



Ascend Strategic Communications is a client-centered, minority, woman-owned, strategic communications consultancy that specializes in strategic planning, organizational change management, stakeholder engagement, DEI & AI integration, and leadership training & development. We help build authentic connections between organizations, their stakeholders, and the communities in which they operate, leading to higher engagement, social impact, and community transformation.

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CREDIT CARDS: Accepted

CAGE/NCAGE: 9N5S9

UNIQUE ENTITY ID: LB9HSHPF8EN5

DUNS #: 10-712-1664

BUSINESS TYPE: Minority, WOSB, Small Business

DESIGNATIONS: MBE/SBE, N.C. SWUC HUB, NMSDC MBE

NAICS: 541611, 541612, 541613, 541618, 541990



CERTIFICATIONS:



CORE COMPETENCIES

Strategic Planning, Execution, Monitoring, and Evaluation— We help businesses develop integrated strategic communication plans, manage implementation, and measure effectiveness.

Organizational Change Management— We leverage the LeMarsh and Prosci ADKAR® Change Management approach to guide leaders and organizations through the people side of change to mitigate risks and drive desired outcomes.

Employee Engagement Solutions— We leverage our proprietary **Use Your Inside Voice® Framework** to develop and implement effective organizational strategies to help all employees feel connected and engaged at work so they can support organizational goals.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) Strategy and Integration— We help organizations develop and integrate transformative DEIA strategies to create and sustain a workforce that reflects their customers and the communities in which they do business.

Content Creation and Editorial Services— We develop, edit, and curate content for all communication materials and channels including organizational messaging, print, intranet, internet, digital, social media, press releases, and campaigns.

Marketing and Communications— We are powerful storytellers of the benefits of products and services when businesses need expert communicators to deliver culturally relevant communications and health equity content across various communication channels.

How We're Different



Over 20 years of employee engagement and change management experience.



Diverse team representing multiple underrepresented communities, cultural insights, and various experiences.



Certified Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace practitioner.



Breadth and depth of industry experience: pharmaceuticals, healthcare, fine chemicals, federal government, higher education, telecommunications, non-profit, local community organizations.



Three-time Federal Administrator Award Recipient for internal excellence, policies & procedures transformation, and organizational change management.



Architect/owner of the Use Your Inside Voice® Framework for driving employee engagement and retention.

PAST PERFORMANCE

Novartis Pharmaceutical Corporation: Unbranded Breast Cancer Campaign (2021-2023): *More Than Just Words* metastatic breast cancer campaign initiative, a multiyear commitment to promote health equity in breast cancer care. Served as communications partner and subject matter expert to provide strategic guidance on reaching Black women. Develop culturally relevant communications aimed at promoting breast cancer awareness and equity in breast cancer care for Black women. Scope of work included:

- Provided strategic guidance on reaching Black women to drive awareness and encourage breast screenings.
- Created culturally relevant content for resources to drive meaningful conversations between Black women and their HCPs.
- Served as liaison to breast cancer patients and the creative team to develop a patient storytelling.
- Provided oversight on a virtual reality HCP training to encourage more empathy for Black patients.

RESULTS: Informed overall strategy and identified opportunities and events to reach Black women; developed multi-media content for the campaign, including HCP guide and social media content; Served as point of contact for patients and provided oversight for filming and production of patient stories; Guided strategy for on-the-ground activations such as ONE Musicfest in Atlanta and 2023 San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium.

Novartis Pharmaceutical Corporation: Enterprise Communications (2008-2015): Served as part of the extended Enterprise Communications team, counseled Marketing, Information Management, Human Resources and other internal clients on communications strategies and supported initiatives to drive the organization's business objectives. Led internal communications for Primary Care Marketing, Health, Safety & Environment, Information Management, and Human Resources departments. Developed and executed strategic communications plans for change management and employee engagement. **RESULTS:** 80% greater understanding of and appreciation for employees' roles within the larger organization.

Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation: Primary Care Marketing Business Unit (2008-2015): Led internal communications for Primary Care Marketing during reorganization under new CEO as the company faced brand expiry of their blockbuster drug—a product that was supported by approximately 25% of the workforce, mostly in Primary Care, and waning morale. **RESULTS:** Achieved successful rollout of new organizational vision, increased employee engagement and commitment, evidenced feedback poll across internal communication channels.

Janssen Pharmaceuticals: Serious Mental Illness Campaign (2021-2022): Served as communications lead and subject matter expert to promote equity in treatment for serious mental illness in underserved communities. Provided guidance and developed culturally relevant communications aimed at promoting awareness of inequities in the treatment of Black adults living with serious mental illness in Texas, California, North Carolina, and Georgia. Informed survey strategy and questions to support campaign objectives and used survey findings to develop content for bulletins to be used by community leaders and community based organizations with services to help drive awareness and provide guidance for mental health treatment. **RESULTS:** Achieved stronger partnership with community and faith leaders and provided them with resources aimed at helping Black adults living with serious mental illness seek and find equitable treatment.

Bristol Myers Squibb: Internal Communications Specialist/Consultant: IT Change Management (2008): Served as part of the extended Information Management change team charged with ensuring message alignment across the general administrative functions during organizational restructuring. Played a key role in repositioning and revitalizing the Information Management organization through integrated, enterprise-wide communication initiatives. **RESULTS:** Developed and executed strategic communications plans for the IT team and implemented Culture Ambassadors Program to drive and sustain change.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): (2015-2017): Established the first internal communications function and led enterprise-wide communication strategy to move a resistant workforce from a private office environment to an open concept workspace several miles away, and within 12 months. **RESULTS:** Garnered appreciation for the benefit of an open and collaborative environment and was awarded two Administrators' and Internal Excellence Awards.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Office of Health Equity: (2021-2022): COVID-19 Monitoring and Evaluation Case Study—Developed a strategic communications plan to relay key findings to the CDC and local health departments. **RESULTS:** The CDC and participating health departments used the communication materials to inform communities on mitigation measures.

CDC Deputy Director of Noninfectious Disease Office of Director (DDNID): (2021-2022): Served as the project/communication lead and provided oversight for the assessment of CDC's Centers' and Divisions' efforts to advance and sustain the integration of Health Equity (HE) in their work and workplaces in the areas of Health Equity, Social Determinants of Health (SDoH), and Diversity Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA). **RESULTS:** Led weekly meetings with the Senior Advisor of Health Equity to report on progress. Developed ongoing communication products for various phases of the project. Coordinated interviews with SMEs for input on assessment reports to inform final guidance. Ensured all project deliverables within the scope of work were delivered in advance of project closeout deadline.

Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce: Organizational and Community Leadership Change Management (2019-2022): Developed and implemented a 3-year strategic plan to evolve the organization's image, evolve its service offerings, increase and improve membership value, revamp programming to increase sponsorship and attendance, and increase community engagement. **RESULTS:** Elevated the organization's image as the leading economic development entity for Durham County, reformatted signature events that increased sponsorship levels and dollars, complimented by neighboring chambers adapting similar formats, fostered partnerships with community organizations, achieved extensive coverage and visibility by local media, wrote and published articles on small business members, increased followers and community engagement on social platforms by 30%, increased newsletter readership by 22%, received multiple accolades for Chamber events from community, members, and the Board of Directors, and led communications and pivot strategy to online platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic.