



2024

connect

ANNUAL ONE-DAY CONFERENCE | NOVEMBER 14, 2024 | 8:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.



aaf® midlands



International Association
of Business Communicators
South Carolina

South Carolina Chapter



AGENDA

8:30-9 A.M.

BREAKFAST/REGISTRATION/NETWORKING

9-9:15 A.M.

Auditorium

WELCOME AND CHAPTER GREETINGS

Eva Foussat – AAF Midlands President
Mary-Kathryn Craft – IABC/SC President
Laura Kirkpatrick – SCPRSA President

9:15-10 A.M.

Auditorium

**FROM THE NEWSROOM TO THE BOARDROOM:
AN UNLIKELY AND INSPIRING PATH TO LEADERSHIP**
Adrienne Fairwell – South Carolina Educational Television

10-10:15 A.M.

BREAK

10:15-11:15 A.M.

Auditorium

**BUILD IT WHILE WE FLY IT:
BUILDING A COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE WHILE ADVANCING A BRAND**
Chris O’Neil – Savannah River National Laboratory

Savannah River National Laboratory’s declaration of independence in 2021 had multiple ripple effects including the need to build a communications capability from scratch and the need to distinguish the lab as an independent entity in the constellation of contractors at the Savannah River Site. In this session, O’Neil will look at what it takes to build capacity, capability and a high-performing team, while simultaneously advancing a brand, in a risk-averse environment. Building a coalition of the willing within the C-Suite, showing the ROI and small wins and taking care of your team are all vital to success. Learning to lead in communications is key to career progression and this case study offers a unique look at leadership in communications.

Wachovia Room I

**HOW TO FIND AND TELL STORIES THAT RESONATE
WITH YOUR STAKEHOLDERS ONLINE**

Ben Culbreth – Culbreth Copywriting LLC

Storytelling moves people. It can draw them closer to your organization. And stir them to take action when you need them. Telling stories has become even more important in a digital world where the people you want to connect with are bombarded with images, messages and, yes, stories from other organizations. That’s why it’s important to develop a skill for finding the right stories and crafting them in a way that will resonate in the digital spaces where your audience spends their time. Culbreth will spend time talking through the types of stories you can tell, how to uncover them and how to create those stories so they make an impact.

11:15-11:30 A.M.

BREAK

11:30-12:30 P.M.

Auditorium

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

**Marcia Purday – University of South Carolina
School of Journalism and Mass Communications**

Artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing communications by enhancing campaign effectiveness, innovative storytelling and streamlined workflows. Marcia Purday, APR, MBA, will discuss AI applications in communications and will offer practical insights. She will also address the ethical integration of AI into campaign effectiveness, workflows, and authentic storytelling. Purday is dedicated to ensuring that AI serves as an ethical tool to enhance communication strategies that are trustworthy and dynamic.

12:30-1:45 P.M.

Wachovia Rooms I-III

NETWORKING LUNCH

AGENDA

1:45-2:45 P.M.

Auditorium

BECOMING A GHOST BOSS: STORIES ABOUT THE FREELANCE AFTERLIFE

Eva Foussat – Eva Foussat Creative

Danielle Salley – Danielle Salley Creative

Have you ever wondered what it's like to quit your job at the midpoint of your career and start freelancing full-time? Well, there's a weekly podcast where two graphic designers, Eva Foussat and Danielle Salley, share their experiences of doing just that called "Ghost Boss: Stories About the Freelance Afterlife." Join Foussat and Salley live to learn tips on effective time management, mental health improvement and creative process enhancement for both freelance and non-freelance creatives.

Wachovia Room I

COMMUNICATING CHANGE EFFECTIVELY:

KEY STRATEGIES FOR LAUNCHING A NEW PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY

Cassandra Harris – South Carolina Department of Public Health

Cristi Moore – South Carolina Department of Public Health

Cassandra Harris and Cristi Moore had the unique opportunity to build a new government agency from the ground up. On July 1, 2024, the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control transitioned into two distinct agencies: the Departments of Environmental Services and Public Health. This session will explore the strategic efforts of a cross-functional team dedicated to facilitating this monumental change, ensuring that both staff and the public stayed informed throughout the process.

While change presents challenges, it also offers opportunities for significant improvements. Participants will gain insights into effective internal communication strategies, understand the importance of stakeholder engagement and learn how to support staff during times of transformation.

2:45-3 P.M.

BREAK

3-4 P.M.

Auditorium

HOW TO REACH LOCAL AUDIENCES IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA ERA

Ryan Johnston – 6AM City

Get advice and best practices for reaching local audiences in the social media era from Ryan Johnston, co-founder and CEO of 6AM City. Redefining the future of local media as the fastest-growing newsletter-first local media company in the country, 6AM City delivers the most relevant need-to-know local news and events to over 2.8 million locals through daily morning email publications, original web content and social media platforms. Johnston aims to build communities driven by conversation, telling stories together with a community designed to educate and activate the cities we call home. He will help you make the most of the social media era so your business can connect with your community.

4-4:15 P.M.

CLOSING AND THANK YOU

4:30-6 P.M.

HAPPY HOUR NETWORKING MEET UP

Join your colleagues for happy hour at The War Mouth following today's conference. Participants will be responsible for purchasing their own drinks.

The War Mouth
1209 Franklin St,
Columbia, SC 29201

MEET THE SPEAKERS



BEN CULBRETH

Content Strategist + Copywriter – Culbreth Copywriting LLC

Ben Culbreth is a content strategist and copywriter and the only one who shows up for work at Culbreth Copywriting LLC. He helps folks develop branding and content strategies and writes copy for websites, emails and customer stories. He lives in South Carolina. You can read his words and see his work at benjaminculbreth.com.



ADRIENNE FAIRWELL, APR

President and CEO – South Carolina Educational Television

Adrienne Fairwell, APR is the seventh president and CEO in the history of South Carolina Educational Television (SCETV). She returned to SCETV and South Carolina Public Radio after serving as the general manager of Arizona PBS headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona. She also served as the division director of marketing and communications at the S.C. Department of Commerce.

As assistant general manager of SCETV and South Carolina Public Radio, Fairwell oversaw brand management, promotional and advertising efforts, public relations, audience engagement, revenue activities, partnership development, multi-platform content generation, studio and field production, local and national programming, broadcast programming, traffic and government transparency work.

Her recent work at SCETV and South Carolina Public Radio gave her the best of both worlds: the overwhelming opportunity and responsibility to oversee content development, integration and implementation for television, digital and radio audiences.

Recognizing the power of maximizing the use of content on all platforms, Fairwell has overseen the deployment of strategies and tactics allowing the network to connect with the viewers and listeners in ways not imagined just a few short years ago: creating long- and short-form stories, using pre-packaged content from other platforms and integrating specific keywords for high search engine optimization.

Fairwell holds a Bachelor of Arts in journalism and mass communications from the University of South Carolina and a master's degree in human resources development from Webster University; she has earned the Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) designation and the Certified Public Manager professional designation. Fairwell is civically engaged, and she and her husband, Michael, share two children.

MEET THE SPEAKERS



EVA FOUSSAT

Owner – Eva Foussat Creative

Eva Foussat is an award-winning creative director and designer who has worked in the Columbia, South Carolina, area for more than 20 years. From brand launches to copy editing, healthcare to roller derby, on the web and etched (literally) in stone, she has worked on it all.

She owns Eva Foussat Creative, a design and marketing company, she started in early 2020. Her previous roles included being the creative director for the South Carolina Hospital Association and the graphic designer at Lexington Medical Center.

Foussat serves as president of AAF Midlands. She holds professional memberships with the Carolinas Healthcare Public Relations and Marketing Society, AIGA South Carolina and AAF Midlands.

She is a member of the San Luis Rey Band of Luiseño (Payómkawichum) Indians in Oceanside, California. Her family relocated from California when she was young and she was raised in Aiken, South Carolina. She moved to Columbia to attend the University of South Carolina.



CASSANDRA HARRIS

Health Programs Branch Assistant Director – S.C. Department of Public Health

Cassandra (Cassie) Harris is the assistant director for the Health Programs Branch within the Division of Health Promotion and Services at the S.C. Department of Public Health (DPH). She supports the branch director in overseeing health program bureaus and leads branch evaluation, planning, strategic direction and alignment. She is passionate about working with DPH's talented and dedicated employees, agency partners and community members to support a healthier future for all South Carolinians.

Previously, Harris served as the chief strategy and engagement officer for S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control. She also served as strategic advisor to the agency's incident leadership team during the COVID-19 pandemic and oversaw messaging and engagement for Hurricane Dorian.

She began her career with the Hawaii State Senate advancing to deputy director of senate communications. Harris earned a master's and bachelor's degrees in communications from the University of Hawaii at Mānoa and served on the school's Board of Publications. She is currently working toward her Doctor of Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Harris lives in Columbia, South Carolina, with her husband and daughter. She believes in making a positive impact in all she does so her daughter's generation and others can have the opportunity and resources they need to make the world even better.

MEET THE SPEAKERS



RYAN JOHNSTON

Co-Founder and CEO – 6AM City

In his previous position as the vice president of *Community Journals* Ryan Johnston led the brand and product development of *The Upstate Business Journal* and *TOWN* magazine. Before joining the *Community Journals* team, Johnston was a commercial real estate broker in Charlotte, North Carolina.

He has a Bachelor of Science in business management and entrepreneurship from Clemson University and was the co-founder of Southern Tide, College Comfort and the Greenville, South Carolina, chapter of The Founder Institute. He has also led the revitalization of the commercial mill village district, The Village of West Greenville, to be a nationally recognized arts and cultural district. Johnston's extensive background in community communications strategy, planning and public engagement has helped position 6AM City to redefine how communities engage, connect and experience the markets that 6AM City serves.



CRISTI MOORE

Chief Communications Officer – South Carolina Department of Public Health

Cristi Moore serves as chief communications officer for the South Carolina Department of Public Health (DPH). In this role she leads the Communications and Public Affairs team which advances DPH's brand — both internally and externally — by promoting the agency's programs and services and its employees' contributions and successes. Communications also supports many high-impact agency initiatives by providing communications planning and support year-round and during emergencies.

A member of the DPH team for more than two decades, Moore previously served as acting chief communications officer. Before that, she served as creative services director and art director, respectively.

A native of Homestead, Florida, Moore received a bachelor's degree in liberal arts with an emphasis in graphic design from Columbia College. She is a graduate of the South Carolina Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program, a nationally accredited management development program for managers and supervisors in South Carolina state government. Moore serves as the National Public Health Information Coalition (NPHIC) immediate past president and Region IV representative.

Moore lives in Irmo, South Carolina, with her husband, Scott, and their rescued pack of dogs. In her free time, she enjoys cooking, baking, rowing and spending time with friends and family.

MEET THE SPEAKERS



CHRIS O'NEIL

Director of Communications – Savannah River National Laboratory

Chris O'Neil is the director of communications at Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL). He is the senior advisor for external and internal communications, leading his team in the integration, coordination and synchronization of communications to build an understanding of and support for SRNL's mission.

Prior to SRNL, O'Neil held full-time and collateral-duty public affairs positions with the National Transportation Safety Board, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Air Force. He was twice hand-selected to write the public affairs annexes for the Department of Homeland Security's plans for maritime and land mass migration. He also contributed to the rewrite of the National Response Team (NRT) Joint Information Center (JIC) manual, focusing on better alignment between the External Affairs Annex 15 and NRT JIC structures and functions. Amid the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010, O'Neil served as the chief of strategic communication for the U.S. Coast Guard National Incident Command staff. Along with his previous experience, O'Neil serves on the executive committee of the National Laboratory Chief Communications Officers Working Group and is a member of SRNL's Regulatory Center of Excellence.

O'Neil has an Associate of Arts in criminal justice from the University of Phoenix, a Bachelor of Science in communications from Charter Oak State College and a Master of Science in public relations from Boston University. He earned his Accreditation in Public Relations in 2019.



MARCIA PURDAY

Instructor – University of South Carolina School of Journalism and Mass Communications

Marcia Purday, APR is a seasoned public relations and advertising professional with decades of experience across Fortune 100 companies, nonprofits, higher education, and government organizations. With an MBA and a BA from the University of South Carolina, Purday has dedicated her career to advancing communications through strategic planning, media relations, crisis communications, and integrated marketing. She is a past president of the South Carolina Public Relations Society of America (SCPRSA), where she led the efforts to establish the S.C. Mercury Awards. She also served as chair of the PRSA Southeast District. Today as an instructor at USC's School of Journalism and Mass Communications, Purday equips students with hands-on skills, including certifications in Google Advertising and expertise in strategic communications campaigns. Purday's work increasingly focuses on integrating artificial intelligence (AI) in advertising and public relations. She has spearheaded initiatives to incorporate AI literacy and prompt-writing into her curriculum to bridge traditional communication strategies with emerging AI tools.



DANIELLE SALLEY

Owner – Danielle Salley Creative

Danielle Salley is a freelance creative director and designer with a background in branding, advertising and web development. Located in South Carolina, Salley has nearly 20 years of experience working in the advertising industry. In 2023, she decided to take the leap and start her own company, Danielle Salley Creative.

Her passion for advertising is seen through her dedication to the American Advertising Federation (AAF). Through this organization, she has been awarded National President of the Year (2014), Member of the Year (2016), National Governor of the Year (2020) and is a Silver Medal recipient (2021). She currently serves on the AAF National Board of Directors and the AAF Council of Governors Executive Committee.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

PLATINUM SPONSOR

The Post and Courier
COLUMBIA

freetimes
A The Post and Courier COMPANY

VOLUNTEERS

Special thanks to the CONNECT Conference co-chairs Matthew Long and Alison Shuman and our hard-working and much appreciated committee members Mary-Kathryn Craft, Eva Foussat, Brooks Hearn, Haley Kellner, Bailey Lewis, Celina Ortiz, Savannah Scott and Cynthia South.

Program design provided by: Alison Shuman, Farm Bureau Insurance



S.C. DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY LAYOUT

