

Alison Kirkland

B.A., B.HEc., APEC CBC

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Executive Profile

Respected and creative communications professional with extensive experience in the development and delivery of innovative programs supporting women entrepreneurs. Excellent interpersonal skills with proven ability to forge relationships with boards of directors, staff at all levels within a variety of organizations, consultants, government representatives, elected officials and the media. Skilled at effectively allocating and managing budgets and identifying new revenue opportunities. Core competencies include: Communications and Marketing ● Strategic Planning ● Human Resource Management ● Financial Management ● Sponsorship Development ● Business Plan Evaluation and Loan Application Review ● Client Service ● Training Development

Selected Achievements

- Led all aspects of planning and implementing the highly successful SHEday, a one-day leadership event that has more than doubled its participation numbers since I became involved (800 attendees in 2016 to 1,700 in 2019). Secured over \$225,000 in sponsorship in 2019 (a 20% year-over-year increase) and worked with more than 60 corporate and business partners on their sponsorship fulfillment. Major responsibilities included program development, marketing strategy, development of all communications tools, ticket sales, volunteer management, venue liaison and media relations.
- Led the brand evolution for the Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba. As the foundation for all interactions with clients, promotion and delivery of services, and connections with stakeholders, it involved understanding the past and looking to the future. Information and perspectives were gathered from clients, staff, Board and stakeholders. Guided an advertising firm in the conversion of ideas into concrete tools including website, signage, banners, event promotions, direct mail, training materials, online advertising and printed promotional tools.
- Initiated and implemented the Pearls of Wisdom Business Breakfast series to provide women entrepreneurs with an opportunity to network and enhance their business knowledge. The series continues to grow in popularity due to the professional delivery, high-calibre speakers, and the supportive environment that has been developed. It has generated corporate sponsorship that has moved the event from a break-even to a profit-generating program.
- Represented the Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba at conferences in Lviv, Ukraine and Da Nang, Vietnam, both developing economies that recognize the benefit of supporting women entrepreneurs. Worked in conjunction with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Canadian Bureau of International Education to share the history and best practices of the Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba. Responsibilities included keynote presentations, workshop delivery, panel discussions, post event reports and development of a case study for international distribution.
- Led a delegation of six women entrepreneurs to the Global Summit of Women in Mexico City. The event focused on women's economic development and empowerment. The Canadian delegates were exploring export opportunities with entrepreneurs from around the world.

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Professional Experience

Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba

2002 to Present

Director, Communications and Client Services

- An integral part of the management team, responsible for developing the Centre's communications strategy, ensuring the professional brand is captured in all communications and marketing activities; implementing the strategy with appropriate communications material and relevant events; developing training materials customized to the needs of women entrepreneurs; ensuring consistent client service at every stage of interaction; and budget management. Prepare board reports and attend board meetings.
- Instrumental in the evolution of the Centre's strategic direction and creation of innovative funding initiatives to provide resources to grow and sustain service offerings.
- Manage the client services team and social media contract staff, including recruitment and selection, new employee orientation, performance reviews, and work plan development.
- Certified small business advisor work directly with clients at various business stages, including the loan application process.
- Serve as acting CEO when necessary, responsible for the day-to-day Centre operation, participate on the loan committee, review business plans and make lending recommendations.

Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone

1997 to 2001

Communications Manager

- Key part of the management team, responsible for all communications activities connecting the organization with its members and key stakeholders including sponsors, politicians, civic staff and board members, including newsletters, brochures, annual reports, media releases, and website.
- Planned and implemented large-scale annual general meetings, managed communications budget.

Fanfare Communications Group

1992 to 1997

Editor

- Responsible for all editorial requirements of seven different publications, resulting in 30 magazines produced annually. Worked with the publisher to establish overall theme and magazine size; graphic designers and photographers to conceptualize and implement magazine layouts; and clients to ensure accurate editorial representation. Participated in array of events including business openings, awards ceremonies and arts and culture performances to remain informed about the magazine's subject matter.

Independent Freelancer

2000 to Present

Principal

- Apply writing skills to various projects including government reports, training material, presentations, website content, award applications, proofreading, and editing documents such as academic thesis and niche magazines.

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Education

Advanced Program in Management, Leadership & Strategy Executive Education, Asper School of Business
Certificate in Leadership Development, QNET, Winnipeg
International Development: Executive Development, McGill University, Montreal
Project Management Overview, Leslie Lindberg Consulting
APEC-IBIZ Certificate in Small Business Counselling, Acadia University for Small Business & Entrepreneurship
Media Buying, Red River College
Editing for Editors, University of Winnipeg Continuing Education
Bachelor of Human Ecology, University of Manitoba, Dean's Honor List
Bachelor of Arts, University of Manitoba

Community Service

Manitoba Chambers of Commerce Board Member, Marketing Committee, Nominating Committee, Policy Committee	2015 to Present
Millennium Library Grand Reopening Committee Member	2004 to 2005
Characters N' Costumes Gala Fundraiser Gala Chair	2002 to 2004
Exchange District Business Improvement Zone Board Member, Secretary	1997
Run for the Cure Chair, Media Relations and Promotions Committee	1995 to 1996