

Thomas Coombes

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DoB: 26/12/1982
Nationality: Irish/French

Profile

Communications strategist with a proven track record of narrative change campaigns and framing workshops and skills training for global NGOs and EU institutions.

Experience

HEAD OF BRAND & DEPUTY COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR | AMNESTY INT'L Jan 2017-

Responsibilities: Managing the world's biggest NGO brand, commissioning content, overseeing message consistency and big picture strategy across more than 70 countries. Implementing new Hope-Based Communications brand strategy. Running workshops on framing, narrative and messaging.

Achievements: Rolling out new 'Making Human Rights Popular' communications strategy, following brand audit and major global audience analysis. Developed messaging guides for migration and abortion. 'Brand ambassador' strategy is scaling up spokesperson training and supporter engagement movement-wide.

GLOBAL MEDIA MANAGER | AMNESTY INT'L – London

2015-2017

Responsibilities: Designing and running communications strategies for global campaigns. Preparing media material, b-roll and social media content. Liaising with journalists and producers from global outlets like CNN, BBC, NYT and newswires. Communications training for campaigners, researchers and lawyers.

Achievements: Tripled media coverage for Amnesty's global issues. Ran PR campaigns on workers rights at [World Cup 2022](#), [child labour in smartphones](#), [Edward Snowden](#), [abortion in Ireland](#) and media campaigns aimed at reframing the debate on [refugees](#) (notably the [Refugees Welcome Index](#)). Cyber-censorship [campaign](#) won a Cannes Silver Lion.

SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER | TRANSPARENCY INT'L – Berlin

2010-2015

Responsibilities: Speechwriter and communications advisor, leading efforts to develop "accountability" and "people power" frames in corruption narratives. Designing and implementing comms strategies for global campaigns. Ran a movement-wide [blog](#) showcasing stories from across the anti-corruption movement. Designing and ran new training courses in messaging, media, writing & social media for staff worldwide.

Achievements: Regular pickup in newswires and major press (NYT, FT, WSJ) on corruption stories. Wrote speeches delivered at WEF, G20, OECD and UN. Blog views grew 700% and visits 200% during one-year revamp that won a European Digital Communications Award. One of first NGOs to adopt Instagram strategy.

PRESS OFFICER & SPEECHWRITER | EUROPEAN COMMISSION – Brussels

2008-2010

Responsibilities: Writing speeches, opeds, talking points, press releases for Vice President Viviane Reding. Drafting daily *Lines to Take* for midday press briefing. Liaising with reporters from across Europe.

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Achievements: Drafted messaging for major EU campaigns on “Roaming” regulation, telecoms rules and fair trial rights. Drafted several key, politically sensitive speeches setting out new policy priorities. Represented EU in Irish media during Lisbon Treaty referendum. Revamped Commission’s press release templates and processes to improve copywriting.

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE | HILL & KNOWLTON STRATEGIES – Brussels 2006-2008

Responsibilities: Pan-European communications campaigns for companies, think tanks, law firms. Pitching and briefing reporters, organising press briefings, developing messages, lobbying decision-makers and monitoring for reputational issues.

Achievements: Campaign for Special Court for Sierra Leone raising €12 million emergency funding. Raised profile of US law firm in Brussels through expert media commentary. Helped pharma company influence government responses to health crisis. Led Brussels PR firms’ joint response to EU transparency initiative. Developed tech firm’s EU messaging on copyright.

OTHER EXPERIENCE 1998-2003

Before graduating: internships with an MEP and the UNDP; freelance work for Limerick Leader newspaper and Lyric FM radio station; part-time jobs in market research, media monitoring agencies, bars, restaurants and shops.

Education

EUROPEAN INTER-UNIVERSITY CENTRE, ITALY | MA HUMAN RIGHTS LAW 2005-2006

Jointly with Erik Castrén Institute of International Law and Human Rights, Helsinki

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN, IRELAND | BA ECONOMICS & HISTORY 2001-2005

Erasmus exchange at Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV), France

Training

Taken	Offered
Advocacy	Blogging
Audiovisual	Brand-building
Council	Foresight
CMS web publishing	Interview control
Leadership, management and diversity	Message development / Framing
Search-Engine Optimisation	Social media
Social listening and audience analysis	“Train the Trainer” sessions

Languages

English	Native
French	Near-native
German	Fluent
Dutch	Fluent
Italian	Spoken
Spanish	Basic

Hobbies

Rock climbing, age-group triathlete with Team Ireland, blogging about world literature (I’m reading a book from every country in the world from A to Z - blog on Medium).