

# Laurie Wakefield

(Formerly Laurie Sillay Lahr)

## Strategic Public Relations and Marketing Communications Consultant

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Communications professional with more than 30 years of experience leading communication programs in a variety of industries and organizations including high-tech companies in television and computer systems, satellite telecommunications hardware, software and service providers, as well as multiple consumer products including contact lenses and eye care solutions, banking, real estate, hospitals, fast food and apparel.

- Applies strong leadership skills to effectively coordinate the varied personalities, needs and talents of management, technical product experts, clients, corporate partners and support staff as well as external contractors.
- Combines artistic and managerial creativity with a diverse and sophisticated palette of public relations and communication tools and activities. Web and e-mail programs figure prominently in strategies and initiatives.

### Experience

#### **2007 – Present      Public Relations and Communications Consultant**

Providing public relations and marketing communications consulting services for a variety of companies. Significant projects have included strategic communications planning and budgeting, corporate and product branding, key message development, product demonstrations, website development, as well as print collateral, tradeshow programs, presentations, FAQ and briefing documents, news releases and media relations.

#### **2005 – 2007      CIBA Vision – Director, Communications and PR, North America**

Communications and public relations director for the North American business unit of CIBA Vision, a contact lens and lens care solution manufacturer, headquartered in Duluth, Georgia. Developed and led internal and external communication programs. Directed public relations firm and consultants to deliver strategic communications programs for 4 brands of contact lenses and 2 brands of contact lens solutions in the United States and Canada. Reported to the region president, aligned with corporate communications and worked with product marketing leaders to develop **key messages**, align with advertising and other marketing communications activities and **launched new products**. Directed **media relations, crisis communications**, led **customer communication programs** directed to eye care professionals and consumers, created **employee communication programs** and activities.

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## **2002 – 2005                      Concurrent - Director, Strategic Communications**

Corporate and marketing communications and public relations director for this global, high-tech company offering real-time, high-performance software and hardware for television video-on-demand and specialty, real-time computing systems. Managed professional staff and outside contractors. Led strategic communications for the introduction and promotion of critical, core-business initiatives including: **Strategic corporate message and campaign development**; Repositioned Concurrent Computer Corporation's corporate image – led development and implementation of new corporate identity, groomed image and messages to more accurately showcase products and services, shifted image from that of legacy hardware manufacturing; **Product launch and repositioning** – developed new messaging and launched programs to promote the unique, open and scalable comprehensive platform; featured benefits of the Interactive Media Solution with presentations, supporting materials and interactive PC-based video demonstrations; leveraged partners to increase credibility and demonstrate power of products; **Web and e-mail programs** – Expanded customer database inviting online registration for access to exclusive portal; slashed support call volume by guiding customers to web-based support; improved customer communication with e-mail campaigns, which included results metrics; informed and educated employees with cost-effective e-mail newsletters and private web portal.

## **1999 – 2002                      Pathfire - Director, Marketing Communications**

Directed marketing communications for this leading provider of digital media distribution and management solutions. Created and led communication programs, budgets and staff. Communication activities included advertising, direct mail and e-mail programs, events and tradeshow, media relations, corporate and product literature development, presentations and product demonstrations, online portals and websites. Programs included a **re-branding** campaign for the corporate name change from Video Networks Inc., numerous comprehensive campaigns and activities supported other major actions including several rounds of **venture capital funding** and marketing programs including **new product launches**. Established online portals and communications platforms for **employee and customer communication programs** that supported network expansion, hardware deployment and software upgrades.

## **1993 – 1999                      Scientific-Atlanta**

Held two positions for the company; **Public Relations Manager** – Based in Atlanta, managed public relations worldwide for two divisions on three major satellite product lines for this global company. Responsibilities included: PR strategies and messages, media relations, executive briefings for spokespersons, article placement, speaking engagements, media tours and trade show press relations. **Marketing Communications Manager** – Managed worldwide Marketing Communications for Satellite Data VSAT product line in the Private Networks Division, based in Melbourne, Florida. Responsibilities included trade show and exhibit management; public relations; advertising; and support material production. Developed and managed VSAT User Group annual meeting.

## **1981 – 1993                      Advertising Art Director, Public Relations Consultant and Instructor**

Poindexter and Associates Advertising, Roanoke Virginia; Brand Edmonds Packet Advertising Roanoke, Virginia, Umphenour and Martin Advertising, Atlanta, Georgia, Instructor, Portfolio Center, Atlanta, Georgia

## **Education**

Portfolio Center, Atlanta graduate, 1981

Florida State University, Advertising Design 1976 – 1979, Associate Degree