



Petri RJ Darby

brand builder • creative player-coach •
communications & content strategist

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About

I build creative brand marketing, design, multimedia production, and strategic communications teams that build great brands through compelling narratives designed to change hearts, minds, and lives.

I've helped build philanthropic brands from scratch, led marketing and communications for leading brands, helped launch and grow entrepreneurial ventures, and served clients in a wide range of industries while running my own business.

- ✔ Corporate experience
- ✔ Agency experience
- ✔ Nonprofit experience
- ✔ 30 years' total experience
- ✔ 17 years leading teams
- ✔ 13 years in executive roles

Skills

- Brand strategy & architecture*
- Integrated campaigns & storytelling*
- In-house brand studio leadership*
- Creative direction & production*
- Creative/marketing/PR copywriting*
- Brand marketing*
- Advocacy & public policy campaigns*
- Executive communications*
- Media relations*
- Issues/reputation/crisis management*
- Digital/social/website strategy*
- Community relations & engagement*
- Team recruitment & coaching*

Highlights

- Helped build two philanthropic brands founded by H-E-B Chairman/former CEO
- Led marketing, PR & digital strategy for one of the nation's most trusted charities
- Operated as sole PR rep for AMLAW 50 law firm
- Served in dozens of civic, community, charitable, and industry leadership roles
- Published writer and poet and frequent public speaker

Work Experience

VP of Brand, Creative & Communications (Jan 2022 - Present)

Charles Butt Foundation

- Spearheaded brand strategy, identity development, new strategic messaging, and narrative-building for the Foundation
- Directed 5-year #TeachersCan initiative with 150+ partnering organizations working to elevate the teaching profession across Texas — built World Teachers' Day into annual statewide campaign with media, content, proclamations, building light-ups, and \$3+ million in DonorsChoose funding for teacher projects
- Oversaw branding, PR, social media, web development, and multimedia production for Uvalde Moving Forward Foundation in support of successful \$60 million fundraising campaign to build new elementary school

VP of Marketing (Oct 2013 - Dec 2021)

Raise Your Hand Texas

First-ever chief marketing officer for statewide public education advocacy nonprofit founded/funded by Charles Butt. Built and led an in-house multimedia brand studio responsible for brand marketing and supporting programs, policy, and research departments.

- Shepherded brand refresh: new identity, mission/vision/values, sharpened messaging, and mobile-responsive website
- Led brand architecture strategy, promotional launches, content strategy, and storytelling for four branded programs: Raising School Leaders, Raising Blended Learners, Raising Family Partnerships, and Raising Texas Teachers
- Oversaw branding and strategic communications/promotional launches for \$50 million Charles Butt Scholarship for Aspiring Teachers and \$20 million blended learning initiative now scaling across Texas
- Supported policy/advocacy team with media relations, digital communications, and multimedia campaigns for successful legislative pursuits: \$11.6 billion HB 3 school finance and pre-K bill, HB 1842 Districts of Innovation, and release of \$16.7 billion in federal stimulus funds for schools

Certifications

Accredited in Public Relations (APR)
Universal Accreditation Board

Career Essentials in Generative AI
Microsoft & LinkedIn

Asana Foundations Skill Badge
Asana

Awards/Honors

Award of Distinction
Communicator Awards for new website

Silver Award
W3 Awards for new website

4 x Bronze Telly Awards
"Same Ol' Mr. Voucher" campaign

Award of Excellence
Business Marketing Association

Sid Bernstein
Communications Award
American Advertising Federation

"One of the Valley's
Most Influential Under 30"
Phoenix Business Journal

G.D. Crain Jr. Public Service Award
American Advertising Federation

First Place Government
Relations Award
American Advertising Federation

Education

B.A. Media Arts / Minor Sociology
University of Arizona

Improving Schools: The Art of
Leadership
Harvard Graduate School of Education

Leadership Development Program
Center for Creative Leadership

Other

Dual citizen of the United States and
Finland

Founder, Voices of Karelia nonprofit

Haiku Contest Winner
Phoenix New Times

Haiku Laureate
TEDx The Woodlands

Only 2-time winner of Online Haiku
Contest
USA Today

Interim VP of Brand Advancement | Director of Marketing, Communications & Digital Strategy (Apr 2010 - Oct 2013)

Make-A-Wish America

- Crafted media relations and user-generated content strategy (using donated smartphones, data plans, and cloud-storage accounts) and drove on-the-ground storytelling efforts in London related to 50 wish families attending 2012 Olympics — the largest and most expensive wish-granting event in the organization's history — resulting in 350+ media placements in three weeks
- Led team of national and chapter representatives through discovery, design, and development process for new national website and 62 chapter websites, all mobile responsive and built on enterprise-wide CMS for first time
- Oversaw strategy, content, and multi-departmental team, responsible for website generating \$6 million per year in donations
- Established vision for, and supervised overhaul of, intranet to move from basic document repository to comprehensive online communication, collaboration, and resource center across the national enterprise

President & CEO (Mar 2006 - April 2010)

darbyDarnit virtual brand marketing, creative & PR agency

Clients included Stryker Orthopaedics, Memorial Hermann Healthcare System, DuPont, Blockbuster, Sony, ConocoPhillips, Mayer Brown, Winstead, Make-A-Wish America, Starlight Children's Foundation, Cuvee Coffee, Riazul Tequila, and Houston Ballet. Exclusive Houston-area member of national virtual agency, PRConsultants Group.

PR/Corporate Communications Manager (Mar 2001 - Mar 2006)

Jenkins & Gilchrist law firm

- Served as sole internal/external communications representative for top 50 national law firm of 625 attorneys in nine offices. Provided media relations, issues management, and litigation communications counsel to executive management and firm's clients.
- Directed issues/crisis communications throughout tax class action lawsuit and IRS/DOJ investigation involving the firm and \$80+ million settlement with 1,100 clients
- Communications programs resulted in increased positive media coverage and enhanced employee morale and confidence even while firm faced significant scrutiny

Brand Manager| External Communications Manager (July 1998 - March 2001)

Make-A-Wish America

- Served as national spokesperson and supported communications efforts of 82 chapters and 22 international affiliates. Promoted to brand manager role — first in the nonprofit world.
- Managed development and successful launch of Foundation's new global brand identity
- Spearheaded first three PSA campaigns, each resulting in \$20+ million in free visibility
- Led the website overhaul and introduction of the first e-mail newsletter that introduced Make-A-Wish to online fundraising, helping generate more than \$1 million the first year

Other Relevant Work Experience

Account Executive

Robb, DeMenna Pfister PR/public affairs/ad agency

Public Affairs Director/Webmaster

Arizona Students' Association

Tempe Transit Campaign Coordinator

Summit Group Political Consulting

Civic/Community/Industry Service

Cedar Park City Councilman (Nov 2025-current)

Make-A-Wish of Central & South Texas

Governing Board (July 2021-current)

- Current Chair / Past Vice Chair / Past Secretary

Austin Regional Council

- Past Chair

Cedar Park Economic Development Sales Tax Corporation Board of Directors (Jan 2020-current)

- Past Vice Chair

Leander Independent School District

- INCubatoredu Entrepreneurship Mentor
- Campaign team for Keep LISD Strong PAC
 - \$763 million school bond passed with 60-64% support per ballot initiative
- Citizens' Facility Advisory Committee/Bond Steering Committee
- Campaign manager (twice) for Dr. Gloria Gonzales-Dholakia for LISD Board
- Bond Oversight Committee
- Campaign manager for Growing LISD's Future PAC
 - \$454.4 million bond passed with 66% voter support
- Leander ISD Bond Steering Committee
- CC Mason Elementary School Site-Based Advisory Committee
- Districtwide Educational Improvement Council
- Financial Leadership Leander ISD
- Leadership Leander ISD

Sports Coaching

Rush Soccer Assistant Coach / i9 Soccer Assistant Coach / i9 Flag football Assistant Coach

Only In Houston Executive Board

I Have A Dream Foundation Houston Board of Directors

- Vice Chair / Marketing Chair

Wing Aviation Corporate Scholarship Fund Board of Directors

Make-A-Wish Foundation of the Texas Gulf Coast

- Wish-Granter / PR & Development Volunteer

Mesa Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors

- President / Vice President / Marketing Chair

National Broadcasters Association for Community Affairs Board of Directors

- Vice President, Partners Caucus

Ad 2/American Advertising Federation (AAF)

Ad 2 Houston Board of Directors

National Ad 2 Executive Board of Directors

- Public Service Advisor

Ad 2 Phoenix Board of Directors

- Communications Chair / Govt Relations Chair / Public Service Co-Chair

Arizona Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired Advisory Board of Directors

Hugh O' Brian Youth Leadership Conference Advisory Board

Rock the Vote

- Arizona Field Coordinator