

Michael DeVault

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An international media and communications executive and well as award-winning writer, journalist, and editor with 20 years' experience in media and publicity management, I am a vibrant and engaged leader with extensive experience in diverse industries and large, national and international markets.

Key Proficiencies

Communications: Long-form features writing, general assignments reporting, and story assignment management; copy editing, editing, page layout and design; proficiencies in AP Style Guide and Chicago Manual of Style, lede development; general marketing and promotional planning and execution, media budgeting, public speaking, and media appearances; project management, broadcast and print production management, newsroom management; on-page search engine optimization (SEO) and SEO writing; keyword-research strategy development.

Tools and Software: Expert-level user of the following platforms: Adobe InDesign, Photoshop, and Illustrator; Microsoft Office; Quark Xpress; WordPress; SEMrush, SpyFu, Google Analytics. Working knowledge of multiple CMS systems, HTML layout and design, CSS, and Java-Script/XML implementation; integrated online learning systems Moodle, D2L, and Blackboard.

Education

Creative Writing, Non-Fiction, M.F.A.
English, B.A.

Lindenwood University - December 2013

University of Louisiana - Monroe - December 2012

Additional Education: 24 credit hours, graduate business studies (MBA) at Lindenwood University

Publishing and Marketing Experience

Staff Writer, TechnologyAdvice

January 2023-Present

- Wrote and edited content for FitSmallBusiness.com, an affiliate-marketing website focused on tools to help small businesses succeed.
- Created content providing best answers to issues facing small business owners.
- Key Accomplishment: Launched Brand Presence funnel with piece on creating and maintaining brand presence in the marketplace; debuted on page-one of Google search results.

Adjunct Professor, Austin Peay State University

August 2015-Present

- Provided college-level instruction in English I, English II, and World Literature to incoming college freshmen.
- Designed curriculum and instructional materials, assessed student performance and assigned grades.
- Key Accomplishment: Served on the departmental Public Relations and Recruitment committee.

Franchise Writer, Brand Journalists

June 2016 – June 2021

- Developed brand strategies for top franchise brands including SONIC, Steamatic, and Fantastic Sams; researched and wrote informative, buyer-focused pieces for assigned brands; launched new franchise brands, including Outback Gutternvac, Dryer Vent Squad, and Revolism.
- Implemented a competitive, credit-granting internship program across all divisions for students at universities and colleges in Middle Tennessee; introduced Persona Marketing to organization. Transitioned to contractor status in 2018 during company downsizing.
- Key Accomplishment: Developed brand strategy for MTY Brands of Canada for first entry into U.S. market of Canadian brand Thai Express.

Marketing and Business Consultant/Contractor

December 2009 – July 2022

- Created marketing strategy and content for multiple regional and international brands; researched and wrote financial advice pieces for radio host Dave Ramsey; managed marketing for non-profits, celebrities, and corporate media clients; executed numerous brand launches and major media events.
- Assisted C-suite directors of a Fortune 25 company to create more than 1,000 policies and procedures to comply with federal mandates; coordinated final creative project of Stan Lee; managed careers of fine artists to grow sales and audience.
- Key Accomplishment: Worked with international pop artist Rob Prior to grow per-piece prices from \$6,000 to \$1 million.

Publicity Manager, Webster Public Relations

April 2015 – August 2015

- Created and managed media plans and organized and tracked inbound requests for clients such as the Oak Ridge Boys, Dolly Parton, and Hank Williams Jr; coordinated major media and public events to maximize client exposure.
- Led marketing and P.R. efforts for Oak Ridge Boys' *Rock of Ages*, navigating this 2015 album to No. 8 on the Billboard Charts; managed public relations and media for Tanya Tucker's comeback year.
- Key Accomplishment: Created process to receive and track inbound publicity requests to maximize free media impact across all clients.

Staff Writer, BayouLife Magazine

January 2013 – April 2016

- Wrote feature-length articles about political and cultural notables, national and international film and music stars, and regional citizens; profiled His Holiness the Dalai Lama, May, 2013.
- Originated monthly book reviews column, "Nightstands and Coffee Tables;"
- Key Accomplishment: Launched the "Icons Ball," an annual charity event highlighting each year's monthly "Bayou Icon" honorees.

Editor, Ouachita Citizen

September 2011 – January 2013

- Managed daily operations of four to six member news and sports team to ensure delivery of timely, high-quality content to the readership of a Louisiana Press Association award-winning weekly newspaper.
- Executed a "flag-to-footer" redesign to incorporate the latest trends in content and advertising delivery; coordinated development of a new, state-of-the-art web presence and the paper's transition into the Digital Age.
- Key Accomplishment: Grew newsroom staff from one reporter and one sports editor to six full-time,

part-time, and contract reporters.

*Marketing and Development Director
Strauss Theatre Center*

February 2009 - August 2011

- Developed and executed marketing, public relations, and advertising and promotions strategies for eighty-year-old MainStage community theatre and satellite Young Troupe children's theatre.
- Worked with other staff, volunteers, and board of directors to support donation and grant efforts, increase in-kind and financial support, and grow volunteer involvement with organization.
- Key Accomplishment: Developed and implemented Media Patrons program which generated some \$525,000 in media buying power for MainStage and YoungTroupe promotions.

News Editor, Ouachita Citizen & The Franklin Sun

September 2005 - December 2009

- Supervised newsroom staff and photographers, managed production schedule, and covered government beat and breaking news; wrote award-winning editorials and agri-business features.
- Extended coverage of the BP oil spill, funding crises in law enforcement, local health and hospitals management and operations, and Hurricane Katrina.
- Key Accomplishment: Received Second Runner Up for investigative reporting among other recognitions and awards.

Editor in Chief, Bayou Outdoors Magazine

August 2003 - July 2004

- Led monthly outdoor living magazine focused on fishing, hunting, and watersports; designed all pages and oversaw story assignments to dozens of contributing writers.
- Developed and implemented top-to-bottom business plan to ensure continued profits and growth; calculated new, cost-basis rate cards costs and renegotiated print contracts to minimize expenses.
- Key Accomplishment: Implemented organizational changes and grew staff from one full-time employee to a team of eight in six months.

Other Relevant Experience

- **In-House Marketing Director**, Ready Decks Inc. (2006-2014): Cultivated brand image, researched market, and coordinated national marketing campaign for franchise company and numerous franchisees throughout the U.S.
- **Senior Account Executive**, Bayou Internet (1998-2000): Grew sales from one representative at \$50,000 in gross sales to five representatives with gross sales of more than \$2.5 million per year.
- **On-Air Investigative Reporter**, KNOE News (2008-2009): researched, produced, and delivered "hard-hitting" news reports on public corruption.
- **English Instructor**, various colleges and universities (2013-present): taught college composition, technical writing, and film courses via face-to-face and online media.

Leadership and Civic Involvement

Alpha Chi National Collegiate Honors Society; Alpha Kappa Psi 2014 Honorary Member, Beta Chi chapter, LSU; Louisiana Purchase and Gardens Zoological Society, president, 2005-06; on-air fundraising volunteer, KEDM Public Radio; member, Lions Club International; Pilots for Patients, logo and branding development; Member (tenor) Masterworks Chorus, 2003-2009.

Awards and Achievements

- "Let Them Play Ball" – August 17, 2012, 1st Place, Best Single Editorial, 2012 LPA Awards
- "Ouachita Correctional Center" reports – March-September, 2012, 3rd Place, Best Continuing Coverage, 2012 LPA Awards
- *The Patriot Joe Morton*, 2010 First Runner Up, Novella. Pirate's Alley Faulkner Society Faulkner Medal.
- "Good Fences," 2014 Finalist, Essay. Pirate's Alley Faulkner Society Faulkner Medal.

Clips and Publications

- Professional Portfolio, various publications
<https://portfolio.michaeldevault.com>
- Lead Generation SEO writing, October 2019 – How to Start a Fire Water Restoration Business
<https://restoration1franchise.com/how-to-start-a-water-fire-restoration-business/>
- BayouLife Magazine, February 2016 - King of Hearts
<http://www.bayoulifemag.com/king-of-hearts/>
- BayouLife Magazine, May 2015 - DIANNE! The Unauthorized Biography of Dianne Cage
<http://www.bayoulifemag.com/dianne-the-unauthorized-biography-of-dianne-cage/>

References

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