Tara Croft

BRANDING, CONTENT STRATEGY, EDITORIAL DIRECTION, MESSAGING

New York, NY & Los Angeles, CA

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Creative consultant, content strategist and editorial leader with more than 20 years of experience shaping messaging, content strategy, content governance and high-impact digital copy for consumer, financial and technology clients.

Skilled at translating complex topics into clear narratives, mentoring writers and implementing content systems that improve consistency, engagement and conversion. Available for fractional or project-based engagements.

Experience

Founder, Creative Director

New York, NY
Sep 2016 - Present

Blue Slate Branding

Specialties: Storytelling; brand voice, positioning and messaging; content strategy and guidance; brand and product naming; product/service website writing

Client industries: Technology, financial services, consumer, healthcare, real estate

Select clients and work:
• Developed specific storytelling, voice, tone, product naming and website copy for cannabis company Hudson Valley Jane, building the female customer base.
• Conceptualized and wrote clever social media scripts that resulted in thousands of views for multimillion-dollar companies including The Honest Kitchen pet food, Health Ade kombucha, Mars Nutro, Pilot Pen and Redi-Tag.
• Created an enduring brand story as well as positioning, messaging and voice for Gaiam Yoga, a well-known yoga products company.
• Delivered multiple successful naming and positioning initiatives for Spri fitness, PetWell pet care and Kidnasium fitness, including launching the brand name “Kidnasium” for the children’s fitness product line.
• Conducted research, interviewed industry experts and developed compelling content strategy and messaging for long-form thought leadership about machine learning for Harvard Business Review Analytic Services.
• Increased client engagement and procurement for UBS by developing content strategy and messaging for financial wellness seminars, advisor videos and website copy.
• Modernized the brand voice and digital narrative strategy for high-net-worth advisory City National Rochdale, sharpening market differentiation and elevating client-facing storytelling.
• Rebuilt the digital content strategy framework for national insurer MedPro, aligning messaging across business units and channels.

Creative Consultant at IBM

New York, NY
Dec 2018 - Dec 2024

Gather

Drove content strategy within multiple IBM.com teams:

Inbound marketing
• Spearheaded the implementation and configuration of Acrolinx, a dynamic editing tool, elevating and improving content across IBM.com.
• Developed a successful strategy for the creation of AEM experience fragments across IBM.com in consultation with IBM Content Hub stakeholders.

AEM implementation
• Delivered high-impact digital content and AEM templates for IBM.com as a content strategy and content guidance expert.
• Created complete cand consistent content guidance, including defining the voice and tone, for a dozen new AEM templates used on IBM.com, including industry, product, use case and pricing pages.
• Partnered with design to ensure pages remained user-friendly and elegant, and collaborated with the SEO team to refine pages for greater impact.

Automation and AI
• Created compelling and engaging narratives and website copy that simplified complex AI and automation topics.
• Mentored a team of writers.
• Consulted with internal teams to identify positioning and value proposition and ensure they carried across pages.

Digital acceleration
• Delivered new, high-performing product narrative and UX/conversion copy for under-performing pages by working with internal teams to identify positioning and value propositions.

Associate Editorial Director

VSA Partners

New York, NY
Jul 2014 - Sep 2016

Crafted compelling brand concepts and messaging hierarchies for a diverse portfolio of clients.
• Created brand concepts and content guidelines that worked across audiences and wrote engaging content for clients including Aldo shoes and Bloomberg.
• Produced impactful physical displays, infographics and internal and external marketing collateral for clients including IBM.
• Originated multiple brochures, including several for Siemens to support new medical technology, for Belgard to promote beautiful outdoor-living design, for MVSC to advertise its latest technology offering, and for Serena del Mar, a new city outside of Cartagena, Colombia.
• Collaborated with clients, including Bloomberg and Fidelity, to develop brand experiences—using copy, content strategy, audience-specific messaging and great storytelling to help them achieve distinction.
• Led the concept development of brand-driven advertising campaigns for BMO bank and Sappi paper company.
• Partnered with fellow writers to develop new brand names and naming hierarchies for clients including Jared jewelry and IBM.

Senior Copywriter

Bank of America Merrill Lynch

New York, NY
Jun 2012 - Jun 2014

Developed incisive concepts and copy that aligned with brand voice for global commercial banking campaigns.
• Enhanced brand perception by writing concise, powerful ad and brochure copy for divisions including community development banking and financial markets.
• Conducted in-depth interviews with executives and financial markets experts to create brochures, white papers, case studies, thought leadership, website copy, video scripts and executive letters using the enterprise brand voice.
• Worked with account executives to understand client and line-of-business needs in developing marketing content (LOBs included middle-market banking, commercial real estate banking and wealth management).

Senior Copywriter

Self-Employed

New York, NY
Sep 2009 - Jun 2012

Reimagined marketing materials for a variety of clients, ensuring alignment with business goals.
• Crafted concept statements, website copy and marketing materials for the rebranded presence of QBE North America, a multibillion-dollar insurer.
• Produced engaging newsletters and pitch books targeting middle-market executives for Capital One Bank.
• Created impactful ads for OppenheimerFunds, appealing to financial advisors and clients.
• Devised concept statements, brochures and complete website copy for legal services business DiscoverReady, collaborating with designers to meet tight deadlines.
• Wrote insightful and conversational marketing case studies and copy for Schwab's investment advisor websites.
• Developed creative concepts and copy for Ameriprise's innovative "DreamBook" retirement planning tool.

Senior Writer

Alger Management

New York, NY
Aug 2007 - Aug 2009

Conceptualized, researched, wrote and edited internal and external messaging for asset management company with $15 billion in assets.
• Acted as lead writer for initiatives, working with CEO and portfolio managers to create communications including Q&As and the CEO's annual shareholder letter.
• Created compelling brand messaging within brochures, website content and quarterly commentaries, boosting the firm's rebranding efforts.
• Helped double the firm's output of targeted marketing materials.

Senior Writer

The Deal magazine

New York, NY
Aug 2001 - Aug 2007

Responsible for major stories for financial publication's daily website and weekly print magazine targeting wealthy investors.
• Researched and wrote long-form features on trends in the healthcare, pharmaceutical, retail, technology and consumer industries to keep website and weekly print magazine timely.
• Wrote engaging and detailed breaking news stories describing how various financial deals worked to be understandable to a broader audience.
• Scooped The Wall Street Journal with a feature on Eli Lilly and a cover story about Teva Ltd.; scooped The New York Times with a cover story on Bill Wrigley Jr.
• Interviewed on CNBC's Power Lunch about pharmaceutical deals in China; stories featured regularly in The New York Times' DealBook newsletter
• Analyzed company reports and interviewed executives, industry consultants and analysts to ascertain industry shifts.

Associate Editor

Chicago magazine

Chicago, IL

Managed content for the website of a nationally distributed monthly magazine, driving traffic from the magazine to the site and vice versa.
• Wrote an entertainment column, monthly back-page celebrity interview and travel features for the urban print magazine.
• Launched a website redesign and increased page views fivefold within one year.
• Collaborated with other writers to become the editorial team award winner for "Through Thick and Thin," an entertaining discussion of Chicago-area pizza restaurants.
• Wrote a compelling cover story on fashionable city hotspots for a September fashion issue, which broke circulation records.

Education

MS Journalism

Evanston, IL

Northwestern University

Earned a master's degree in journalism from the Medill School of Journalism.

BA Political Science

Evanston, IL

Northwestern University

Earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Northwestern University.

Junior-Year Abroad

Brighton, England

University of Sussex

Studied history, photography and political science for a junior-year abroad program at the University of Sussex.

New section

Professional Memberships

National Association of Professional Women, NU Start-Up Society, Women in Digital Media

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