

Cheryl Welch

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SUMMARY

Dedicated and highly effective communications leader with more than 20 years of experience successfully guiding news organizations through major transitions in multimedia storytelling and audience engagement. Known for mentoring the next generation of journalists and developing innovative content strategies that generate tangible results.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Editorial & Journalism: Newsroom Leadership, Traditional and Brand Journalism, Editing, Writing, Photography, Social Media Engagement, Content Management, Audience Development

Digital & Multimedia Production: Adobe CC, Multimedia Production, Digital Publications and Platforms, Social Media Platforms and Monitoring, Google Analytics, Graphic Design, SEO

Financial & Resource Management: Budget Management, Revenue Generation, Stakeholder Engagement, Philanthropic Campaigns, People Leadership and Development

Strategic Communications: Strategic Content, Advertising, Integrated Content, Content Marketing, Brand and Marketing Campaigns, Executive Communications, Enterprise Reports

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of Tennessee
College of Communication and Information Media Center

Aug 2025 – Present

Publications Advisor

Knoxville, Tennessee

- Advise student journalists on the daily and weekly operations of *The Daily Beacon*, offering guidance on journalism fundamentals, advanced reporting techniques, editing and design, audience engagement, public records, story development and journalistic best practices to ensure continual improvement in the quality of independent student publications
- Develop and lead twice-weekly workshops for The Media Center on key journalistic techniques, providing hands-on training for students in writing, reporting and editing to enhance their professional skills

Adjunct Lecturer

Knoxville, Tennessee

- Teach and guide JMED 200 Multimedia Writing students as they grow in their reporting and multimedia writing skills

Future Leaders in Communication and Information Faculty Fellow

Knoxville, Tennessee

- Selected as one of four faculty fellows for the University of Tennessee's Future Leaders in Communication and Information Program, which serves to inspire emerging communication professionals through theoretical and hands-on summer classes and experiences

Tennessee Valley Authority

Jan 2022 – Aug 2025

Senior Manager of Strategic Content

Knoxville, Tennessee

- Directed integrated content strategies that reached 10 million people across seven states
- Optimized TVA.com content, boosting engaged traffic by 40% year over year
- Launched *The Powerhouse*, a brand journalism venture to share TVA's story in energy and innovation, economic development and environmental stewardship with a broad internal and external audience
- Led cross-functional teams to produce omnichannel content, enterprise reports, executive speeches and integrated communications campaigns that secured bipartisan support for key strategic initiatives
- Pioneered multimedia initiatives across websites and social media, enhancing digital storytelling and brand impact
- Managed and balanced complex budgets, ensuring optimal allocation of resources across digital and print projects

Spectrum Health

Nov 2014 - Jan 2022

Corporate Communications Manager

Grand Rapids, Michigan

- Directed content strategies that generated more than \$100 million in annual profits
- Launched *Health Beat*, a multimedia content strategy that engaged 16 million monthly viewers and earned 160+ international awards including:
 - Best in Show by PRSA Proof Awards
 - Best Blog by PR Daily's Content Marketing Awards
 - Best Brand Awareness by PR Daily's Digital Marketing & Social Media Awards
 - Best Digital Publication by PR Daily's Nonprofit PR Awards
 - Best Health Care Website by the Web Marketing Association
 - Best Brand Journalism and Best Publication Overall by Hermes Creative Awards
 - Best Website by PR Daily's Content Marketing Awards
 - Outstanding Brand Journalism – Platinum by MarCom Awards
 - Outstanding External Publication – Platinum by MarCom Awards
 - Outstanding Web Content – Platinum by MarCom Awards
 - Outstanding Magazine – Platinum by Aster Awards
 - Outstanding Nonprofit Website – Platinum by Aster Awards
 - Outstanding Blog Overall by dotCOMM Awards
 - Outstanding Email Strategy by dotCOMM Awards
 - Best Newsletter by PR Daily's Nonprofit PR Awards
- Developed integrated marketing campaigns that doubled the system's size in five years
- Leveraged strategic partnerships to amplify brand content, achieving a \$171 ROI per dollar invested
- Directed all owned media platforms, including social media, web content, brand journalism publications and a content syndication platform
- Built editorial processes and multichannel strategies that significantly grew programs
- Introduced systemwide content management best practices, streamlining digital workflows

- Professional speaker and panelist for “Brand Journalism: How to Create and Deliver Your Own News” workshop for The Conference Board in New York City in 2019
- Professional speaker for content marketing session at the HCIC Conference in Las Vegas 2016

Sandusky Newspaper Group

Jan 2007 - Nov 2014

Director of Content & Audience Development

Grand Haven, Michigan

- Directed all editorial and multimedia initiatives, quadrupling engaged traffic for the *Grand Haven Tribune* and other Lighthouse Media publications
- Mentored teams to produce impactful content, fostering innovation and strengthening community ties
- Secured 54 personal and team awards, including Best Editorial Writer award in 2014 and back-to-back Michigan Press Association Newspaper of the Year awards and Associated Press General Excellence awards, showcasing excellence in editorial and digital storytelling
- Served as Board Director for the Michigan Associated Press Media Editors Association
- Enhanced print design standards to align with marketing collateral, improving visual communication

Assistant Managing Editor

Sandusky, Ohio

- Led a 25-person newsroom to provide outstanding daily news coverage of a five-county service area by the *Sandusky Register* and other Tandem Media publications
- Built social media and digital news platforms, revamping digital and print content workflows to drive 6 million additional monthly pageviews
- Launched and managed monthly print and digital magazines, boosting profitability by 105% in six months
- Secured 147 personal and team awards, including five years of back-to-back Associated Press General Excellence awards
- Spearheaded enterprise projects, mentoring teams in multimedia storytelling and content packaging for exceptional audience experiences on special edition microsites
- Served as Board Director for the Ohio Associated Press Media Editors Association

New York Times Company

Oct 2003 - Jan 2007

Staff Writer and Assistant City Editor

Wilmington, North Carolina

- Produced engaging multimedia reports for the *Star-News* that enhanced reader engagement and informed public policy while covering health care and social services issues for the southeastern corner of North Carolina
- Earned the prestigious New York Times Chairman’s Award in 2005 for in-depth investigative journalism that changed the structure of the North Carolina Medical Board and strengthened the health care patient safety net for all North Carolinians
- Awarded Investigative Reporters and Editors Data Journalism Fellowship in 2006
- Earned North Carolina Press Association award for feature writing in 2007 for “Invisible Enemy” series focused on the 1918 flu pandemic and its modern-day cousin, H5N1

Sandusky Newspaper Group

Aug 2001 - Oct 2003

Staff Writer and Copy Editor

Sandusky, Ohio

- Covered news for three counties as a bureau reporter for the *Sandusky Register*
- Advanced to copy editing and newspaper design for daily publications and special editions

Thomson Newspapers/Gannett Co.

May 1999 – Aug 2001

Staff Writer

Marion, Ohio

- Progressed from a summer intern to freelancing during my final year of college and then became a full-time staff writer covering education for *The Marion Star* and writing features for the *Mansfield News Journal*

EDUCATION**University of Tennessee**

Starting August 2026

PhD in Communication & Information

Journalism & Media Concentration

Ashland University

Jan 2017 – Dec 2018

Master of Arts in Corporate and Strategic Communication

Concentration: Public Relations and Social Media

Capstone Project: The Power of Brand Journalism

Ohio Wesleyan University

Aug 1997 – May 2000

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism

Graduated with Departmental Honors

Helen B. Woodward Award for Writing Excellence

OTHER RECENT HONORS**Silver Lens Award**

Dec 2025

*Professional Photographers of East Tennessee for
exceptional photographic accomplishment***Best of Show Award**

June 2025

*For Dragon's Eye photograph featured in the juried
The Collective Lens: Perspectives exhibit at the
Emporium Gallery*