

Statement of Qualifications



FERTILE GROUND
Communications

SUMMARY

Developing engaging content is one of my superpowers. As a writer and marketing communications consultant with 30 years in the architectural, engineering, and construction (AEC) industry, I help clients discover what makes them special and help them share that with the world.

During the 28 years I worked at CH2M HILL, I wore countless hats...starting as a technical editor and soon becoming a group leader, I was one of the firm's first proposal managers, led a team of 70+ talented publications professionals across our Northwest Region, led our business development team and created a business development awards program, served on countless firmwide teams, and then moved into marketing & communications and sustainability and corporate citizenship. I comanaged our company's award-winning *Sustainability and Corporate Citizenship Report* and led communications for CH2M's foundation. I got to toot my company's horn about their sustainability and corporate social responsibility accomplishments.

After leaving CH2M, I worked at Otak, a much smaller AEC firm, as their first communications manager. I managed the revamp of their website; launched communications programs, tools, and processes; developed communication plans, public relations, and campaigns; worked with the marketing team to elevate their proposal quality; helped kick off their first equity & inclusion program; pitched a community engagement strategy; and significantly improved Otak's digital presence and brand through storytelling, media relationships, social media strategy, public relations, and mentoring staff. I also learned how to get things done on a much smaller scale and without advanced technology.

I started Fertile Ground Communications to help others find their fertile ground and bring their ideas to life. Fertile Ground Communications LLC is a certified women-owned business enterprise (WBE), disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE), and emerging small business (ESB), dedicated to creating a kinder, more sustainable, and just world.

"Fertile Ground Communications is my go-to partner when I need editing expertise on articles I write for my company. Marie has an innate ability to quickly understand my 'voice' and reposition messages in a clear and concise manner. I trust the creative relationship we have and respect her professional judgement because Marie's first priority is to produce a product in the best interest of the brand of my business."

*--Julie Jensen, Founder and Principal,
Moxie HR Strategies*

"Marie and I recently worked together on my political campaign, where she provided pro bono copywriting services and managed my e-newsletter as part of my team. Marie is an excellent communicator and has the ability to adapt her communication style to fit the messenger or audience as needed. From her grasp of graphic design and written communications to her ability to contextualize abstract things like greenhouse gas emissions, Marie is a person I am glad to work with."

*--Ozzie Gonzalez,
Founder, P3 Consulting*



FERTILE GROUND COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

I specialize in understanding what you need and distilling what's most important to help you communicate in your unique voice. I help you articulate why you are special. You pursued your professional career to improve the world and use your powers for good. My goal is to make your life easier. You'll be able to focus on what you do best, while I help you shine in the marketplace. I offer the following services to assist you:

- **Website content and design:** Create or revamp a compelling website that showcases your company culture and differentiates you from your competitors
- **Social media strategy and creation:** Develop or boost your social media presence by creating high-quality content and managing your channels
- **Business development, awards, and proposal management:** Win work and recognition with compelling, unbeatable proposals and award applications
- **Content writing and thought leadership:** Position yourself as an industry leader through press releases, podcasting, blog posts, articles, social media, and papers that express your authority and experience
- **Employee engagement and internal communications:** Write communications and design an intranet for your team to boost their morale and engagement
- **Recruiting strategy and communications:** Revamp your job descriptions and hiring strategy to attract the best, diverse candidates
- **Executive communications and leadership coaching:** Improve your leadership skills through engaging, authentic communications
- **Corporate social responsibility communications:** Develop and implement sustainability and community engagement strategies that enable your company to walk its talk
- **Team and document management:** Coordinate authors and reviewers and manage the process to produce documents in one voice and with the level of quality you need

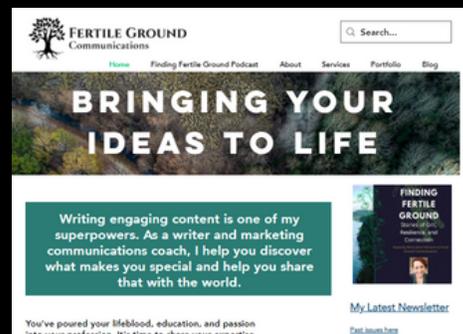
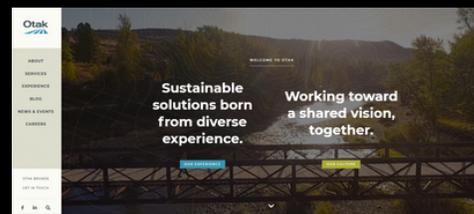
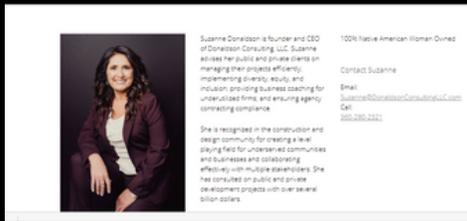
Each of these services is explained in the following pages.



WEBSITE CONTENT AND DESIGN



HOME ABOUT CONTACT US SERVICES PORTFOLIO



I've been writing website content for 15+ years, beginning with blogging and creating and maintaining CH2M HILL websites and Intranet pages. I was an early adopter of finding and creating online solutions for processes and templates, making everyone's jobs easier. My website experience includes:

- Writing and posting countless intranet stories and managing online channels for CH2M's Northwest Region, company intranet, Sustainability group, and CH2M Foundation
- Creating content for and managing intranet sites for CH2M's Northwest Region, Publications group, Communications Community of Practice, Sustainability group, and CH2M Foundation
- Comanaging CH2M's online *Sustainability and Corporate Citizenship Report*, also Section 508 compliant
- Writing and editing content for CH2M's external website and managing sustainability and corporate citizenship pages
- Managing the [CH2M Foundation site](#) (WordPress)
- Writing and editing the [Spirit of Grace website](#) (Squarespace)
- Managing the revamp and writing content for [Otak's website](#)
- Designing and writing [my own company website](#) (Wix)
- Designing, writing, and managing [Leber IP Law's website](#)
- Writing and managing content for [DiBerardino McGovern IP Group](#), [Donaldson Consulting LLC](#), and [The Formation Lab](#) websites

"The crafting of our new website by Fertile Ground Communications was truly a labor of love on Marie's part. She gifted us with her patience and tenaciousness, guiding our team in a true collaborative effort. Marie's insightful questioning helped us all better understand what is different and special about our business, and her ability to convey that uniqueness to others in the content she developed will serve us well for years to come."

--Celia Leber, Founder and Patent Attorney, Leber IP Law

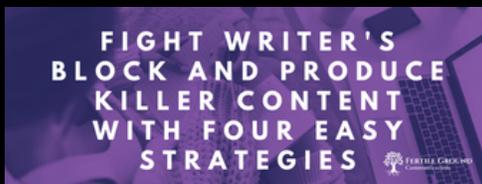
SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY AND CREATION



A social media maven, I've been posting high-quality content on personal and professional channels since Facebook was opened to the public. I'm well versed in all major social media channels, having developed campaigns for every blog post or article I've written at CH2M, Otak, and Fertile Ground Communications. For example:



- At CH2M, I developed campaigns for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram for all sustainability and corporate citizenship activities, including our annual *Sustainability and Corporate Citizenship Report*. I also became an early expert in using Microsoft Yammer (an internal social media platform) and managed several Yammer groups.



- At Otak, I boosted the company's social media presence by developing branded templates for a consistent look and feel and creating high-quality posts. I fielded comments, redirecting to appropriate staff. I also responded to the company's reviews on GlassDoor. Otak's likes and follows increased significantly during my time there, and the posts got rave reviews from colleagues and employees.



- I administer multiple Facebook pages and groups for community organizations and am well versed in social media administration.



- I manage multiple social media channels for Fertile Ground Communications and promote my clients and successes, share tips and best practices, and advertise my services.

"Marie is intuitive, action oriented, and exceptionally skilled in the realm of communications. Better yet, she's a pleasure to work with. Both her experience and her comfort and familiarity with new communication platforms (e.g., social media) are invaluable to effectively delivering messaging and marketing information to our staff, clients, potential team members, and potential clients!"

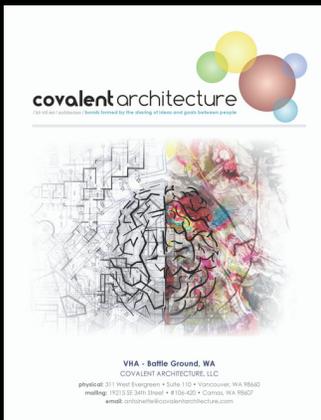
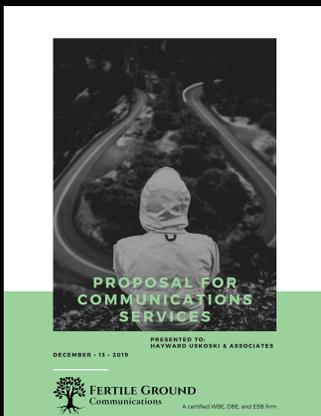
--Tim Leavitt, Director, SW Washington Operations, Otak

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, AWARDS, AND PROPOSAL MANAGEMENT



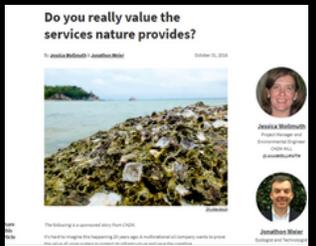
Early in my career, I felt drawn to writing and managing persuasive documents. I also knew consulting staff's time is better spent doing what they do best instead of managing proposals. During my career, I:

- Pioneered the "proposal manager" role at CH2M HILL, running the entire proposal process. Developed tools and processes to save time and money and produce high-quality, compliant, and effective proposals, and managed hundreds of winning SOQs, proposals, and presentations.
- Managed and mentored CH2M's proposal managers and was firmwide business development (BD) manager for the Publications group.
- Served on firmwide team to develop "Proposal Manager Training," and helped deliver the training in Denver several years in a row.
- Created the Publications BD Awards of Excellence, a competition to award creativity, innovation, and content in BD materials across the firm.
- Became well known for my skills in writing award entries, including the World Environment Center Gold Medal Award for International Corporate Achievement in Sustainable Development (CH2M was the first in our industry to win this award); multiple project award wins; awards for our sustainability programs; and ten awards of my own for communications
- Managed the marketing team at Otak, helped hire the new marketing manager, and wrote and edited several proposals
- Won several awards at Otak, including multiple DJC Women of Vision awards for Otak women and several project awards
- Wrote and edited proposal content for Hayward Uskoski Associates, Inc.; covalent architecture; Donaldson Consulting, LLC; and Vincent Construction Management Group



*"Marie is one of the best writers and editors I've worked with. She's incredibly talented and an excellent project manager who keeps everyone on track. **Whenever there was an award we absolutely HAD to win, I always brought in Marie...**she turned raw content into such beautiful prose that I lost count of how many awards she won for us. Marie's work is truly amazing, but what makes her valuable is her personality. She's driven and hardworking, but also one of the friendliest and most fun people I know. She's always up for a laugh or an insightful conversation about strategy. Someday, when I build my communications dream team, Marie will be one of my first calls."*
 -Kurt Workman, East Corridor Outreach Manager, Sound Transit

CONTENT WRITING, PODCASTING, AND THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



Sharing your expertise freely is the best form of marketing. Others will learn more about you and want to work with you.

I can take any piece of writing and improve it significantly in a short amount of time. Turning staid, complex language into engaging, dynamic prose is my specialty. In addition to blogging for more than 15 years, I've:

- Authored and edited hundreds of blog posts, articles, news releases, and papers for CH2M, Otak, and Moxie HR Strategies ([see examples](#))
- Edited and written *Sustainable Construction Manual* (CH2M, 2012) and ghostwrote technical paper for the WaterReuse Foundation
- Written feature-length pieces for CH2M's *Sustainability and Corporate Citizenship Report*; articles featured in *GreenBiz*, *livebetter*, and The Nature Conservancy's blog *Cool Green Science*; and all posts for the CH2M Foundation site
- Written extensively [on my own company website](#) and editing client articles
- Launched the [Finding Fertile Ground Podcast](#), gathering and sharing stories of grit, resilience, and connection, and building an audience, with 1,000 downloads in less than 3 months

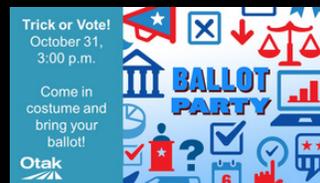
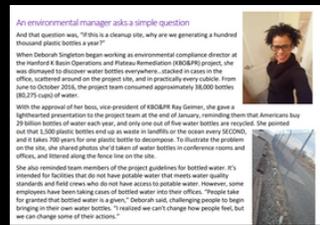
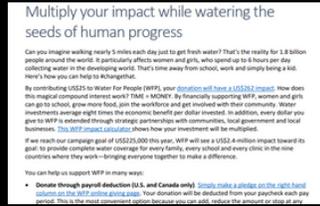
"Marie communicates clear, tailored messages that cultivate individual understanding of big issues with compassionate empathy. Her ability to understand and connect with her audience is unparalleled. She can play any position, from directing strategy and coaching a group of writers and designers, to writing compelling pieces that dovetail with company brand and flow naturally as part of the whole. She has earned multiple awards for communication excellence and created widespread and lasting employee and external engagement."

--Brandy Wilson, Former Global Sustainability Director, CH2M (now at Simplot)

"I admire Marie's writing for its clarity and positivity. She created social media and public relations to spotlight the accomplishments of the talented people at Otak. She has a wonderful way of expressing the concepts we use in our industry in terms that allow others to understand and appreciate the collaboration that results in outstanding projects. Her love of people, ability to leverage her knowledge on behalf of the firm, and instigate joyful teamwork make her a wonderful leader and communicator."

--Mary Jo Mrochinski, Pursuit Manager. Otak

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS



When someone asked me what I would like on my headstone, I knew the answer immediately: "She inspired." I tell stories to inspire and turn dry language into compelling communications. I thrive when I can help people be their best, so I have a passion for internal communications.

When I taught English in Japan, I founded the language school's newsletter. Starting at CH2M in my 20s, I got assigned the task of writing the company newsletter because no one else wanted to do it. Within that first year, I'd transformed the *PDXtra* and won my first award from the International Association of Business Communicators, for "One-Person Projects."

As a staff manager for 25 years, I know firsthand the importance of authentic, timely, and clear communications for employee engagement and morale.

In the past 15 years I've created opportunities to amplify and improve communications everywhere I can. In 2005, I took over the communications for 3,500 employees in CH2M's Northwest Region, working closely with the management team to amplify their messages and tell employee stories. In 2010 I moved into marketing & communications completely, specializing in sustainability and corporate citizenship, but also lending my expertise and skills to our Corporate Communications group and the technical business groups. I designed and managed several intranet pages, SharePoint groups, and Yammer groups.

Working as Otak's first communications manager, I worked closely with executives, HR, and Marketing to engage employees and boost morale by dramatically improving internal and external communications.

I'm a rarity in the field, with a strong track record designing and implementing communications programs that advance organizations' strategy, mission, culture, and reputation.

"Marie is a tremendous communicator with a strength in collaboration and developing strong relationships with partners and stakeholders across all lines of the business. She approaches each project with passion, professionalism, cleverness, and wit. She goes above and beyond what is required and consistently brings her knowledge and innovative ideas to every meeting and assignment - exactly what you want from a team player. Her industry experience - coupled with being an instrumental communicator - has played a critical role in the development of our corporate communications team and the success of corporate citizenship programs."

-Brian Morandi, Public Relations Manager, Jacobs

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, LEADERSHIP COACHING, AND RECRUITING STRATEGY



CH2M's corporate citizenship leadership team

I've developed outstanding relationships throughout my career. Serving on cross-functional management teams, I've collaborated with a wide variety of stakeholders to develop and implement programs. I've ghostwritten messaging, articles, and speech and video scripts for executives; developed talking points for managers to share with teams; written confidential memos and emails; crafted communication strategies for sensitive topics; and coached leaders of all levels.

I've coached, advised, and assisted executives in communicating transparently and engaging employees and clients in the organization's larger purpose. I've worked directly with three different CEOs and multiple senior executives.

As communications manager for CH2M's global sustainability and corporate citizenship programs, I comanaged our award-winning *Sustainability and Corporate Citizenship Report*, which measured and reported our triple-bottom-line impacts. I managed content and reviews from our CEO, executives, and 80 contributors around the world, including our environmental management systems in Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America.



With CH2M CEO Jacque Hinman

I have extensive experience coaching and mentoring staff, building collaborative relationships, and developing strategic plans. As Otak's first communications manager, I led communications for the Green Otak team, developed a corporate citizenship program, and helped launch an equity & inclusion initiative. I also helped revamp Otak's recruiting strategy and communications to recruit more diverse, high-quality candidates.



CH2M's Northwest Region Business Services Leadership Team

"Marie was on my management team, responsible for over 70 professionals providing marketing and client communications. She was outstanding, leading the integration of numerous groups into one large team. During this difficult time she gained the trust and respect both of her teams and the clients her group supported. She was viewed as a key reason for the successful integration and, later, the outstanding reputation her organization generated because of her leadership. Marie is an unfailingly optimistic and lively individual. Her commitment, honesty, and dependability were peerless in every role I witnessed her in. Her problem-solving skills, in particular around complex management and communication issues, always filled me with the utmost confidence."

—Mike Payne, VP and Director of CH2M's North American Business Operations

SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNICATIONS



I create and implement sustainability and community engagement strategies that enable companies to walk their talk. One of the greatest joys in my career was elevating CH2M's global sustainability and community-building brand. We became the first firm in our industry to produce a *Sustainability and Corporate Citizenship Report* and implement an Environmental Management System (EMS). We also were the first in our industry to win the Gold Medal Award for International Corporate Achievement in Sustainable Development from the World Environment Center. I managed and wrote the award application and led all communications.

As marketing & communications manager for sustainability and corporate citizenship, I developed communications strategies, used storytelling, and implemented communications plans to engage employees and external stakeholders in our sustainability and philanthropic programs.

Beyond developing a comprehensive communications strategy to manage and publicize our annual *Sustainability and Corporate Citizenship Report* throughout our organization of 20,000 employees, I also led communications for our internal EMS. The EMS teams around the world set annual goals and relied on my communications to accomplish them. My role included:

- Researching, comanaging, and writing our annual *Sustainability and Corporate Citizenship Report*. Coordinated 60 contributors and reviewers to ensure report was thorough, transparent, and in one voice; managed production team; led launch; and responded to disclosure requests. Transitioned report to online and Section 504 compliant.
- Managing communications for our sustainability programs and the EMS, including websites, social media, public relations, and speeches.
- Helping CH2M launch its new brand and logo by serving on the brand implementation team and as a brand ambassador and expert.
- Writing winning award applications (e.g., World Environment Center Gold Medal Award for Sustainable Development).
- Amplifying thought leadership and collaboration with The Nature Conservancy.



In 10 years, we adopted green office finishes and furniture, eliminated bottled water and replaced paper and plastic with durable kitchen goods, switched to recycled paper and slashed our paper usage, implemented recycling programs in all offices, and expanded our EMS programs to six continents.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY COMMUNICATIONS

In addition to promoting sustainability, I revitalized communications for the CH2M Foundation, which granted \$1 million annually for STEM education and sustainable communities. I wrote the foundation blog and created stories about employees building bridges in Rwanda and Nicaragua, explaining why to donate to Water For People, or asking them to pledge to drink our clients' tap water instead of bottled water. I also helped manage our Bridges to Prosperity trips and set up donations to universities.



When the executive director took medical leave, I stepped in to manage our Water For People giving campaign. We met with campaign coordinators around the world, set up tracking and tools, and worked with coordinators, managers, and executives. I led communications to generate interest and promote our success stories. We raised 16 percent more than the previous year and more employees donated than ever (160 cities in 15 countries). The executive director said it was the best communicated campaign she'd ever seen.



At Otak I pitched a community involvement strategy and led Otak's website revamp, emphasizing corporate social responsibility. I convinced the CEO to donate \$5,000 for our holiday card, which focused on community involvement.



After my son was born at 24 weeks, I cofounded "Precious Beginnings: Parents Supporting Parents of Critically Ill Newborns," supporting NICU families throughout Portland for 15 years, and wrote the organization's newsletter.

In 2019 I co-led a powerful evening centering the voices of women immigrants, "Voices on the Margins," as part of Beaverton's Welcoming Week, and I led a four-session accompanying book group. I volunteer with The Immigrant Story, and in September 2020 we launched "Dreams Deferred Live," a storytelling event.



As a business owner, I have pledged my commitment to corporate social responsibility, setting goals around pro bono work, sustainability, anti-racism, and community development. I've written extensively on racial justice in 2020.

I'm helping Adelante Mujeres document all of its programs in procedure manuals. And in July 2020, I launched my "Finding Fertile Ground" podcast, centering the voices of underrepresented individuals.

"Marie is a supremely talented writer, editor, communicator, social media maven and storyteller. I first benefited from Marie's remarkable abilities when she took the reins of promoting the global corporate citizenship efforts of CH2M's Foundation. I counted on Marie's skills and passion to communicate with 25,000 colleagues and a global audience of CH2M followers about our strategic sponsorships, global grant making, and skill-based volunteerism.

As a result, CH2M's profile as a true corporate citizen was elevated and celebrated."

-Ellen Sandberg, now VP, Client and Community Relations, PNC Bank

TEAM AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT



With one of my leadership teams

Beginning my career as a technical editor, I have 30 years of experience coordinating authors and reviewers and managing the process to produce documents in one voice and with a high level of quality. I began managing large documents and teams early in my career when I realized how much more smoothly a proposal would go if I were running the process as opposed to the project manager, usually an engineer. I pioneered the concept of proposal manager at CH2M, managing the entire proposal process and eventually training hundreds of other staff in how to be a proposal manager.

I have over 25 years of proficiency managing people and large projects in a complex matrixed organization. For over half of my tenure at CH2M, I led large teams of publications professionals. I managed a team of 70+ talented publications staff responsible for producing all of CH2M's documents for 13 years. Later I led our firmwide business development team, instituting consistent processes and tools and creating our first-ever business development awards program. I constantly led training and we shared and refined best practices, tools, and teams to improve our document quality and make the process run more smoothly.

Later as the content manager for CH2M's annual *Sustainability and Corporate Citizenship Report*, I co-led a several-month-long project involving 60+ contributors and multiple department and executive reviews. We brought together all parties to share tools and processes and brainstorm the best way to communicate our company's sustainability and corporate citizenship programs. Our project management required intense data management and explanation, presented in a way that read as one voice and satisfied all stakeholders, including our clients and the U.N. Global Compact.

I implement technological solutions to problems, create style guides and templates, and facilitate best practices to achieve efficiency and consistency.



The Seattle Publications team



CH2M Environmental Management System Team

"I have learned a lot about how to effectively manage people from Marie, particularly showing me how to identify strengths and help people use those strengths to lead to their success and tie them into organizational goals. Marie is also an excellent writer, able to target any audience with material that engages them and achieves the overarching organizational purpose. Marie's excellent qualities include: insightful about the way people work best together, excellent writer, organized thinker, positive approach, and solution seeker. She delivers excellent work, and her positive energy makes everyone around her better."

--Jeff Crisafulli, Finishing Manager/Senior Technical Editor, WSP/California High-Speed Rail

"Marie is an exceptional leader. She is also extraordinarily talented as a writer, editor, strategist, and project manager. Her broad experience, from sales and marketing to sustainability, make her a valuable leader anywhere she goes. She has a kindness, integrity, and respect for people that is uncommon in the corporate world."

-Tina Macon, Deputy Director, Sales Center of Excellence, Jacobs

FERTILE GROUND COMMUNICATIONS QUALIFICATIONS

Fertile Ground Communications brings the following additional benefits:

Over 30 years of experience translating technical language for the layperson by creating engaging and dynamic content: After starting as a technical editor 30 years ago, I discovered a passion and affinity for translating technical or industry-specific language so everyone will understand it. After being trained as an editor, I found myself gravitating to marketing, branding, and communications, as well as team leadership. I'm known for creating fresh, compelling narrative that captures people's attention and inspires them to action.

Marketing, branding, and publications savvy: Beyond decades of experience writing proposals and collateral for CH2M, Otak, nonprofit organizations, and my current clients, I helped CH2M relaunch its new brand and logo by serving on the brand ambassador team; managed Otak's brand by developing templates and branding guidelines; led a renaming and branding process for Spirit of Grace church; and did all the branding for my own company. I publish weekly articles and a monthly newsletter for Fertile Ground Communications.

Ability to help organizations discover and communicate what makes them special: During the last several years I worked at CH2M, I spearheaded marketing and communications for our sustainability and corporate citizenship programs and EMS, including our annual *Sustainability and Corporate Citizenship Report*. I built communication plans and strategies for award-winning global initiatives and programs, using print, multimedia, speeches, social media, and proposals. I also revitalized communications for the CH2M Foundation, which granted \$1 million each year to strategic partners in STEM education and building sustainable communities. I strategized, composed, and distributed press releases, social media, and news stories; built relationships with charitable partners; oversaw communications for the foundation's executive director; wrote news stories and blog posts; and administered the foundation website. Since founding Fertile Ground Communications, I've helped smaller organizations discover their distinguishing brand and share it with the world.

Leadership and interpersonal communications skills: Always drawn to leadership roles, I led large groups of publications teams at CH2M (including a group of 70+ in six offices across the Northwest, Alaska, and Hawaii) and have also led nonprofits. I believe in connecting people and passions by getting to know them and how they tick, and then understanding how I can best help them. Connection and communication drive everything I do. I invite you to read more of what clients, colleagues, direct reports, and supervisors say about my communication and leadership skills [in the testimonials on my website](#).



CLIENTS AND REFERENCES

Clients:

Adelante Mujeres
covalent architecture
DiBerardino McGovern IP Group LLC
Donaldson Consulting LLC
ELCA Oregon Synod
The Formation Lab
Hayward Uskoski Associates, Inc.
The Immigrant Story

Leber IP Law
Moxie HR Strategies
Otak
Ozzie Gonzalez for Mayor 2020
Perimark
Spirit of Grace
Tualatin Hills Nature Park
Vincent Construction
Management Group

Fertile Ground Communications

References:

Celia Leber, Founder and President, Leber IP Law, celia@leberiplaw.com, 541- 526-1234

Julie Jensen, Founder and Principal, Moxie HR Strategies, julie@moxiehrstrategies.com, 503-313-9558

Otak References:

Tanya Boyer, Marketing Manager, Tanya.Boyer@otak.com, 503.415.2330

Ellaina Gordon, Pursuit Manager, Ellaina.Gordon@otak.com, 541.971.1056

CH2M References:

Brandy Wilson, Global Sustainability Director (now at Simplot), brandymwilsonxvii@gmail.com, 208-954-9512

Melissa Mora, Sustainability Manager (now at Micron Technology), melimora@gmail.com, 415-910-9433

Ellen Sandberg, Executive Director of CH2M Foundation (now at PNC Bank), eyesandberg@gmail.com, 303-249-4845

"I was always grateful for Marie's talent, work ethic, team spirit, and unrelenting optimism (even in the face of grave challenges). She was a major contributor to effectively communicating CH2M's commitment to sustainability and corporate social responsibility, and was part of award-winning teams that produced our annual reports and a major re-branding effort... Along with her great toolbox of communications skills, Marie also brought a strong commitment to doing the right thing for our clients, our employees, and our planet."

--Elisa Speranza, President, Seventh Ward Strategies