

## Professional Summary

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Ryan Hughes a senior-level public relations professional with over 12 years of experience delivering strategic communications solutions by leading account teams in providing media relations, corporate communications, crisis & litigation communications, issue advocacy campaigns, public affairs and reputation management programs. Throughout his career, agency leadership and the clients he's worked with have expressed their appreciation for his ability to quickly familiarize himself with the intricacies of their unique industries and lead in the development and execution of successful communications campaigns that further their strategic objectives.

Hughes is currently Assistant Vice President, Public Relations at JConnelly, an integrated marketing and communications agency with the grit of a boutique shop & the power of a global firm that works to help organizations and leaders build, grow, manage and protect their brands.

In his previous role as Senior Manager at Hiltzik Strategies, Hughes was responsible for managing account teams from a diverse cross-sector of industries, including but not limited to those in public affairs, politics, philanthropy, entertainment and the media, public policy, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, national security and defense, blockchain and cryptocurrency, financial services, technology and artificial intelligence, corporate and professional services, non-profits and education. Hughes joined Hiltzik from ROKK Solutions, a bipartisan public affairs firm in Washington, D.C., where he managed high level strategic communications and media relations campaigns for clients in both the private and public sectors with a particular focus on how to leverage their message with policymakers in Washington.

During his time at Shirley & Banister Public Affairs, he oversaw public relations and strategic communications for multiple high-profile politically right-of-center accounts, including public figures, issue advocacy organizations and political campaigns. In this capacity, he served in a pivotal role handling conservative media relations for Governor Scott Walker's campaign for President and later managed key aspects of the surrogate booking operation for Governor John Kasich's campaign for President. Hughes previously served in state government as External Relations Coordinator for Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker (R-WI) and as Assistant to Illinois State Treasurer Dan Rutherford (R-IL).

## Work History

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**Assistant Vice President, Public Relations & Strategic Communications** 07/2023 – Present  
**JConnelly** – Chicago, IL

- Develops and executes strategic communications plans unique to each client that helped achieve their various strategic objectives.
- Secures earned media opportunities to build brands and achieve strategic communications objectives.
- Ensures positive press coverage of clients by building and maintaining strong relationships with reporters, editors and producers.
- Provides crisis communication consultation promptly to avoid negative press on any situation.

**Freelance Public Relations Consultant, Public Relations & Strategic Communications** 04/2022 – 07/2023  
**Freelance** – Chicago, IL

- Developed and executed strategic communications plans unique to each client that helped achieve their various strategic objectives.
- Secured earned media opportunities to build brands and achieve strategic communications objectives.
- Provided crisis communication consultation promptly to avoid negative press on any situation.

**Senior Manager, Public Relations & Strategic Communications** 01/2021 - 04/2022  
**Hiltzik Strategies** – New York, NY

- Oversaw public relations and strategic communications for multiple high-profile accounts in a diverse cross-sector of industries, including but not limited to those in philanthropy, politics, entertainment and the media, public policy, national security and defense, blockchain and cryptocurrency, financial services, technology and artificial intelligence, corporate and professional services, non-profits and education.
- Managed account teams uniquely assembled to match team member talent with client needs.
- Maintained the reputations of high-profile individuals such as former Google CEO Eric Schmidt and TV personality Dr. Phil.
- Led litigation communications support efforts for the successful defense in the \$66B "Bitcoin Trial of the Century" case of Kleiman v Wright.
- Developed and executed strategic communications plans unique to each client that helped achieve their various strategic objectives.
- Ensured positive press coverage of clients by building and maintaining strong relationships with reporters, editors and producers

**Senior Account Executive, Public Relations & Strategic Communications** 05/2016 - 01/2021  
**ROKK Solutions** – Washington, DC

- Oversaw high level strategic communications and media relations for client accounts in both the private and public sectors, with a particular focus on how to leverage their message with policymakers in Washington.
- Provided international media relations and public affairs support to The White House for Senior Advisor Jared Kushner's 2019 Peace to Prosperity economic workshop in Manama, Bahrain.
- Executed a strategic communications plan for Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Roselló in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in 2017 that reversed the narrative of financial mismanagement, secured a \$15.8B down payment for emergency disaster relief from Washington and attracted an influx of new business investments.
- Led litigation communications support efforts for the 9/11 Families suing for justice against state sponsors of terrorism.
- Developed and executed strategic communications plans unique to each client that helped achieve their various strategic objectives.

**Account Executive, Public Relations & Strategic Communications** 09/2014 - 05/2016

**Shirley & Banister Public Affairs** – Alexandria, VA

- Oversaw public relations and strategic communications for multiple high-profile politically right-of-center accounts, including public figures, issue advocacy organizations, and political campaigns.
- Secured new business relationship with then-Republican frontrunner Gov. Scott Walker's (R-WI) campaign for President, managing all conservative media relationships for the campaign.
- Directed all aspects of the surrogate media booking operation for Gov. John Kasich's (R-OH) campaign for President.
- Developed and executed strategic communications plans unique to each client that helped achieve their various strategic objectives.

**Assistant to the Treasurer**

06/2013 - 09/2014

**Office of Illinois State Treasurer Dan Rutherford** – Chicago, IL

- Provided in-person administrative and project coordination support to the Treasurer, serving as personal aide for all travel, events and meetings during his campaign for Governor of Illinois.
- Organized and regularly maintained a complex schedule and calendar for the Treasurer, providing advanced information of key events, including details and facts ahead of time.
- Professionally interfaced with elected officials, business leaders, supporters, donors and the media on the Treasurer's behalf.
- Managed executive communications on behalf of the Treasurer, including drafting press releases, local thought leadership op-eds, and social media posts corresponding with visits to constituencies statewide.

**External Relations Coordinator**

09/2012 - 06/2013

**Office of Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker** – Madison, WI

- Traveled statewide to advance events prior to the Governor's arrival to set up events and confirm event logistics.
- Cooperated with leaders of counties, municipalities, businesses, and nonprofits to establish relationships on behalf of the Governor.
- Worked with Wisconsin State Patrol and local police units to establish security for the Governor's participation in events.
- Constructed events in ways that sent the Governor's intended message to the media.
- Briefed the Governor on event logistics, key dignitaries, and agenda for public appearances.

**Press Office**

05/2012 - 09/2012

**Republican National Committee** – Washington, DC

- Prepared daily reports of news clips from battleground states for staff during 2012 Presidential election cycle.
- Created media contact lists for each state, including state republican surrogates, press contacts and media markets.
- Assisted the Communications Director in research and special projects depending on the week's messaging campaign.

**Administrative and Scheduling Intern**

09/2011 - 01/2012

**Office of Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker** – Madison, WI

- Provided scheduling and administrative assistance to the Chief of Staff, Deputy Chief of Staff and Scheduling Department in the Executive Office of the Governor, often interacting with officials meeting with the Governor, constituents over the phone and office visitors.

**Scheduling and Community Affairs Intern**

05/2011 - 09/2011

**Office of Illinois State Treasurer Dan Rutherford** – Chicago, IL

- Accompanied the Treasurer to events and meetings as his personal aide, providing in-person executive administrative assistance, scheduling and project coordination support on the road.

## **Volunteer Experience**

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**Public Relations Director**

05/2012 - 06/2013

**UW-Madison College Republicans** – Madison, WI

- Led as Chairman of the Public Relations Committee to promote conservative ideals on the campus of UW-Madison.
- Served as on-the-record spokesperson for media inquiries from local television, radio and print outlets.
- Produced press releases, media advisories, talking points and letters to the editor on behalf of the organization.
- Directed the organization's social media accounts on Facebook & Twitter and produced content for organization's website.

## **Education**

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**Bachelor of Arts: Political Science**

05/2022 – 05/2023

**Indiana University**, – Bloomington, IN

**Bachelor of Arts: Political Science**

09/2010 - 06/2013

**University of Wisconsin-Madison**, – Madison, WI

## **Skills**

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Public Relations, Strategic Communications, Crisis Communications, Social Media Management, Brand Positioning, Corporate Communications, Public Affairs, Thought Leadership, Reputation Management, Executive Communications, Strategic Management, Media Relations, Litigation Communications, Policy Communications, Internal Communications, External Communications, Executive Visibility, Consumer Public Relations, Account Management, Client Services, Project Management, Team Leadership, Coordinating, Organization, Delegation, Training and Development, Performance Improvement, Strategic Planning, Time Management, Change Management, People Management, Supervision, Brand Marketing, Issues Management, Investor Relations, Stakeholder Engagement, Editorial Calendars, Writing, Press Releases, Relationship Building, Spokesperson, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Outlook, Microsoft Powerpoint, Cision, PR Newswire, MuckRack, Sony Vegas, LexisNexis, TVEyes, Earned Media