

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIST, CONTENT CREATOR, REVENUE GENERATOR

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE – *a public relations expert specializing in media relations wins*

Leader in media relations and communications strategy with more than 15 years of experience. Worked with large companies, nonprofits, associations, and start-ups. Wrote speeches for long-serving Members of Congress, an editorial for a punk rock icon, and prepped a teen pageant winner for a national television interview. Author / co-author / editor of news releases, speeches, editorials, and eight cybersecurity research papers. Proud to have fought for “impossible” causes like health care reform and social media platform accountability. Successfully secured interviews with broadcast and cable TV networks, as well as local affiliates, and respected daily newspapers. (see <https://adamrbensonresume.com> for a closer look).

DISTINCTIVE QUALIFICATIONS – *experience in government + cybersecurity + television*

Creates and executes complex communications strategies for businesses and nonprofits reaching federal and state audiences. Multi-dimensional problem solver; brings different perspective to create different solutions. Recognized as an expert on cybersecurity and cyber safety protection against illicit and illegal activities happening in the “darkest corners of the internet” and protecting citizens from digital theft, malware, and exploitation.

RECORD OF SUCCESS IN MULTIPLE AREAS, INCLUDING:

- Cybersecurity & Cyber Safety Research
- Health Care Advocacy
- Television Interview Preparation
- Client Recruitment
- Campaigns for nonprofits
- Pitching for Earned Media Opportunities
- Coordinating Social Media Campaigns
- Digital Marketing
- Creating Owned Media
- Building a deep rolodex of journalists

PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY EXPERIENCE

VRGE STRATEGIES (previously 463 COMMUNICATIONS) – Washington, 2013-Present

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, 2019-Present, VICE PRESIDENT, 2015-2019; DIRECTOR, 2013-2015

Execute communications campaigns, engage influencers, and enhance brand awareness for Fortune 500 companies, start-ups, and non-profits. Turned media relations work on cybersecurity into subject matter expertise.

Notable achievements and experience:

- Landed interviews for cybersecurity pros at nonprofits (Digital Citizens Alliance and the Cyber Readiness Institute) and security & technology companies (including Cisco, Fortress Information Security, Black Kite, Cigent & Gravwell).
- Secured coverage from top-tier media organizations including ABC News, CBS News, CNN, Fox News Channel, MSNBC, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, *USA Today*, *BuzzFeed*, *Wired*, *The Economist*, and *Bloomberg*.
- Generated more than \$500k in revenue, bringing ten clients to Vrge since Q4 2016.
- Provided cybersecurity expertise in on-camera television interviews for CNN and local affiliates in New York, Washington, and San Francisco.
- 2016 SABRE Award Nominee (first nomination for a major PR award in the firm’s history)
- Represented agency at industry events including RSA, BlackHat, and DEF CON.

DIGITAL CITIZENS ALLIANCE – Washington, 2013-Present

Helped launch 463's (and later Vrge's) largest client. Directed research and authored reports on illegal / illicit activity on the internet. Executed delicate media outreach promoting one of the first organizations to investigate social media platforms' business models. A trusted watchdog, DCA's research 1) pressured YouTube to pull down videos pushing illegal and/or illicit goods and services; 2) increased accountability in digital advertising.

PUBLIC RELATIONS WORK IN NONPROFIT SPACE

ETHICS RESOURCE CENTER – Arlington, VA, 2011-2013

DIRECTOR, PUBLIC RELATIONS

Oversight of internal and external communications of 90-year-old nonprofit research organization. Supervised team of media relations and marketing contractors.

Notable achievements and experience:

- Managed digital marketing efforts; creating \$11K in advertising revenue
 - Increased audience on social media sites by 80% between 2011 and 2012
 - Helped recruit former Congressman Bart Stupak to join Board of Directors
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PUBLIC AFFAIRS WORK ON CAPITOL HILL AND IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

U.S. CONGRESS, CONGRESSMAN JOHN DINGELL (MI-15) – Washington, 2004-2011

CONGRESSIONAL PRESS SECRETARY & WEBMASTER

Lead writer/editor on office speeches, news releases, op-eds, newsletters, and website. Refined Congressman's message after redistricting to reach new constituents without alienating traditional supporters. Advisor on key public policy issues including health care, social security, climate change, 2008-2009 financial crisis and economic recovery, anti-corruption, watchdog efforts, social activism, and auto industry.

Notable achievements and experience with Congressman Dingell:

- Created podcast and social media pages to reach younger, tech-savvy constituents
- Managed Google AdWords account and debate war room during 2010 campaign
- Scored appearances on local news, cable news, and *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* during Obamacare debate and explanation
- Directed website redesign, resulting in 2010 & 2012 Gold Mouse Awards
- Member of U.S. House Democratic Leadership health care messaging hotline team

PENNSYLVANIANS FOR KANJORSKI (PA-11) – Wilkes Barre, PA, 2008

CAMPAIGN PRESS SECRETARY & SPOKESMAN

Recruited by Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee to help hold a targeted seat (during a two month leave of absence from Congressman Dingell's office). Overhauled media strategies to refocus constituency on the Congressman's position on issues. Controlled message by direct outreach to voters through telephone town halls and small group engagements. Deployed online advertising blitz to reach critical voting blocs.

Notable achievements and experience with Kanjorski campaign:

- He won – after one Republican poll showed him 14 points down in early September

JOE TURNHAM CAMPAIGN FOR CONGRESS (AL-03) – Auburn, AL, 2002
CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Recruited to deliver innovative messaging strategies to grow candidate’s support. Tasked with improving poll numbers by creating media opportunities for candidate to address issues of concern to local voters. Reversed double-digit deficit, closing race to two percentage points.

TELEVISION EXPERIENCE

Produced more than 1,000 newscasts in 10 years at markets across the U.S. Experience includes work at the CNN’s Washington bureau; two years as an Executive Producer in Louisville, KY; and newscast producing in three top 50 markets – Seattle, Kansas City, and Detroit.

DEGREES AND CERTIFICATIONS

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, MEDILL SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM – Evanston, IL
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN JOURNALISM, Newspaper Administration, 1992

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, WHARTON SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
CERTIFICATION, Digital Marketing, 2020

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN – Ann Arbor, MI
BACHELOR OF ARTS, Political Science, 1990

VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

UNITED CYBERSECURITY ALLIANCE, 2021

Member of Executive Advisory Board to nonprofit working to bring more women and minorities into the cybersecurity industry.