



Our Expertise

The Wakeman Agency



The Wakeman Agency deploys culturally competent strategic communications practices to address the most pressing social issues of our time. We partner with nonprofits, foundations, and socially responsible companies globally that aim to advance society toward systemic equity and justice.

With 20 years of experience in social change, we remain committed to advancing progress on urgent social issues through communications.



Public Relations

Successful communications strategies are at the heart of Public Relations. Like arteries, communications reach into every aspect of an organization —internally and externally— representing the foundation of establishing visibility and building meaningful influence, in pursuit of systems change.

Strategic Advisory

We pride ourselves on our ability to act as both thought partner and implementer. Providing trusted counsel to our clients, we offer the insight and foresight necessary to build awareness that catalyzes audiences into action.

Our wins cover a broad spectrum of social issues including: health equity, education, climate justice, civil rights, social innovation, economic mobility, technology, domestic violence, and a host of others.



The core thread connecting our suite of Public Relations services is the concept of Narrative Justice: the process of creating a more equitable environment via communications practices. We work to craft stories that amplify the efforts of mission-driven organizations, creating emotional connections with audiences that drive action.

We implicitly recognize that how narratives are positioned has a direct correlation to how audiences interpret, retell, and respond. This profound responsibility requires us to activate our expertise in deep listening, nuanced narrative development and to deploy tactical skills that enable the right stories to be told in the right way, to the most important audiences.

Messaging Architecture and Narrative Development

Messaging is a potent device for engaging audiences.

Our messaging architecture framework is rooted in behavioral science, research, and best practices. We leverage journey mapping to understand target audiences, create strategic calls-to-action, and to evaluate communications patterns that isolate emotional triggers and opportunities that increase responsiveness.

Ensuring accurate and consistent messaging architecture that is tailored to the specific needs of relevant audiences is the foundation for all successful communications strategies.



Media Relations

Garnering media coverage is a foundational element for increasing visibility and support for the mission of an organization. Journalists and editors respond to our pitches because they speak authentically to current issues of pressing concern.

The Wakeman Agency has extensive press relationships within top-tier print, digital and broadcast media outlets. We do not only “preach to the choir.” Rather, we seek to motivate and mobilize new and broader audiences.

Using proactive and reactive media relations techniques, we position clients in the context of emerging trends and issues, while also leveraging opportunities for impact through real-time response to current news and events as they unfold.

True to our Narrative Justice framework, we are committed to bringing forth stories that reflect the dignity, strengths, and histories of the people and communities that we serve, by seeking to highlight the humanity of those we are representing.

Thought Leadership Development

Thought leadership allows the building of credibility and influence that can change the trajectory of an organization.

Through an artful process of distilling important insights, seeking opportunities to amplify the right visibility, and creating positioning media placements, we build the thought leadership platform of organizations, or individuals, as an authority and go-to resource.

Our framework has helped many leaders leverage executive positioning to strengthen fundraising efforts while building consensus for urgent issues.

Crisis Communications & Reputation Management

It has become commonplace for organizations, or individuals, to experience sudden crisis situations. With the lightning pace of the digital media landscape, issues can explode into a full-blown maelstrom with the potential for long term damage if they are not handled quickly and properly.

Through strategic advisory, drills, and simulations, we prepare and support organizations for challenges that may arise during an emergency. We are also well equipped to nimbly jump into action for an acute crisis event already in process.

We train teams on how to tactically respond in a way that protects and sometimes even strengthens an organization's reputation. We help rebuild and restore trust with audiences, seeking to create alignment between the intentions and actions of the organization and the associated narrative.



The Lexicon Project™



The power of language is increasingly recognized as a core pillar of enacting social change: a medium that can either advance systemic bias, or mobilize actions toward equity. Through the Lexicon Project, we invite organizations into the deep exploration of language and narrative development that translates to effective and culturally competent communications with multicultural audiences. This work builds pathways to operationalizing the principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion within organizations.

Organizational Lexicon Development

A Lexicon helps to operationalize the use of culturally competent language within an organization.

The Lexicon Project™ offers quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, including ethnography informed interviews, surveys and review of internal and external communications. The result is a roadmap to actualize organizational culture goals through communications.

The Lexicon developed features a glossary of terms in current use that are to be retired, with substitute language and rationale for the shift, as well as suggestions related to overall organizational messaging and positioning. It provides a practical, guided pathway for systemic adoption of findings and principles that emerge through the process.



Special Events

Special events are an integral part of an organization's annual fundraising strategy for many nonprofits and an equally important avenue for implementing and reinforcing the organization's communications approaches.

We ideate and execute live, virtual, and hybrid event experiences that catalyze audiences and elevate revenue in a manner design to create emotional connections that extend beyond the event. We are a true thought partner to our clients, strategizing and producing small and large scale events that position organizations to cultivate connections with desirable audiences while reinforcing ties with existing supporters.

Event Management

Achieving a successful event is a demanding enterprise that pushes many organizations past capacity, resulting in events that don't hit development or experiential goals. For the past two decades, The Wakeman Agency has honed a seamless interplay between the mechanics of event management and production.

Our services include every aspect of event planning, from formulating the bigger picture event vision and goals, to designing and executing the smallest details.

Our mastery of strategic communications weaves organizational messaging into the event narrative, helping to define how the event unfolds and resonates over time.

Partial List of Current & Past Clients

- Alliance of Families for Justice
- Alliance for Financial Inclusion
- Animal Farm Foundation
- Anti-Violence Project
- Bottom Line
- Choose Healthy Life
- Civil Rights Film Festival
- ClimateWorks
- COLORS-NY
- Community Sector Banking
- Day One
- Drug Policy Alliance
- Education Equity Action Plan Coalition
- Echoing Green
- Emmett Till Legacy Foundation Generation
- Generation Citizen
- Grace Institute
- Harlem Educational Activities Fund
- Help For Children
- Interledger Foundation
- Metropolitan College of New York
- Misophonia Network
- National Domestic Workers Alliance
- New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- New York Edge
- New York Urban League
- New York Women's Foundation
- Northwest Area Foundation
- Oliver Scholars
- Opportunity Network
- Scratch Foundation
- ShoreTel
- The Africa-America Institute
- The END Fund
- The Hartford
- UCLA's Civil Rights Project
- Urban Resource Institute

Reach out for a confidential consultation to explore how our holistic approach to communications can amplify the impact of your organization's work in pursuit of systems change.

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