



# Zeb Carlson

Let's make something great

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## Summary

Strategic leader with 20 years of experience in marketing, communications, partnerships, fundraising, and content. Known for blending storytelling, design, and strategy to advance organizational goals and turn big ideas into practical, results-driven plans.

I'm passionate about social impact, LGBTQ+ rights, equity, and never miss the chance for a good pun.

## Core Expertise

- Brand Strategy & Positioning
- Creative Direction
- Integrated Marketing Campaigns
- Executive Communications
- Content Strategy & Storytelling
- Audience Growth & Engagement
- Fundraising Communications
- Media Relations & Public Relations
- Community-Centered Marketing
- Social Media & Digital Strategy
- Cross-Functional Leadership
- Event & Experiential Marketing
- Team Leadership & Vendor Management
- Nonprofit & Mission-Driven Branding

## Professional Background

### Heart of America

2023-Present

Sr Director, Marketing, Communications, and Individual Giving

- Lead organizational marketing, communications, and fundraising storytelling strategy for a nationally recognized nonprofit focused on educational equity.
- Direct integrated campaigns across brand, digital, content, media relations, donor engagement, and executive communications.
- Oversee development of creative assets and messaging supporting national initiatives, school transformation projects, fundraising efforts, and stakeholder engagement.
- Shape executive thought leadership and organizational narrative across public-facing channels and strategic partnerships.
- Manage creative production and external vendors to ensure consistency, quality, and alignment across platforms and campaigns.
- Drive audience engagement strategies that strengthen visibility, donor relationships, and organizational reputation.

### Self

2010-Present

Independent Contractor

- Advise nonprofits, businesses, and community organizations on brand strategy, marketing, communications, creative direction, and audience engagement.
- Develop marketing systems and campaigns including websites, content strategy, digital communications, branding, visual identity, and public relations.
- Produce creative content and storytelling initiatives that strengthen visibility, engagement, and community connection.
- Partner with organizations to create compelling narratives and strategic messaging for fundraising, growth, and overall brand awareness.
- Lead end-to-end creative development including copywriting, campaign strategy, design direction, and content production.

### Medtronic

2019-2021

Creative Producer

- Led creative preferred partner program strategy and launch, including vetting agency relationships, abilities, and management.
- Worked with sourcing, brand stakeholders, creative teams across the organization, and other stakeholders to develop a roster of world-class talent.
- Collaborated cross-functionally to strengthen audience engagement and expand organizational reach.

### United Way

2016-2017

Content & Creative Manager

- Managed organizational communications strategy including media relations, campaign storytelling, event marketing, and community outreach.
- Built partnerships with community stakeholders, funders, and local leaders to strengthen visibility and engagement.
- Developed public-facing messaging and campaigns that increased awareness and support for community initiatives.
- Led content strategy across social media, print, web, and donor communications.

## Education

Graphic Communications, MCTC, Minneapolis, MN

Liberal Arts Coursework, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD

## Volunteerism

- Co-founder, President and Board Chair, Wide Open Spaces Foundation
- Burke Riding Club and Stampede Rodeo board member, marketing and fundraising
- Prime Academy mentor
- Volunteer and organizer with PFund, Better OUTcomes, Human Rights Campaign