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Top Skills

Public Relations
Media Relations
Social Media Marketing

Heather Whaling

I help companies, nonprofits, and people accelerate growth and impact. | Agency Owner, Angel Investor, Nonprofit Board Member
Columbus, Ohio, United States

Summary

I'm on a mission to positively impact my part of the universe through intentional actions, reciprocal relationships, and rewriting the rules (when necessary). At Geben Communication, I've built an incredible team known for our fast-pace and high-impact results. As a board member, I apply that entrepreneurial mindset to mission-driven organizations, infusing bigger, bolder ideas that spark impact. Whatever role I'm in -- advocate, entrepreneur, donor or mentor -- I couple curiosity and creativity with a bias toward action.

(Want the more formal bio? Here you go ...)

Heather Whaling is founder/president of Geben Communication. In 2016, she was named EY Entrepreneur of the Year in the Ohio Valley Region (OH, KY, IN) and was named one of Columbus BusinessFirst's C-suite honorees in 2020.

After launching Geben in 2009, Heather's data-driven approach to communication helped the firm evolve into one of the Midwest's leading independent agencies. With 25+ employees, Geben is a highly respected, sought-after, award-winning agency, focusing on PR, social/digital marketing, crisis communication, and analytics/insights. Partnering with both B2b and B2c clients, Geben recently won 12 PRSA awards for communication excellence -- and 20 in the last few years, including best of show. Previously, Geben was named the national media relations agency of the year (Ragan/PR Daily) and a top 10 agency for startups (Agency Post).

"Geben" means "to give" in German, reflecting Heather's deep belief in doing well by doing good. She's active in organizations supporting and empowering women. Heather currently chairs The Women's Fund of Central Ohio board of directors, and was appointed by Mayor Ginther to serve on the Columbus Women's Commission, a body that applies a gender lens to public policy. As an advocate for

paid family leave, Heather's perspective has been featured in NPR, Forbes, Refinery29, Entrepreneur.com and a variety of other local and national media outlets. In 2020, Heather testified in front of the Ohio legislature in support of a statewide, funded paid leave policy.

Experience

Geben Communication

President/founder

December 2009 - Present (15 years 1 month)

Columbus, OH

Geben Communication accelerates growth and impact for our clients, our community, and our team with intention. That means strategic growth that sustains through the big milestones, the small wins, and all the moments in between. With Geben, you don't just grow. You grow for good.

We specialize in securing high-value media coverage -- including in major national outlets -- generating revenue through paid and organic social media, and mitigating reputation damage through strategic crisis management. Services include communication planning, influencer campaigns, media relations, SEO strategy, paid search and paid social, content marketing and social media strategy and community management.

Our promise? No client leaves unhappy because deliver meaningful impact ... every project, every client.

Costa DeVault

Director of Public Relations

2005 - November 2009 (4 years)

As director of PR, Heather managed public relations, social media and marketing initiatives for a range of regional and national clients. In addition to developing strategic communication plans for a range of businesses, she also secured media placements in the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Fortune Small Business, FOX News, Headline News and dozens of high-circulation trade magazines. Additionally, Heather helped the company launch its social media division in 2008.

Funk Luetke Skunda Marketing

Account Coordinator

January 2002 - March 2005 (3 years 3 months)

Toledo, OH

Heather's career began in politics, supporting campaigns for ballot issues and candidates at Toledo's leading public affairs agency.

Promotions One

Director of Public Relations

2005 - 2005 (less than a year)

Columbus, OH

As director of PR for this event management company, Heather led the media relations efforts for a range of events, including the Major League Soccer 10th Anniversary All-Start Game, the Kirk Herbstreit Football Classic, Red White & BOOM, and the Columbus Marathon.

Education

The University of Toledo

BA, Communication · (1999 - 2001)