

Fish Hook

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*SBA 2008 Home-Based Business Champion of the Year*

## Statement Addressing Longstanding Professional Experience, Diversity and Flexibility

### Autonomous Role in an Executive-Level Position

As a career communication professional with a longstanding, award-winning, proven track record for excellence, strong organizational and managerial skills, a master's degree in communication arts and a growing communication consulting business, I am well-suited to high-level performance in autonomous positions of decision-making, authority and team-building. In addition, I am the only one among my five siblings to have completed education beyond high school; I put myself through undergraduate and graduate schools, which demonstrates tenacity and leadership.

### Develop and Implement a Communication/Marketing/Public Relations Strategy

In addition to developing a successfully implemented organizational structure for the premier corporate communication department of the United States' largest, publicly owned, combined natural gas and electric utility, I have developed and implemented two successful small businesses. I founded these initiatives upon reliable market research, strong persuasive documentation, team efforts and constituency development. Once implemented, the corporate communications department became the hub of employee, customer and government communications. As a result, mass media's perceptions evident in its reporting about the utility's operations and activities improved in quality and quantity. In addition, once launched, the barbecue sauce business grew from distribution in 11 stores to inventory in more than 200 stores within the first year. Finally, once established, my writing and consulting business grew in revenue by 71 percent in its second year over the first year and this trend continues. A well-developed and implemented communication and marketing strategy ensures results like these.

I have held progressively complex communication roles, with the pinnacle being my writing and communication consulting business, which despite the down-turned economy is growing. This is due to effective direct target marketing, consistent networking and relationship-building, and delivery of consistently high-quality communication products and services. In fact, a prominent news anchorwoman of a CBS affiliate TV broadcast station in San Antonio called one of my press releases "the best she ever read," which resulted in prime-time TV coverage within two days of the press release.

As an honors graduate student of a private university of high academic standard, I researched and wrote a comprehensive, persuasive thesis which was recognized as publishable and monograph-worthy by the Journal of Elder Abuse and Neglect (the world's foremost library of research on elder abuse and neglect) of the National Institute on Aging. This accomplishment further demonstrates my ability to conceptualize and implement a major strategic plan within an allocated timeframe and do so exceedingly well. It also illustrates my compassion for and advocacy of the underserved and marginalized in society. I am an outdoors person, a camper and lover of nature, who is at home in any environment.

### Basic Functions of a Typical Position

I have experience in most of the required functions of any communication project and am comfortable with all the functions of such a position, including training staff how to conceptualize, write and disseminate various communiqué as well as orchestrating and coordinating events and functions, reporting, and all other functions of such a position.

### Duties and Responsibilities

I have experience in the required types of duties of such a position and am comfortable with all them, including noting discrepancies and recommending solutions—a skill set that I am particularly adept at performing.

### Technical Skills

I established my freelance writing and consulting business in January 2007 to provide professional writing and communication support to a diverse range of clients and industries to improve their operations and/or increase their market share. Since that time, I have written and presented to mass media press releases on behalf of clients that have garnered both broadcast and print coverage.

Since 1997, my features and guest columns have appeared in major daily newspapers, business journals, travel magazines, and business and medical journals.

Since 1997, I have written and published more than 175 articles in corporate publications and mass media.

My writing and (creative and technical) communication consulting business was awarded the U.S. Small Business Administration's Home-Based Business Champion of the Year Award across a local, 79-county district and the SBA's five-state Region VI in 2008, in my second year in business as a consultant and independent writer.

Both my undergraduate and graduate degrees are in communication, including core curricula in journalism, public relations and English.

I am a storyteller and a marketer. I have developed and distributed information to a wide variety of target audiences across many different industries for a diversity of purposes. Aside from developing a barbecue sauce business's marketing materials and labeling, and developing my writing business's website and marketing materials, other communications I have developed and distributed have included employee, customer, vendor and government communications for a utility company, human-interest feature stories for mass media consumption by newspaper readers, online content for website visitors to a 30-year CPA firm, marketing materials for hotel industry audiences, technical confidential correspondence concerning policy and procedures to worldwide military and civilian audiences across a variety of military and federal agencies, a corporate policy and procedures manual for the corporate headquarters of a 62-year-old commercial and industrial construction contracting company with worksites across the nation and abroad, and much more.

While I may not currently have a broad understanding of issues related to international development and transition economies or keen knowledge of other countries' political, economic and social environments, I can learn these things in order to function well on the international stage. I am intelligent and believe I can apply the maturity, experience, education and successes I have attained thus far to an international context and am prepared to meet this challenge.

I am a prolific, published, Bronze-Quill award-winning writer, editor, a communication professional and two-time entrepreneur who is as comfortable with writing as with speaking and training others whether one-on-one or in groups. I have facilitated creative problem-solving brainstorming sessions professionally for military and private-sector clients. I have facilitated Chamber of Commerce networking meetings where more than 100 attendees are gathered. I have presented at a national Department of Defense communication-

security conference attended by more than 100 civilian executives and military officers from many federal agencies. I have taught small business owners how to create impactful websites and marketing materials. I have taught nonprofit groups how to organize and document their organizations in order to qualify for philanthropic funding. I have taught display advertising account managers of a major daily newspaper how to maximize their use of research data and strategically created sales presentations to increase ad revenue. I have taught hotel staff, who had never worked at a hotel prior, how to handle front-desk operations as well as how to handle housekeeping and maintenance emergencies.

I graduated cum laude with an undergraduate degree in interdisciplinary communications with a 3.56 GPA, and attained with honors and a 4.0 GPA my graduate degree in communication arts, which focused on mass media and the convergence of mass media and included a comprehensively researched persuasive thesis.

### Management Skills

As an entrepreneur, I developed and successfully established two businesses, one of which is my writing and communication consulting business, FishHook.

As a former senior employee and key member of an executive-level strategic-planning committee, I developed an organizational structure for a corporate communication department of the United States' largest, publicly owned, combined natural gas and electric utility. The plan was adopted by the CEO of City Public Service in 2000, was implemented in 2002, and it remains in force today.

Also as a former senior employee of CPS, most of my time was spent in the field building employee morale while ensuring that what I spoke about and wrote about was supported by senior executives as well as by the organization's other constituencies, including government officials and financial auditors.

While an executive with a commercial real estate property management firm, J. Robertson and Associates, I resided and worked onsite at hotels in niche markets while direct-marketing the property and its programs to constituencies in business, academia and government, and while managing the property and supervising hotel staff. In two years' time, I helped turn around four previously under-performing hotel properties located in Texas, Arkansas, Missouri and Virginia, training management staff onsite as I went in effective direct marketing and employee development as "customer servants."

### Interpersonal Skills

My communication skills, maturity and practical experience across a wide range of industries and media have afforded me the understanding that none of us achieves anything without others' help. Only through living and practicing patience, tolerance, listening, compassion, support and a welcoming understanding of others' needs do true, long-term relationships grow and prosper. This idea can be applied to organizations and media relations.

As I have grown professionally and spiritually, my interpersonal skills have also matured over time. Communication is a two-way process that begins with listening. Sharing and understanding varying points of view in order to create an agreeable, mutually beneficial solution should always be the goal, whether in business or in personal life. Mutual respect and compassion are musts in any type of relationship, in any type of endeavor. We are, after all, human beings with the capacity to listen, to understand, to reach agreeable solutions.

While managing and marketing hotel properties on a zero budget, for example, it was important that I motivate employees and keep their morale high and service-oriented while zeroing in on target decision-makers who would sign service agreements for a volume of room nights at the desired room rate set by my corporate headquarters—and follow through thanks to superior customer service. Neither of these attained objectives would have been realized with a one-sided shotgun approach to communication. We must

consider with respect and understanding all stakeholders' points of view in order to achieve optimal outcomes that benefit everyone concerned.

Aside from body language when face-to-face, interpersonal skills also come into play when illustrating communications via the web or in print publications. It is important that each gender and all races, ethnicities, ages and other diversities be illustrated vs. taking a single-minded approach that may otherwise appear to favor one over another. For example, if a communication requires a graphic illustration or photograph, attempts should be made to photograph both male and female, both young and old, both laborer and professional, and so on, to instill a sense of connectedness vs. separateness in the overall audience for which the communication is designed.

Throughout my career, whether working as senior writer for corporate communications for the nation's largest combined natural gas and electric utility company or as owner of a business, stellar communication and follow-through have proven to be integral to my success with reaching and developing relationships with a variety audiences, and I have learned that good interpersonal skills are applicable across all communication media, including face-to-face, print, broadcast and electronic media. Paying attention to the details and to the human aspect of communication can make a huge difference in the outcome of any communication effort.

### Communication Skills

I am a three-time Bronze Quill Award winner for my communication projects including technical writing, printed publications and photography, and my communication business was nominated in its first year and subsequently awarded in its second year the U.S. Small Business Administration's Home-Based Business Champion of the Year in 2008 across the local 79-county district and a five-state region.

My work has received publication in major daily Hearst newspapers, business and medical journals, corporate media, local magazines and on various websites. The first story I ever published, in 1997, appeared on the front page of the Lifestyles section of the *San Antonio Express-News*, a major daily newspaper in what then was the 10<sup>th</sup> and now is the 7<sup>th</sup> largest city in the nation.

Having written and presented a press release on behalf of a little-known nonprofit client to local broadcast and print media, Deborah Knapp Bonilla, a veteran news anchor of KENS-TV, a CBS affiliate, immediately contacted me to coordinate coverage, which she filmed and produced and aired on KENS only two days after receiving and reading what she called "the best press release she had ever read." (Copy of press release available at [www.guckianwriter.com](http://www.guckianwriter.com).) The nonprofit claims results included a marked upsurge in volunteers and other resources.

While I do not possess language skills other than English, I am confident I could work successfully with an interpreter and/or translator during assignment to an area for which I lack direct experience and am typically a quick-study and flexible in new or unfamiliar environments. Experience has taught me that a positive attitude and a genuine willingness to learn and to succeed can often overcome unique challenges.

### Remote Periods of Performance

I am a single adult with no dependents. I am able, willing and ready to relocate anywhere to fulfill an assignment.

### U.S. Citizen/Secret Level

I am a U.S. citizen born and raised in San Antonio, Texas, where I currently reside. I also am a second-generation federal employee. (My father earned two Bronze Medals serving in Europe during World War II, and he held a top secret security clearance for more than 30 years until retirement in 1981.) I held a top secret security clearance from 1982 through 1988 while employed by the U.S. Department of Defense with the U.S. Air Force Headquarters Electronic Security Command at Kelly AFB Texas, from where I resigned to pursue employment experience in the private sector.