

# Samuel Smith, PhD

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## Summary

In my career, which began in 1984, I was a writer, teacher, and business communicator. I worked to infuse stories of complexity with clarity so that audiences could make informed decisions about what most benefited them. I spent decades with rapidly evolving technologies (like software, telecom, and cybersecurity, the industry where I spent the last several years).

I helped organizations articulate what they did, why it mattered, and how it shaped the world around them. My work focused as much on structure as on content—revealing assumptions, surfacing strategic implications, and turning expertise into narratives that informed decisions and influenced outcomes.

I challenged conventional wisdom and translated technical knowledge into insight that executives, customers, and the public could use, and I *always* did so with the best interest of the audience in mind. As a teacher, I helped students and professionals understand how communication created power and opportunity, and again, I never took my eye off the need to behave in the *public* interest.

I also confronted the tension between what was right for the business and what was right. I fought ethical battles against machinery that was only concerned with profit (and actually won a couple.) And I couldn't help being a "thought leader," even when a critical perspective introduced friction that leaders didn't want (but desperately needed).

Across industries, roles, and platforms, the through-line was constant: communication didn't just describe reality—it shaped it. Throughout my career, I worked to ensure that organizations used that influence responsibly and effectively, telling stories grounded in truth, strategy, and the real needs of the people they served.

## Experience

### **Contract Copywriter & Content Strategist**

*wordSmith | 2010–2013, 2017–2019, 2025*

*Developed content, strategy, and training for a range of Fortune, mid-market, and startup businesses.*

- Flagged a mistakenly abandoned \$10–20M account for a Fortune 500 healthcare client and supported renewal success by clarifying value positioning and developing tailored content.
- Advised Fortune 100 executives on public benefit positioning, comms strategy, and messaging for national audiences.

### **Peer Review Lead / Technical Editor**

*Cyderes | Apr 2024–Nov 2024*

*Developed AI-based offensive security enablement suite supporting \$750M cybersecurity*

*provider. Edited enterprise red-team and pen-test reports for consistency, clarity, and executive readiness.*

### **Senior Content Manager**

*Expel | Jun 2022–Feb 2024*

*Managed content operations and editorial workflows across marketing channels for #1 provider in managed detection and response industry, partnering with subject-matter experts to deliver clear, compelling cybersecurity narratives.*

- Owned strategy for blog, driving 40%+ organic traffic growth and double-digit engagement gains while fueling sales with pipeline-ready assets.
- Conducted in-depth SEO analysis and launched a new content plan to improve organic visibility.
- Led an audit that identified significant content gaps and drove blog strategy focus.

### **Content Manager / Digital Copywriter**

*Optiv | Jun 2019–Jun 2022*

*Produced and optimized a wide range of cybersecurity content—from blogs to executive e-books—supporting brand leadership, demand generation, and major enterprise deals.*

- Wrote and edited hundreds of blog posts, web pages, and sales enablement assets covering IAM, threat detection, AI, risk, and cybersecurity ROI, contributing to record-breaking growth.
- Created Optiv's flagship cybersecurity e-book; developed for executives and sales as a core positioning tool to influence multi-million-dollar enterprise deals.
- Led initiative to update older blogs (especially high-traffic technical posts); produced a cybersecurity dictionary and co-led a full-site rewrite.
- Refined brand voice to be more authentic, conversational, and "edgy."

### **Senior SEO Content Strategist**

*Merkle | Jul 2014–Jun 2017*

- Led SEO audits and content strategy for a major boutique hotel chain across key markets, including NYC and Southern California. San Diego results, which drove a 15%+ lift in organic traffic, 180K+ incremental sessions annually, and thousands of additional direct bookings, were representative of broader portfolio gains.
- Performed SEO audits and built content campaign strategies for more than two dozen clients over four years; engagement rates typically approached 60%.
- Conducted behavioral analyses, segmentation research, and persona development; developed content strategies and tactical roadmaps for enterprise and mid-market clients.

### **Co-Founder, VP of Creative & Content**

*RazzberrySync Mobile | 2005–2012*

*Primary responsibility for development of informative, entertaining mobile content for direct-to-consumer and retail partner channels.*

- Built editorial processes and directed content production for mobile entertainment venture. Recruited, managed talent development and relations. Company profitable in first year of operation.

### **Director of Marketing**

*Accruit | 2008–2010*

*Established a national presence for patented process-backed suite of corporate tax services. Directed all content and communications activities, including branding, production of new collateral suite, Web/blog operations, SEO/SEM, direct marketing and lead generation efforts.*

- Created and executed a multi-channel lead generation campaign for a financial services/ SaaS provider that exceeded industry benchmarks by 5:1 and internal goals by 6:1.
- Researched and published insights into a \$600B market opportunity linking \$1031 exchanges and green reinvestment; findings were validated by legal, financial, and policy stakeholders.

### **Communication Director**

*Gronstedt Group | 2001–2004*

*Planned, executed corporate communication and creative content development projects for enterprise clients. Assessed requirements, developed and launched comprehensive internal and external campaigns. Directed all communication, with heavy emphasis on sales support.*

- Built an innovative e-learning suite teaching 400 Volvo retail managers to run local PR campaigns. Directly credited with fueling Volvo Drive for Life Days, generating 100M+ media impressions and raising \$1M+ in donations, making it the largest community event in Volvo's 50-year U.S. history.
- Directed internal brand audit for major mobile telecommunications provider; identified the core causes of operational breakdowns that were driving massive customer churn and hamstringing company growth. Discovered 8,000+ legacy plans, flagged 90%+ low-value call drivers, and mapped 3,000+ unnecessary internal messages/year, supporting clearer service communication and strategic streamlining goals.
- Developed strategy and creative for highly-rated video, audio and/or interactive internal communication and training suites for Microsoft, Kimberly Clark, TD Waterhouse, Avaya, Janney Montgomery Scott, Ericsson, Arrow Electronics, ADT, Jamba Juice, DaVita, and more. Specialized in sales, service, and DEI initiatives.

### **Managing Editor/Marketing Manager**

*ATG | 2000–2001*

*Responsible for corporate Web initiatives, major site redesign, marketing and content development, publication design and training.*

- Directed corporate web initiatives and streamlined editorial workflows, slashing turnaround times by ~30% and ensuring consistent, high-quality marketing communications in support of \$139M+ annual revenue.

### **Public Relations Manager/Executive Director**

*U S WEST | 1997–2000*

*As manager of employee communications electronic operations, directed daily content development and multi-channel delivery for an audience of 50,000+.*

- Led management comms during difficult strike negotiations and labor stoppage, earned industry acclaim.

*As special projects manager for external communications,*

- Program drove a stunning 1400% increase in positive impressions and reduced -:+ impression ratio from 6:1 to 1:1.

*As Executive Director of Center for Digital Culture, launched first-of-its-kind Internet PR/community relations program.*

- Established innovative research center to explore economic, cultural, and public policy implications of developing technologies and promote corporate social responsibility within the telecom sector.
- Managed annual budget of \$500K.

### **Teaching Experience**

#### **Adjunct Instructor**

*University College, University of Denver | 2007–2011*

*Taught business internet strategies, business social intelligence, fixing dysfunctional teams, organizational structure and behavior, and principles of environmental scanning in Technology Management and Leadership & Organization programs. Supervised graduate capstone projects.*

#### **Associate Professor, Journalism and Mass Communication**

*St. Bonaventure University | 2004–2005*

- Taught marketing, advertising, business communications, professional writing, and organizational structure/behavior for graduate integrated marketing/communication program.
- Taught mass media, technology and culture, and communication research courses in undergraduate J/MC program.
- Leveraged program development capabilities in establishing blueprint for a proposed graduate program in interpretive journalism.

#### **Lecturer, Dept. of Humanities**

*University of Colorado | 1996–1997*

*Developed and taught innovative senior-level course in cyberculture.*

#### **Teaching Assistant, School of Journalism & Mass Communication**

*University of Colorado | 1994–1996*

*Taught introduction to mass communication, audio production, and advanced course in mass media and society.*

**Visiting Instructor of Communications****Adjunct Lecturer in World Literature**

*Winston-Salem State University | 1989–1993*

*Taught introductory courses in business communications and world literature.*

**Adjunct Instructor of English Literature**

*Forsyth Technical Community College | 1992–1993*

*Taught introductory survey of English and American literature.*

**Adjunct Instructor of Writing & Communications**

*Salem College | 1989–1991*

*Taught advertising, journalism, media culture, and creative writing.*

**Teaching Assistant, Dept. of English**

*Iowa State University | 1987–1989*

*Taught English composition.*

- Excellence in Teaching Nominee, 1989

## Publishing

**Publisher/Writer**

*Lullaby Pit | 2004–present*

*Launched in April 2004, the Pit is one of the 1,000 oldest brands on the Internet.*

- Between Lullaby Pit and Scholars & Rogues (below), I have authored more than 3,700 posts on politics, religion, arts and culture, and popular culture.

**Publisher/Managing Editor**

*Scholars & Rogues | 2007–2020*

*Led digital magazine that published more than 10K posts in 13 years covering politics, arts and culture, economics, the environment, music, foreign affairs, journalism, sports, and a number of other topics.*

- Recruited, collaborated with a team of 15–20 contributors.
- The site published more than 10K posts over 13 years. At its peak, we ranked in Technorati's top 900 websites (out of several billion).

## Education

**PhD, Communication:** University of Colorado

*Areas of graduate research focus: Internet/new media development, popular culture, social applications of Complexity Theory, and cyberpunk/near future fiction.*

**MA, English:** Iowa State University

*Departmental Critical Writing Awards, 1988 & 1989*

**BA, Psychology:** Wake Forest University

*Cum laude, Dean's List seven times*

*George Foster Hankins Scholar*