

# EDWARD M. BERGSTRAESSER

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**Broad international and domestic leadership experience in public affairs, corporate communications, media relations and content development, with a strong emphasis on communications strategy, as well as CSR and foundation relations. Multi-million-dollar budget responsibility, including creation and maintenance of strategic alliances, and the forging of partnerships with policymakers. Has handled all facets of organizational gift giving to educational institutions and non-profits, community organizations and economic development interests.**

## EXPERIENCE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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### **Bergstraesser Strategies**

**2019 to present**

**Lead proprietor** for a full-service communications and consulting firm, offering integrated strategic PR, advocacy and marketing services that build brand reputation and offer solutions to business challenges. The firm specializes in brand and content development and issues advocacy, with the credo that high-quality content and create visibility, build and sustain reputations and even change opinions or behaviors.

### **AT&T Corporation, New York, NY**

**2009 to**

**2019**

#### **External Affairs Director**

Communications leader for public and media relations programs for key AT&T segments. Handled global and international service initiatives, and communications surrounding AT&T relationships with multinational companies. Conceived broad range of issues management strategies and crisis communications plans. Corporate point person on regional network outage media outreach.

Lead External Affairs for New York State public and community relations programs for key AT&T segments including broad policy development and face-to-face elected representative influence. Collaborates with the AT&T Foundation on disbursement of funds to educational institutions, and to community, non-profit and economic development programs, from the digitization of FDR speeches at his Presidential Library, to gender in the workplace symposia, to promotion of nation-wide student coding and STEM-related programs.

Developed and implements executive and corporate messaging to external and internal audiences. Spearheads outreach initiatives with NGOs and labor interests, including unions, the Consumer Federation of America and the AARP.

Directed organizational gift giving, policy communications, issues management and strategic corporate relations for eastern half of United States across AT&T business and financial segments. Manages a team of agency and public affairs consultants.

#### **Public Relations Director**

Started as Public Relations Director, a position contracted through public affairs firms; subsequently asked to join full-time as External Affairs Director. As Public Relations Director, handled many of the above tasks as well as those enumerated below.

Key corporate spokesperson in mid-Atlantic, New England and some Southern states, a region that represented nearly half of AT&T's revenue. AT&T spokesperson at national political party conventions in Boston and New York. Wrote and edited white papers, speeches and editorials for key executives to external and internal audiences.

### **Bergstraesser Strategies, New York**

**2003 to 2009**

#### **Consultant**

Led corporate communications for AT&T in the Northeast Region and for a range of technology, professional services and corporate clients with an emphasis on external, strategic communications planning, including social media outreach as well as financial and corporate social responsibility communications.

Senior consultant to: McGraw-Hill, New York; Private Equity Council, DC; ConferencePlus, Chicago; ISCO International, Chicago; Greenwood Fuels (clean biomass conversion), and others. Of-counsel with public affairs agency, Glover Park Group, Washington, DC; branding and technology marketing interest, Creaxion, Atlanta and JMC Communications, NY.

**Independent Consultant, Chicago and New York**

**1999 to 2003**

Directed strategic communications programs for McGraw-Hill, AOL, MCI, AARP, Concert (joint venture between AT&T and British Telecom), PWC, Gateway, Compaq, Winstar, Geodesic Systems (telecom software), Sorrento Networks (optical networking), Telution (telecom systems), Moving Station (executive "e-relocation"), and JET-A.com (jet fuel e-distribution).

Consulting, of-counsel, relationship with New York-based public relations firm, Euro RSCG Magnet, a Havas subsidiary, and Illinois-based Coyote Marsh & Associates, a boutique public relations firm specializing in business-to-business and economic development issues. Additional contract relationships with Hill & Knowlton-owned, San Francisco-based Blanc & Otus Public Relations; Chicago-based Greenhouse Communications; and the DC-based arm of Weber Shandwick).

**EARLIER WORK EXPERIENCE**

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**MCI Telecommunications Corporation (Verizon), Chicago**

**Senior Manager of Public Relations/Data and Internet Communications**

Directed all issues management, corporate communications, speechwriting, and strategic corporate relations for five MCI segments. Managed professional staff, agency consultants, and public relations firms. Supervised large public relations team in five cities.

Managed the high-profile launch of internetMCI, involving several celebrities and industry leaders. Directed sweeping "NetDay '96" initiatives to bring the Internet to high schools. Directed relationships with National Science Foundation and Internet Society among others.

Conceived and directed NetVote, MCI-sponsored national voter awareness programs, including national surveys and first-time-ever-online voter registration. Programs garnered 300 million impressions, registered 75,000 citizens, were mentioned in President Clinton's 1997 Inaugural Address and received a dozen awards, including Smithsonian Award.

Conceived and arranged Oval Office project in which the President Clinton made a "relay" telephone call to a deaf Arkansan via MCI's service allowing communication for the hearing-impaired. National satellite feed garnered more than seven million viewer impressions.

**RELATED EXPERIENCE**

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Editor/Communications Manager for a half-billion-dollar technology spin-off of United Airlines in Rosemont, IL.

Senior account executive positions in technology PR groups at Ingalls, Quinn & Johnson, Boston and Golin/Harris, Chicago.

Editorial/publishing management for The Chicago Reporter, award-winning monthly journal on urban affairs and race relations.

Researcher for National Endowment of the Humanities project "Federal Idea and the City."

Former area policy coordinator, United States Senate campaign.

**EDUCATION**

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**CARELTON COLLEGE**

BA in Political Science, concentrated coursework in international relations, economics and urban studies.

**UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, NEWBERRY LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ**

Writing seminars/Workshops; Graduate work, English.

**PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION**

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Winner of seven industry awards, including the International Mercury Award for excellence in strategic communications, the Communicator Crystal Award (twice) an AT&T Service Excellence Award, and a Smithsonian Award for a nationally-acclaimed on-line voter registration program.

## **INTERESTS/AFFILIATIONS**

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**Board of directors:** Parks and Trails of New York, Executive Committee

**Former board member:** Fair Media Council, Long Island; Young Playwrights, Inc., Chicago (Stephen Sondheim's program for urban students)

**Member:** Creative Coalition, New York; International Association of Business Communicators; Strategic Management Association, Chicago; Cliff Dwellers Arts Club, Chicago; Interfaith House Advisory Council, Chicago (a homeless care center); National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences

**Sponsor:** JFK Presidential Library, Boston; FDR Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York