

NICOLE D. SMITH

Digital Editorial Strategist | Communications Executive | Journalist | Educator

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WORK EXPERIENCE:

Harvard Business Review

Editorial Audience Director | June 2021 - Present

- Lead cross-functional audience strategy across editorial, video, and product teams to grow HBR's reach, engagement, and subscriber conversion across digital platforms.
- Developed HBR's editorial AI audience optimization framework to improve LLM content discovery and align with user behaviors across AI ecosystems (ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude).
- Guided internal strategy to mitigate hallucinated outputs from generative AI by improving how LLMs interpret page structure, content intent, and user needs; strategically designed 404-page UX to drive engagement and click-through despite misdirected AI referrals.
- Produced and hosted company-wide AI programming, including "Engaging Audiences with AI" and "Ethical AI," featuring experts from Google, Digiday, Huffington Post, and leading financial firms.
- Set audience development vision and KPIs using analytics, AIO/SEO, and platform trends to guide strategy across search, newsletters, social, podcasts, livestreams, and AI-powered discovery tools.
- Manage and develop a high-performing, multi-disciplinary audience team with oversight of hiring, performance reviews, and career growth planning.
- Shape editorial AIO/SEO strategy with editors and data teams, aligning content creation with both traditional and emerging discovery platforms.
- Drive newsletter growth and retention across a 2.7M+ subscriber base, building audience funnels that convert readers into loyal subscribers.
- Executive producer of live programs, including "HBR Boot Camp for Leaders," overseeing content direction, guest booking, and performance metrics.
- On-air host and brand ambassador for HBR's live event series, shaping content and representing the brand in real time.
- Collaborate with product, marketing, and analytics teams to advance HBR's digital and brand goals.
- Contributing author to HBR Press books; lead writer on digital articles, newsletters, and social campaigns aligned with HBR's voice.

Morehouse College

Adjunct Journalism Professor | August 2021 - Present

- Develop, design, and write courses for journalism classes in the Department of Journalism in Sports, Culture, and Social Justice.
- Teach foundational topics including: writing, editing, ethics, attribution, grammar, audience development, brevity, broadcast news, critical thinking, newsletters, newsroom leadership, push notifications, and podcasts.
- Develop course syllabi, curriculum, and materials, including selecting reading materials
- Facilitate in-person and virtual, interactive lectures about journalistic principles and prepare students to create and distribute multiplatform content.
- Design assignments and online discussion exercises that measure performance relative to standardized learning objectives from college.
- Served as lead editorial advisor of student-led publication, The Maroon Tiger (2022-2023).

WORK EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED):

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Senior Editor, Features | February 2016 - May 2021

- Led the strategy and execution for features content (arts, entertainment, breaking news); managed 14-member team; topics included film/entertainment, media, celebrity, faith, travel, local events, decor, human interest, theater, music, things to do, and more;
- Strategized and executed journalistic presentation to grow audience share and build reader loyalty via tools such as Chartbeat, Google Analytics, Social Flow and Omniture.
- Ideated and assigned stories for online and print, including Sunday Arts & Living, Things to Do Go Guide, and daily living features for Living
- Collaborated closely with other senior newsroom managers to ensure cross-content coverage on all platforms including Twitter, Facebook Live, Instagram, and Snapchat.
- Managed audience growth for a specified area of coverage; Managed \$200K departmental freelance budget; Hired freelancers and copy edited for print newspaper.
- Produced, managed, co-wrote weekly podcast, accessAtlanta.

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE:

Time Inc., Essence Magazine (Freelance)

Social Media Editor | November 2015 - March 2016

- Wrote and curated original news stories, calls to action, and viral editorial to increase brand awareness and foster engagement (graphics, photos, videos, GIFs, hashtags)
- Tracked analytics into actionable insights that inform and optimize the content strategy

Bounce TV (now an E.W. Scripps Company)

Manager, Digital Content & Social Media | July 2014 - January 2016

- Planned and executed targeted digital marketing campaigns for owned and operated channels (organic social, paid social, blogs, emails, and other marketing assets)
- Created integrated, omni-channel editorial calendars to improve user engagement, audience retention, and audience conversion; worked with influencers, actors, and singers

CNN

Video Journalist | June 2003 - August 2007

- Enterprised, wrote, and produced news stories that aired globally on CNN, CNNi, HLN, and CNN en Español.
- Curated and culled user-generated content (UGC) for CNN.com and on-air content.

EDUCATION:

The George Washington University

Master of Arts in Education and Human Development in Organizational Leadership and Learning

University of Georgia

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism

LEADERSHIP, VOLUNTEERING, AND FELLOWSHIPS:

- Investigative Reporting Teaching Fellow at Howard University (2024-2025)
- Board Member at the Center for Collaborative Journalism at Mercer University (2020-Present)
- Girl Talk, Inc. programming chair for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Committee (2020-2022)
- Poynter-NABJ Leadership Academy for Diversity in Digital Media Fellow (2016)