

## Karen Cristello, MBA, CTSM

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### Agency Founder/Chief Creative Officer/Marketing Director

**BRAND STRATEGY & DEVELOPMENT • INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS •  
EVENTS/TRADE SHOWS • COPYWRITING • PUBLIC RELATIONS**

I'm a hands-on, results-driven marketing leader with B2B/B2C/D2C experience in the U.S. and Japan. I provide brand, marketing and PR/communications services to associations, foundations, museums, public service programs, medical/healthcare, footwear/apparel/accessories, and musicians.

- **Superior writing and editing:** Short- and long-form content; creative, technical; AP, AMA, Chicago
- **Creative, collaborative problem solving:** Attention to detail, adaptability, flexibility, initiative
- **Strong analytical skills:** Ability to present logical positions & win stakeholder buy-in
- **Proven success:** Meeting/exceeding retention, recruitment, conversion, sales, and revenue goals

### SKILLS/EXPERTISE

Brand Strategy & Development • Marketing Strategy • Integrated Marketing Campaigns • Public Relations • Corporate Communications • Copywriting • Editing • Presentations • Collateral Design • Consumer/Retail Promotions • Event & Trade Show Logistics • Strategic Partnerships & Sponsorships • Product Strategy, Launches & Management • eCommerce • Competitive Research • Teaching & Training

### ACHIEVEMENTS/EXPERIENCE

**DECIBEL AGENCY LLC**, Sacramento, CA

**Founder/Chief Creative Officer** (10/2021–present)

- Founded a boutique brand, marketing, and communications agency serving associations, foundations, museums, public service programs, footwear, apparel, accessories, and musicians.
- Establishment in progress; full launch in January 2022. Clients include a jeweler and a career coach.

**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OPHTHALMOLOGY**, San Francisco, CA

**Senior Marketing Manager** (04/2013–present)

*AAO is a membership association that provides education to ophthalmologists globally.*

Built a team and took on additional internal clients to impart a higher degree of strategic direction and brand vision. Oversee marketing plans and editorial calendars for 11 departments and products.

- **COVID pivot:** Despite COVID-19 budget cuts, cancellations, and move to virtual events, led teams of 2 to 62 to exceed conference attendance goal by 16%, achieve highest-ever gala participation and funds raised by 200%/237%, and maintain above-average online product orders and revenue.
- **Brand:** Co-orchestrated full company rebrand, designing strategy, brand architecture, voice, and visual identity—resulting in an award for Rebrand/Relaunch Strategy of the Year (Drum Marketing Awards) and members' heightened awareness of innovations, sense of community, and pride.
- **Public service:** Increased public service program's YOY page visits by more than 1,000% through search engine optimization/SEO and search engine marketing/SEM.
- **Fundraising:** Led creation of print, digital, and SMS campaign communications and gala event marketing to help Foundation raise \$12M for the museum endowment.
- **Membership:** Develop expert copywriting, editing, web and print campaigns for Member Services to maintain Academy's high membership rate (92–95% of all U.S. ophthalmologists).
- **Museum:** Collaborate with museum staff to establish strategy, protocols, and templates for the July 2021 launch; execute public-facing print campaigns.
- **Trade shows:** Lead 80+ conference booth staff to exceed sales goals by up to 29% and to achieve record (90%+) service ratings via interactive logistics and product training sessions.

- **Trade Shows:** Surpass membership and product sales goals by up to 24% by meticulously managing marketing operations for 5 to 7 international and domestic trade shows per year.
- **Conference:** Exceed Academy's annual conference attendance targets by up to 15% and revenue by up to 18% by creating high-impact creative themes and supervising successful tactical execution.
- **Conference:** Increased attendance at glaucoma association meetings by 65% over 3 years by creating more engaging and inspirational email marketing campaigns and print ads.
- **Product:** Consistently deliver 25% of annual conference product sales revenue by managing lifecycle of Meetings on Demand, from product set-up to promotion to sales booth logistics.

**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OPHTHALMOLOGY, San Francisco, CA**

**Marketing Project Manager (04/2011–03/2013)**

Increased reach, impressions, and relevance of content by expanding breadth and depth of targeted mar-comm campaigns—including print advertising, video, and social media.

- Introduced record-keeping documents and results-reporting procedures to better track analytics/campaign data, evaluate KPIs, improve customer segmentation, and maximize ROI.
- Managed product distribution through Amazon and international partners, exceeding sales goals by up to 23%.
- Launched Academy's new online ecommerce store with promotional kick-off campaign and all transactional emails.

**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OPHTHALMOLOGY, San Francisco, CA**

**Marketing Communications Specialist, Clinical Education (11/2010–04/2011)**

Promoted from coordinator. Planned and executed all print, direct mail, and digital promotional campaigns for Academy's 170 clinical education products—with target annual sales of ≈\$3.5M. Exceeded product net revenue goals by up to 386% and course attendance by up to 17%.

**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OPHTHALMOLOGY, San Francisco, CA**

**Promotions Coordinator, Meetings & Exhibits (04/2005–11/2010)**

Marketed the Academy's annual conference as the world's premier ophthalmic educational event, drawing ≈25,000 attendees and ≈575 exhibiting companies. Innovated ways to increase ad revenues by 64%, slash printing costs \$135K/year, and improve metadata/SEO to raise web page rankings to top 10.

**ADDITIONAL RELEVANT EXPERIENCE**

**DR. MARTENS AIRWAIR USA, Portland, OR (U.S. headquarters)**

**PR & Promotions Manager**

*"Doc" Martens is a U.K. footwear and accessories brand with a strong musical heritage.*

Built the promotions program in the company's newly-established marketing department. Launched new U.S. website. Increased product placements 250%. Designed trade show booth displays that helped us win the "Best of Show" award at WSA. Achieved high brand exposure through brand marketing, earned media coverage, event sponsorships, music/retail partnerships, and consumer promotions—driving business development and leading to record U.S. sales.

**EDUCATION**

**MBA: Master of Business Administration (2020)**

Sacramento State University, Sacramento, CA • Executive MBA program • GPA 3.92

**CTSM: Certified Trade Show Marketer (2016)**

Northern Illinois University, various locations • Bronze 2017, Silver 2018, Gold 2018

**BA: Bachelor of Arts | English Literature major • Professional Writing minor**

Portland State University, Portland, OR