



EMPLOYEE PROFILE



Scott Gerace

Director, Internal Communications

INTRODUCTION

Scott Gerace, Director, Internal Communications, always had an eye for uncovering the facts and creating a good story, which guided him to a journalism degree and a long career in communications.

For Pride Month, we turned the tables on our regular profile interviewer and spoke to Scott about how writing took him to unexpected places, what brought him to the financial services industry, what a day in the life of an internal communications professional is really like, writing his coming out story for *The Washington Post*, and why a diverse team serves as his biggest on-the-job motivator.

What interested you in a career in Communications and led you to work in the financial world for the last 24 years?

From an early age I gravitated toward creative arts, and by high school I served as a yearbook editor while also being part of an incredible program called Upward Bound, which offered academic support to encourage students from certain income levels to pursue a postsecondary education. During

that program, a counselor suggested a career using my writing skills and suggested the journalism school at Ohio University. While I had dreams of becoming an entertainment reporter or magazine journalist, after college I began my career in Washington, D.C., writing for associations ranging from actuarial to public power. Once I relocated to Seattle, I became a healthcare and benefits writer for a major financial institution, which is ironic since numbers never interested me. Now almost 25 years later, I am still writing in the finance world, even deciphering financial results to communicate to employees



Scott enjoys a riverboat cruise aboard the Natchez along the Mississippi.

Describe what “internal communications” encompasses and how your role contributes to the firm.

I like to say there are external communications that go out to the public and the media about a company, and what I do is the reverse. Internal Communications relates company news and other information to employees – everything from general corporate news and HR and benefits information, to updates from our leadership, support for our CEO

and company-wide events and town halls where we bring the entire firm together for live/online updates. Internal communications handles writing, designing, and distributing communications, working with a wide range of internal partners.

What are some of your biggest challenges?

I would say first, how to take a great deal of information, identify the key messages, and effectively communicate those details in a way that is engaging and understandable to our employee audience. Also, collaborating with subject matter owners who may be extremely passionate about their content, and demonstrating your expertise on what works well in a communication. Another challenge is what I call “getting good at juggling.”

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In one day, I may be writing an earnings results message for our CEO, helping HR launch benefits open enrollment, looking at venues for our annual holiday party, publishing content for our intranet, and preparing a team for a local volunteer event. I could work with a senior leader in a formal setting and then throw on an ORIX USA Cares t-shirt to help build homes through our Habitat for Humanity partnership. Recently during a live town hall, we had a fire alarm go off, and knowing how to mute Zoom, remain calm in front of our CEO, and not reveal what’s going on to listeners, was not in my original job description.

What motivates you at work?

I’m fueled by the support of a diverse team. It’s easy to feel overwhelmed in a communications role with many moving pieces and projects in various stages of completion. Our Communications and Marketing team consists of only five people, and that requires everyone to pitch in, even when

it may not be your area of expertise or assignment. I’m grateful to have a diverse group of teammates bringing various experiences and backgrounds, and different approaches, to the table which infuses energy into what we do. That is often the boost I need when I may not be having my best day.

You have also had success with published personal writing. Are you still doing non-financial writing and what do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I moved to New York in 2007 and my goal was to write a one-man show. While that never came to complete fruition after theater classes, I also took a personal essay writing class, and many of my first published pieces were taken from my draft theater script, including my attempts at coming out to my mother or my experiences as a gay man (front and center in *The Washington Post*). Since then, I have taken a break from writing about myself and am focused now on a mystery novel set in the Big Easy featuring a gay writer turned sleuth.

In addition, I am an avid TV watcher and theater goer, and I spend many hours catching up on the latest television obsessions or trying to catch several plays/musicals when I’m in New York. London is one of my favorite destinations, and I visit once a year to check out the theater scene and explore the city’s emerging food scene.



Scott and his sister Kelli take in the theater in New York City.