



BACK TO THE ROOTS

COMMUNICATIONS & PR CONFERENCE

May 18 | Ocala, FL | 2023

FPRA Ocala Chapter and the Association of Florida Colleges
Communications and Marketing Commission's
Spring Conference



HOWDY *y'all*

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the Back to the Roots Public Relations and Communications Conference. Communications is such a ubiquitous field, and it's wonderful to be able to bring together professionals from such diverse industries to learn about the trends and techniques that are offering real results. Let's enjoy this time to get out of the office, eat some down-home cookin', and connect with each other.

We have a fantastic lineup of speakers this year, with wide-ranging expertise. During the sessions today, you'll have the opportunity to not only explore new techniques but also immerse yourself in the fundamental principles that have driven marketing success for years. As we continue to navigate new challenges in the industry, it is important to remember the value of tried and true marketing practices – going back to the roots of great communication and public relations.

Some sessions are eligible for CEUs for various certifications, inquire with us. Beyond the sessions, we encourage you to take the time to network with our sponsors and other attendees – ask questions, share your own experiences and insights, and explore opportunities to collaborate with each other moving forward.

We are proud to host this year's conference in the Horse Capital of the World®, a place where southern charm meets world-class industry and innovation. While you're here, consider a visit to the gorgeous Silver Springs State Park, the World Equestrian Center, or the Appleton Museum of Art.

Thank you for joining us. Let's make ourselves at home and have a great time!



Rachel Cote
Conference Co-Chair
College of Central Florida
Association of Florida Colleges,
Communications and Marketing Commission Chair



Tammy Gantt
Conference Co-Chair
Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association
FPRA Ocala Chapter President



SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

8:30 - 9:00 a.m. Conference Check-in and Networking

9:00 - 10:20 a.m. Welcome Breakfast and Keynote

10:20 - 10:40 a.m. Vendor Meet and Greet

10:50 - 11:30 a.m. Breakout Session

11:40 a.m. - 12:20 p.m. Breakout Session

12:30 - 1:30 p.m. Lunch and Group Session

1:40 - 2:20 p.m. Breakout Session

2:30 - 3:10 p.m. Breakout Session

3:20 - 4:00 p.m. Closing Session

Front Porch Vendors Open 8:30 a.m.-1:40 p.m.

OUR SPONSORS



This event would not be possible without the generosity of our sponsors. Please stop by the Front Porch Vendors to learn more about their products and services.

CHAMPION CONFERENCE PRESENTING SPONSOR



CLARUS—A Carnegie Company has been helping community colleges define their market opportunities, stay abreast of technology, and grow their enrollments for over 30 years. CLARUS is effective because its team is made up of marketing communications professionals, and CLARUS is successful because the company specializes in community colleges. Working in collaboration with your college, CLARUS helps to identify your markets, develop concrete strategies for reaching those markets, and facilitate your marketing messages through a variety of strategies, including digital advertising. From research to enrollment management to advertising campaigns, CLARUS works in partnership with your college.

SADDLE UP SPONSORS



First Impressions Printing has been in business since 1979. We are a veteran owned and operated business that offers a wide variety of marketing options. We offer printed items, promotional products, apparel, signs, banners and mailing services. Our motto is "if you think it, we can ink it." Customer service is one of the main keys to what makes us successful.



GradComm is a leading higher ed-focused marketing agency dedicated to helping colleges and universities across the country improve their communications. Our team of award-winning experts and creatives combine innovative strategies with time-tested techniques to save you money and ensure you reach your marketing goals.



OUR SPONSORS

SADDLE UP SPONSORS



PHOS Creative is an award-winning strategic agency that helps businesses build trustworthy brand systems and robust inbound marketing funnels. A strategy-first digital marketing agency headquartered in Florida, PHOS employs 25 team members and serves clients in 20 states. The growth, work, and culture of the agency have been highlighted in the Inc. 5000.



TJM Promos specializes in providing promotional products and custom apparel to businesses and organizations. Their products range from branded pens, mugs and folders to custom t-shirts and hats. They offer services such as graphic design, embroidery, and screen printing to ensure clients receive high-quality products that accurately represent their brand.

GIDDYUP SPONSORS



The Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association is a not-for-profit association which represents more than 1,300 Thoroughbred breeders and owners who breed, raise, train and race horses born in the state of Florida. FTBOA promotes and markets the industry throughout the country and around the world via their brand 'Horse Capital of the World'®, and, PR, Marketing and Communications efforts in print, digitally, via podcast and Horse Capital television.



Showcase Properties is a full-service independent real estate brokerage serving all of Central Florida. Agents have proudly represented some of the most unique and prestigious Central Florida properties available for purchase, including three of the highest selling properties in recent Marion County history.

OPENING KEYNOTE



BRANDON WEST, PHOS CREATIVE



Back to the Roots | Returning to the Only Brand Strategy That's Ever Actually Worked

In an age where people are suspicious of what they see online, skeptical about authorship, and distrustful of digital data, how does an organization prove its genuineness to prospective customers? Chief Purpose Officer and Founder of PHOS Creative, Brandon West, will share his agency's model for building into your organization's most important marketing, communications, and PR tool: trust.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Brandon founded PHOS Creative at the age of 26 out of his home office. Brandon's personal mission is to pastor leaders in the marketplace through vulnerable teaching that inspires faithful, purpose-driven leadership.

Brandon serves on the board of directors for Created, a local nonprofit committed to reaching and restoring the lives of women impacted by sex trafficking and sexual exploitation within Alachua County. PHOS' ten-year goal is to launch 30 care centers around the world that help to restore dignity, purpose, and freedom to the lives of women and children impacted by extreme poverty and sex trafficking. They are on track for seven care centers by the end of 2023.



10:50 - 11:30 A.M.

Navigating Ethics Challenges Like a Pro - [Room 101](#)

Margaret Spontak, Great Florida Riverway Trust, Inc

Navigating existing and emerging ethics challenges in private and public organizations has made the role of public relations professionals even more valuable. The growing lack of trust in institutions and evolving technology has made your ability to manage ethical dilemmas more difficult. This session reviews ethical issues in public relations, related case studies, potential scenarios, and tips for handling issues you may face. Earns CEUs for APR/CPRC.

What Goes Into a Brand Revolution? - [Room 107](#)

Loretta Shaffer, CPM, CDME, Marion Co. Visitors & Convention Bureau

Hear elements of the multi-faceted process to revolutionize the Ocala/Marion County Visitors & Convention Bureau. This session will cover the importance of research-driven data, community input, creative development of tagline and logo, and testing to ensure that branding resonates with community members and visitors.

Reforming the Funnel Using Predictive Modeling - [Klein B](#)

Dr. Kathi Swanson, CLARUS—A Carnegie Company

All community colleges are seeking increased enrollment, and marketing has traditionally been responsible for the top of the funnel-generating applicants. New applicant numbers are up, so why aren't enrollments? Learn how a new predictive model can assist in determining the likelihood of who is going to enroll.

11:40 A.M. - 12:20 P.M.

Get the Most out of Your Marketing Budget - [Room 101](#)

Sonda Eunus, Leading Marketing Solutions

Launching and operating a small business is especially challenging when working with a small marketing budget. In this presentation, Sonda will guide you through a step-by-step process to develop a strategic marketing plan to get the greatest ROI on your marketing budget.

How Program Marketing Can Save Enrollment - [Room 107](#)

Cheryl Broom, GradComm

We get it: The college marketing department is overwhelmed and overworked and can't possibly market every program with low enrollment. In this session, Cheryl showcases college program marketing and shares examples of community colleges that saw great results from hyper-focused program campaigns.

Telling Your Story has Impact - [Klein B](#)

Lynne Foster Haines, African-American Club of the Villages

Who we are and where we come from are important facets of developing a narrative that gives perspective and assists others in connecting with you and your message. Storytelling from the heart can be impactful and create a lasting connection. Join me for this interactive presentation.

SESSIONS



12:30 - 1:30 P.M. (LUNCH)

Lunch and Group Session: Engagement Can Lead to Success - [Klein A](#)

[Tom Gantt, Amplify Education](#)

Employee engagement is a key factor in high performance, yet often very little attention or effort goes into improving it. In this session, learn to assess your work group's engagement and take away strategies to ensure each team member can contribute to the greatest of their abilities.

1:40 - 2:20 P.M.

Catching the Low-hanging Fruit - [Room 101](#)

[Michelle Sjogren, St. Johns River State College](#)

How many interested students land on a program page and bounce before you get their information? This presentation will demonstrate how easy and effective putting a request for information form (RFI) on program pages can be to capture contact information for retargeting and marketing.

Making a Good First/Fiftieth Impression - [Room 107](#)

[Justin MacDonald, TJM Promos](#)

Brand impressions are important – they are the initial gateway to any brand's success. In today's world, consumers are inundated with countless choices, so we'll go over how to make sure that your brand's impression is strong and memorable by using positive logo strategies and unique branding applications.

Leading a Team to Greatness - [Klein B](#)

[Lynn Nobles, UF/IFAS Extension, Marion County](#)

Cultivating a shared vision, goal, or objective is vital in creating a functional team. This session will be centered around what makes a great team, breaking down silos within the organization, acknowledging the attributes of the members, having emotional intelligence, and always staying humble.

2:30 - 3:10 P.M.

First Comes Networking, Then Comes Recruitment - [Room 101](#)

[Dr. Raphael Robinson, College of Central Florida, and Lauren Debeck, Marion County Public Schools](#)

Want more face-to-face time for high school recruitment? First, you need face-to-face time with school district leadership. Attend this presentation to hear tactics for building strong relationships and collaboration in order to increase school visits and engagement.



SESSIONS

2:30 - 3:10 P.M. (cont'd)



Rapid Rebrand: TCC2FSU Transformed - Room 107

Suzi Baugh, Tallahassee Community College

TCC2FSU has been one of TCC's most popular and prominent programs, but had not been updated in many years, and time was running out to give it a fresh face in time for FSU denial letters to go out. Attend this presentation to hear how the TCC team, in as little as two weeks, completely rebranded the program as Aspire.



Using Analytics to Inform Your Digital Marketing Strategy - Klein B

Katie Loftus, Farm Credit of Florida

When it comes to digital marketing, it is easy to collect raw data but not always easy to make sense of the data you've collected. This session will focus on which metrics you can use to optimize communications and increase campaign performance. Learn how to use the data you've collected from social media, your website, and email marketing to measure impact and inform strategy.

3:20 - 4:00 P.M.

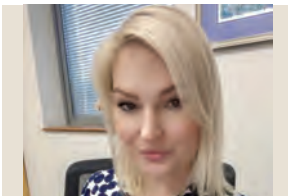


Closing Session - Klein A

Join us for final takeaways and door prizes!



OUR PRESENTERS

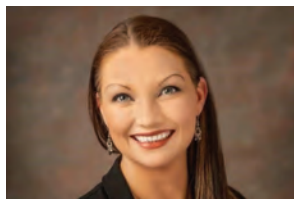


Suzi Baugh, Director of Integrated Marketing at Tallahassee Community College, is an industry veteran with a passion for higher education. A Tallahassee native, FSU graduate, and TCC alumni, she has worked in a variety of industries for international brands such as Hard Rock International, the Island of Aruba, and West Gate Resorts. Her team won the 2022 AFC Exemplary Practice/Overall Campaign.



Cheryl Broom, CEO of GradComm, is a national higher education leader with a passion for student success and a deep commitment to serving her clients with integrity and passion. For 20 years, Cheryl has served community colleges nationwide on projects ranging from bond passages to complex marketing campaigns. A former television news reporter, Cheryl brings her knack for storytelling to everyday projects.

OUR PRESENTERS



Lauren Debick, APR, is the Executive Director of Communications and Community Engagement for Marion County Public Schools. Prior to MCPS, Lauren served as the Director of Marketing, Communications, Public Relations, and Community Engagement for Ocala Health/HCA Healthcare. As a skilled strategic leader, Lauren focuses on activities & goals that align with overall business objectives, promote community engagement & create a positive impact.



Sonda Eunus is the Owner of Leading Marketing Solutions, a full-service marketing agency that specializes in event marketing. Sonda also developed the LMS Network, a free business networking group with weekly events. Sonda is committed to helping entrepreneurs launch and grow their businesses as easily as possible and is a vocal advocate for the importance of mental health care.



As a notional board-certified teacher, **Tom Gantt** blends his joy of science and teaching together with his passion for teamwork. A former biomedical engineer and science center educator, Tom combines his research background with 15 years of award-winning teaching of middle school and high school science. His current role is Manager of the STEM Product Specialist team at Amplify Education.



President of the African-American Club of the Villages, **Lynne Foster Haines** is a daughter, sister, mother, wife, retired educator, community volunteer; who is always in search of the story behind the scenes. It's amazing how the human connection of stories affects our empathy and interactions at work, at home, and within our communities



Katie Loftus is a digital communications and creative design expert who currently plans and executes database, email, and social media marketing campaigns for Farm Credit of Florida. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees in Horticultural Sciences from the University of Florida. She has a research background in plant molecular biology and citrus breeding and applies her analytical strengths to gauge success and optimize ongoing digital marketing campaigns.



Justin MacDonald has a passion for helping businesses grow and succeed. As VP of Sales & Marketing at TJM Promos, he helps clients develop effective marketing campaigns and promotional strategies. Justin is a graduate of the College of Central Florida, where he earned his AA, A.S. in Logistics, and a Bachelor of Applied Science in Business & Organizational Management.



OUR PRESENTERS

Patricia "Lynn" Nobles has worked in agriculture education for over 40 years, both in the classroom and administration in public schools. She is the County Extension Director, overseeing Marion County's extension of the University of Florida's Educational and Research programs. UF/IFAS Extension provides free educational programs to assist clientele in making wise decisions in landscaping, identifying potential pests, financial decision-making, and healthy life choices.



Dr. Raphael Robinson is the Director of Admissions & Student Recruitment for the College of Central Florida. With over 25 years of experience in higher education, Dr. Robinson has worked for multiple institutions including University of Central Florida and the University of Colorado, where he has worked with first-time-in-college students, student athletes and other special populations and minority groups.



Loretta Shaffer, CPM, CDME, has been the Tourism Development Director for Ocala/Marion County since 2013. A proud graduate of the University of Central Florida, Shaffer has more than 25 years of diverse tourism industry experience and a track record of delivering successful strategic plans and marketing strategies. Shaffer is a Certified Destination Marketing Executive, Certified Public Manager and Lean Six Sigma Green Belt certified.



Margaret Spontak currently serves as president of the Great Florida Riverway Trust, Inc. and has a non-profit consulting practice. She founded the Free the Ocklawaha River Coalition, a coalition of 60 organizations for a restored Ocklawaha River. She began her career in marketing and public relations working at the Tallahassee ABC television affiliate, Florida's Silver Springs, Central Florida Community College, and CLM Workforce Connection.



Michelle Sjogren, Executive Director of Strategic Communications at St. Johns River State College, has worked in communications for over 25 years. In Kentucky, she led marketing, public relations, web and social media teams at Bluegrass Community and Technical College and Gateway Community and Technical College. In Florida, she served as director of communications for the St. Lucie County School District and executive director of the St. Lucie County Education Foundation.



SERVICE PROJECT



FPRA and AFC have partnered with the Hispanic Business Council of Ocala's Community Closet. Conference attendees are invited to donate gently used or new business attire, including suits, dresses, ties, jewelry, purses, by bringing items to registration. The closet exists to ensure those who cannot afford business attire have access to it and to make people feel comfortable when pursuing jobs.

HISPANIC BUSINESS COUNCIL



The HBC local, a non-profit organization, was founded in 2020 by Julian Sinisterra and Esmirna Caraballa with the mission of helping members of the local small business community grow, network, learn, support, engage and advocate for each other and the community at large. While the name focuses on Hispanics, who were first targeted as a very underserved part of the community, the HBC recognizes that there are other parts of the community underserved as well, so the council is open to all.

HBC's vision is to foster and develop relationships between the local small businesses and the community which will result in long term, sustainable economic development, growth of entrepreneurship, and creation of strategic partnerships while giving back to the local community.

OUR IMPACT

Many conference projects involve purchasing something new to donate. However, our philosophy at the Back to the Roots Conference is to consider upcycling, when possible, to reduce our impact on our environment. It's just one more way of changing how we implement events that can make an impact. Those that cannot attend are welcome to drop off directly at the closets at HBC, 2945 NE Third St., Suite 205 and at Express Employment at 1005 SW 10th Street, both in Ocala.



The Communications and Marketing Commission is a consortium of professionals from colleges throughout Florida. We provide an opportunity for communication and marketing professionals at each institution to network and share ideas through quarterly roundtable meetings and professional development activities. CMC is open to all AFC members and is geared specifically to those in public relations, marketing, graphic and/or web design, development, and communications positions.

Want to become more involved with CMC? Contact Rachel Cote at coter@cf.edu to learn about commission board positions.



FPRA - The Ocala Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Association builds better public relations practitioners and communicators through professional development, networking opportunities and ethical practices. Members report joining for recognition and opportunities for leadership roles at the local and state levels, networking opportunities, professional development and resume-building opportunities with seminars and accreditation programs and to gain access to industry information, job banks, and research.

To join, visit fpraocala.org.