

ILA ASPLUND

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CONTACT

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PORTFOLIO

writing.halfsky.org

Re: Brand Specialist, IRC

Dear IRC Hiring Manager,

For over a decade, my vocation has been to elevate the brands of purpose-driven global organizations. Through crafting strategic and compelling brand communications, I've deepened my clients' connections with their customers, supporters, employees, or shareholders — and have helped them raise millions of dollars and followers along the way.

In my current role as Marketing Manager at Mercy Corps, I plan and produce digital user journeys that reinforce the visual standards and verbal promise of our global brand, to deepen relationships with our supporter and prospect audiences across channels ([email](#), social media, and [web](#)). I glean or co-create key brand assets (including stories, photos, video, graphics), distilling our work and its impact through tangible, [human-centered storytelling](#). I analyze digital channel performance for wins and ongoing opportunities to improve. My work has resulted in record-breaking audience engagement KPIs and revenue numbers.

As Director of Marketing and Communications at WorldOregon, I [directed all aspects of our brand refresh](#), which included a new name and design rehaul. It was the organization's first major identity evolution in over 60 years. I led the RFP process for procuring an external brand design agency that best aligned with our goals and values, and garnered more than \$30,000 worth of pro bono work contributed to the refresh. I created an inclusive process to draw out key stakeholder input and establish buy-in, established brand guidelines, and formulated and executed a strategic rollout plan which bolstered team, volunteer, board, and member involvement.

At World Pulse, I played an essential role in building this global women's media brand from the ground up. As we evolved the brand from a print magazine to a digital platform, we forged an online network of 30,000 of grassroots activists and citizen journalists, amplifying women's stories from the remotest areas until they were heard by major media. As the creator of high-return fundraising appeals, grant proposals, ad campaigns, and [global events](#), I grew fruitful relationships with community and board members, individual donors, foundations, and corporate sponsors.

As you review my work history and portfolio, I hope you will see that the Brand Specialist role presents a perfect opportunity to apply my talents, years of experience, and passion for IRC's mission. I would be honored to collaborate with your brilliant team, and I'm ready to hit the ground running!

Thank you for your consideration,

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TECHNICAL TRAINING, PLATFORMS & SKILLS

Expertise with Google workspace and all Google creation applications, plus Microsoft Office suite

Marketing data and email analytics, tools including: Action Kit, Litmus, Mailchimp

Project Management expertise with tools including Wrike, Basecamp, and Asana

Practical skills in editing HTML for web, plus CMS tools: Wordpress, Drupal, Weebly, Wix, Squarespace

Basic design using Adobe Creative Suite Fundamentals, (training from Pacific Northwest College of Art) plus Canva graphic design expertise

EDUCATION

University of Washington, Seattle, WA:
Bachelor of Arts: English Writing, Cum Laude with Honors

Seattle University, WA: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, Teaching Certificate

WORK HISTORY

Marketing Manager

Mercy Corps, February 2020 to present

- Contribute to a digital communications strategy that reinforces brand values, drives engagement, and achieves revenue goals
- Help develop brand guidelines for language and photography that avoid the characteristics of white supremacy, sexism, and colonialism that have historically dominated the international aid sector
- Collaborate with external agencies and internal team to design cohesive, relevant messaging and visual assets across the user journey
- Utilize complex digital tools to analyze campaign outcomes and create data-informed decisions to improve future performance
- Provide detailed quality assurance and relentless testing to ensure a positive user experience across digital devices

Freelance Communications

Half Sky Writing, 2018-ongoing

- Developed communications strategies, built websites, planned, edited, and wrote content, did graphic design, plus event planning and facilitation on behalf of a variety of global organizations and businesses
- **Planned and executed rebrand, including new website, and marketing materials for major client and event partner (FLYN Consulting)**
- In partnership with FLYN Consulting, produced communication materials and co-facilitated change management, design thinking, and team culture-building workshops across the globe (Silicon Valley, NYC, London) for HR professionals from major companies including: Standard Insurance, Apple, UPS, Proctor & Gamble, Virgin Media, LinkedIn, Wells Fargo, Kellogg's, Campari Group

Director of Marketing & Communications

WorldOregon (formerly World Affairs Council), 2016-2018

- **Directed start-to-finish rebrand, from pitching changes to board executives to implementing a new website design and CMS**
- Led strategy, design, and content creation for all digital and print communications: newsletters, fundraising appeals, event promotion
- Utilized data and analytic tools to measure effectiveness of digital outreach strategies, continuously adapted campaigns to achieve goals
- Pitched to media, wrote press releases, prepared interviews, and wrote scripts for radio spots promoting large scale speaker events with major thought leaders, including journalist Lulu Garcia-Navarro, author Masha Gessen, travel guru Rick Steves, and racial justice activist Shaun King
- Wrote, scripted, produced video for high-end annual major donor gala
- Created and managed editorial calendar across all communication channels (web, social, email, direct mail) and oversaw marketing budget

Founder & CEO

Half Sky Journeys, 2010-2015

- Increased impact of nonprofits and cause-centered businesses through creating in-person and digital engagements worldwide
- Designed, prepared logistics, marketed, and sold premium international events to unite social impact leaders and philanthropists, with a lens on women's rights. (Past trips include Cambodia, Kenya, and [Rwanda](#))

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LANGUAGES & INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Languages: Native English speaker,
conversational Bahasa Indonesia

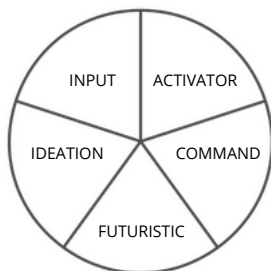
Work and extended travel in countries such
as Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Uganda,
Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania

Rapporteur and blogger for Vital Voices
(New Delhi, India)

Conference Speaker, Media for Activism,
Global Leadership Conference (Indonesia)

Volunteer, International Refugee Hospital
Literacy Program (Seattle, WA)

GALLUP'S "STRENGTHSFINDER" STRENGTHS



WORK HISTORY

Director of Communications and Marketing

World Pulse Media, 2006-2010

- Helped establish brand identity for World Pulse print magazine, and evolve the brand into a scaleable, global digital platform
- Laid the foundation for an outreach strategy that helped triple membership to our social network
- Collaborated with team, designers, vendors, advertisers, and distributors to produce a successful print-turned-digital magazine
- Scripted and planned event content for board trainings and off-site team engagements to align mission and values
- Served as the ghostwriter and editor of CEO's internal and external communications to supporters, board, and subscribers
- Interviewed women participants on the platform virtually, and in person on international trips, to collect, write, and share stories of impact
- Transformed data and research into rich narratives and visuals

Marketing Director

One With Heart Wellness Center, 2001-2005

- Planned, created, and executed sales plans and marketing campaigns, evolving "homegrown" brand to a more modern, inclusive brand
- Created internal team sales strategy resulting in most profitable year to date, funding a self-defense scholarship for low-income families
- Crafted copy for website, press releases, e-news, media (TV/web/radio)

Marketer & Trainer of Trainers

Teach and Travel, 1999 - 2001

- Sold premium cost workshops by leading outreach and marketing events
- Wrote curriculum, taught, and certified students
- Consulted new teachers in preparation for employment overseas

Team Leader, Customer Service

Amazon.com, 1998-2000

- Helped develop LINUX-based "blurbary" system (expertly crafted written blurbs) to train representatives to respond in "customer-centric" brand style, empowering team to convey company's brand and mission with every email interaction