



Brand & Reputation Services

STRATEGIC COUNSEL. BRAND DEVELOPMENT. WEB & DIGITAL. MEDIA RELATIONS.
ISSUES MANAGEMENT. CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS. GRAPHIC DESIGN.

BLACKCOFFEE

BRAND & REPUTATION

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The Perfect Blend

Selecting, roasting and brewing coffee beans is an art. A tradition we borrow from when we work to define, articulate and craft the perfect brand.

We spend our days tweaking, blending, creating and testing until a brand comes to life to tell a story ... perfectly.

Often the adventure starts with a conversation and a great cup of coffee.

So take a moment, brew a cup of your favourite blend. And then fuelled by the power of caffeine and a desire to build a better business, let's get down to work.



How We Work

At Blackcoffee, our work is intentionally integrated and deliberately paced.

Strategy leads.

Execution follows.

Reputation is considered at every step.

We do not believe in fragmented work or disconnected tactics. Brand, reputation, and communication are deeply linked. When they are treated separately, gaps appear. When they are aligned, trust compounds.

Our engagements are designed to create clarity first. We take the time to understand your organization, your objectives, your risks, and the environments you operate in. From there, we develop a strategic foundation that guides decisions, messaging, and action across every touchpoint.

Our value comes from how we think.

We work closely with leaders and teams during moments that matter. Periods of growth. Transition. Visibility. Scrutiny. Change. Our role is to help you make confident decisions, communicate with intention, and protect credibility when the stakes are high.

Some of this work results in visible outcomes. Brands, platforms, campaigns, and communications you can see.

Some of it happens quietly. Behind the scenes. In conversation. In preparation. In judgment calls that prevent problems before they surface. That work does not always make it into a portfolio. It does, however, shape outcomes.

Every engagement is tailored. We do not apply templates or force fit solutions. We partner closely, ask hard questions, and bring discipline to the process so your brand and reputation are not just built, but sustained.



Shannon Larkins
Founder & President,
Blackcoffee



Our Services

Brand and reputation don't operate separately.

THEY WORK TOGETHER TO SHAPE HOW YOU'RE SEEN, TRUSTED AND CHOSEN.

Strategic Counsel

WE GUIDE LEADERS THROUGH HIGH-STAKES DECISIONS.

Strategic counsel is senior-level advisory support for leaders through change, growth and crisis. We partner with leaders and leadership teams to provide trusted guidance when clarity, judgment, and discretion matter most.

Reputation Management

WE EARN TRUST AND INFLUENCE PERCEPTION.

Reputation management begins by anticipating risk, building trust, and shaping perception over time, not simply reacting when something goes wrong.

Brand Development

WE CREATE BRANDS THAT TURN HEADS AND DRIVE DECISIONS.

Design and digital execution is where strategy becomes real. This work ensures your brand is not only well-defined, but clearly expressed and easy to experience – across platforms, channels and moments that matter.

Brand Services



Brand Strategy

SUBSTANCE LEADS
STYLE FOLLOWS

Brand is built deliberately. Through clarity of purpose, disciplined choices, and a deep understanding of how your organization is experienced at every point of interaction. It is not just what you say about yourself. It is what your clients, partners, and stakeholders come to expect, feel, and rely on when they engage with you.

Our work focuses on creating alignment before execution. We help organizations define who they are, what they stand for, and how they need to show up to build credibility, consistency, and confidence over time. A strong brand provides direction for decision making, communication, and growth, long before pressure or complexity exposes uncertainty.

Brand strategy gives leaders a foundation they can act on. It brings discipline to creativity, coherence to communication, and intention to every experience your organization creates.

Talk to us when:

- Your organization lacks a clear or shared understanding of who you are and what you stand for
- Your brand experience feels inconsistent across teams, platforms, or touchpoints
- You are entering a period of growth, transition, or change
- Your value proposition is difficult to articulate or differentiate
- You need a strategic foundation before investing in creative or digital execution

We deliver:

- Brand discovery and assessment
- Brand positioning and strategic direction
- Purpose, promise, and value articulation
- Brand architecture and alignment strategy
- Brand voice and messaging frameworks
- Experience and touchpoint alignment guidance
- Strategic foundations to support long term growth and resilience

Brand Writing

TELL A STORY NO ONE CAN RESIST

Words matter. The right ones stimulate, connect and transform. Language brings your strategy to life — everywhere. To reach the people who matter, you need to uncover and articulate your unique story and tell it with conviction. We'll work with you to set the tone for your brand, lay the groundwork for getting your message across and create specific content that commands attention in all the right ways.

Talk to us when:

- Your company's tone or message changes dramatically across touch points
- Your customers seem unclear about the services or benefits you provide
- Employees have difficulty articulating your story
- You're missing clear guidance for the people that develop your communications
- You're going through a big change and need to tell a new story

We deliver:

- Taglines
- Authentic brand messaging
- Company and staff bios
- Promotional materials
- Sales kit
- Web writing

Design

REALIZE YOUR GRAND DESIGN

Great design may be rooted in strategy, but it often comes alive with intuition. We blend logic with magic to create thoughtful, unforgettable brand identities, systems and experiences that flex and evolve with our clients' changing needs.

Talk to us when:

- You haven't evolved your visual identity in a while
- Your brand doesn't stand out
- Your visuals don't convey who you are and what you offer
- Your visual expression is inconsistent across businesses or geographies
- You're going through a merger, acquisition or spinoff and need to re-evaluate your visual identity

Web

STAKE YOUR CLAIM IN THE DIGITAL SPACE

We deliver:

- Visual identity
- Logos
- Web design
- Photography
- Print: postcards, brochures, annual reports
- Newsletters
- Packaging

It starts with a compelling website that stands out from the competition. A user-friendly space that is informative, inviting and emotionally compelling.

As with any media, the key is user engagement. Putting the user at the centre of an experience that is so entertaining, participatory and social they'll be compelled to pass it on to their friends.

As your audience races across screens, your company must adapt to their needs while considering how your brand behaves in every environment. We'll help you stay ahead of the game by developing original digital experiences that startle with the power of their simplicity.

Talk to us when:

- You need a website
- A web refresh is in order
- You want a social media presence
- You want help understanding where to spend precious resources
- Your customers don't know where to find you
- You don't know where to start

We deliver:

- Web design
- Web development
- Online strategies
- Social media training on multiple platforms
- Social media account management
- Digital advertising

Testimonial



"Shannon brings a rare combination of strategic discipline and instinct for reputation. She understands how ideas land, not just on paper, but in the real world, with real consequences.

Her work helped us sharpen our positioning, clarify our message, and ensure our brand reflects the seriousness and credibility of the work we do. Shannon is thoughtful, direct, and trusted. She's exactly the kind of partner you want when reputation matters."

-Ken Boessenkool

Partner, Meredith Boessenkool Phillips

Reputation Services



Reputation Management

CREDIBILITY EARNED
AND DEFENDED

Many organizations assume their reputation will take care of itself... shaped organically by good intentions and day-to-day operations.

We start from a different place.

Reputation is built deliberately, over time, through consistent behaviour, disciplined communication, and a clear understanding of how stakeholders experience and interpret your actions. It's not just what you say, it's what people believe, expect, and repeat about you when you're not in the room.

Our work focuses on anticipating risk, strengthening trust, and ensuring your brand and reputation are aligned before pressure tests expose gaps. We help leaders move from reactive response to thoughtful stewardship, so credibility is protected and earned long before it's challenged.

Talk to us when:

- You're navigating heightened visibility or scrutiny
- Stakeholders hold competing or unclear perceptions of your organization
- Trust, credibility or alignment feels fragile
- You want to anticipate and mitigate reputational risk
- Your organization is going through change, growth, or transition

We deliver:

- Reputation assessments and audits
- Stakeholder and trust mapping
- Reputation risk and mitigation planning
- Message development and discipline
- Scenario planning and preparedness
- Issues and vulnerability analysis
- Ongoing reputation stewardship
- Post-crisis recovery and repositioning

Public Relations

MAKING EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS

Most companies develop communications plans from their own point of view, focusing on presenting the features and benefits they believe differentiate their products and services.

Ours is a different starting point. We begin with the consumer and develop a campaign that speaks directly and powerfully to that target audience.

The result is work that inspires rather than pitches, tag lines that are rallying cries, and campaigns that use humour and emotion to cut through the clutter. It's about honouring the audience, sparking their imagination, and speaking to their deepest aspirations and unmet needs.

Talk to us when:

- You need to get the word out
- Your customers don't know where to find you
- You want to reach a target audience about an issue or event
- You want to understand how to better connect with the clients you have

We deliver:

- Communications plans
- Media training
- Media and blogger relations
- News release distribution
- Media kits
- Special events management and publicity

Media Relations

Many organizations approach media as a distribution channel, focused on getting coverage, controlling headlines, or promoting key messages.

SUBSTANCE OVER SPIN

We take a different view.

Media relations is about understanding how stories land, how narratives take shape, and how credibility is built, or lost, in the public sphere. We work from the perspective of journalists, audiences, and stakeholders to help our clients engage the media in a way that is clear, credible, and grounded in reality.

Our approach prioritizes substance over spin.

We help leaders communicate with confidence, respond under pressure, and participate in public conversations in ways that reinforce trust and authority rather than chase attention.

Talk to us when:

- You're engaging media around a sensitive or high-stakes issue
- You want to be prepared, not reactive, in interviews or public forums
- Your organization is facing scrutiny, criticism, or misinformation
- Leaders need support speaking with clarity and confidence
- You want media engagement to support long-term credibility

We deliver:

- Media strategy and positioning
- Media training for leaders and spokespeople
- Message development and interview preparation
- Media and journalist relations
- News releases and backgrounders
- Press conference and media event support
- Ongoing media advisory and counsel

Issues Management

WHEN PERCEPTION AND
REALITY BATTLE, PERCEPTION WINS

Setting the record straight is no easy task. We have the expertise to help you navigate threats to your business and your bottom line – from activist campaigns and industrial incidents to regulatory actions and character attacks.

We help contain the damage and protect your reputation and economic interests.

We communicate directly with all of your key constituents, letting them know what's going on and what you're doing to make it right. At the same time, we aggressively monitor and counter misinformation through traditional media channels and online, speaking your truth with authenticity and simplicity.

Talk to us when:

- Your company's reputation is called into question
- There has been an incident or natural disaster that impacts operations
- You need to respond to an untruth
- Your company needs to pushback on public policy
- You aren't sure if your company is prepared to respond to a crisis

We deliver:

- Issue strategy and management
- Media strategy
- Media training
- Press conference management
- News releases
- Stakeholder engagement
- Public meetings

Strategic Writing

WORDS MATTER

The best way to capture the attention of your audience is to use your words to create an experience the reader is compelled to remember and explore. We can help.

Speeches that inspire. Websites that sell. Bids that persuade. Letters that make angry customers happy.

Digital

BE A SOCIAL STAND OUT

Talk to us when:

- You have something important to say
- When you haven't said anything for a long time
- You know you should say something – but what?
- When you want to turn the 'same-old same-old' into something remarkable
- When you need to say thank you and celebrate
- When you want to inspire and make a difference

We deliver:

- Key messages
- Media scripts
- Speech writing
- Newsletters
- Blogs
- Video scripts
- News releases
- Annual reports and corporate publications
- Editorial and copy writing

The rise of social media adds a new dimension to the online communications experience. Now, campaigns are not just distributed, they are posted and shared. It's word-of-mouth taken to the next level.

Digital isn't just a platform or an isolated strategy. It permeates every part of your brand expression and makes reputation management paramount.

Reputation management starts here. It's important for companies to be themselves and tell their truths. Trumpet successes and apologize for mistakes.

Talk to us when:

- You need an online presence
- You want to know how to spend wisely
- You find yourself in a social media conflict
- You need a new website or a web refresh
- It's time for an online strategy

We deliver:

- Online strategies
- Social media training for multiple platforms
- Social media account management
- Blog writing



Brand Principles

How to BE REMARKABLE

Take a stand.

It's perfectly natural to want to stick with what's familiar, to play it safe. But for a brand, playing it safe is dangerous. To stand out, be brave. Take a stand.

Embrace emotion.

The most powerful brands live at the intersection of clarity and wonder. By embracing emotion, they attract the right people and that drives business results.

Prototype early and often.

Brand strategies are essential and helpful. But the real test is creative articulation. The sooner a strategy can be prototyped creatively, the sooner it can be evaluated and refined.

Keep it simple.

Great brands are simple ones. If a brand strategy or campaign rationale is difficult to understand, it's probably wrong. The best brands are built on a simple concept.

Great ideas tend to take time.

Developing breakthrough creative takes time and effort. There are no shortcuts. Take the time required to work it through. Then test. Test again. Get it right.

Stay open to inspiration.

Inspiration is an attitude – a willingness to entertain the illogical, to stretch beyond personal taste, to embrace what you may initially dismiss, to ask questions and stay curious.



Reputation Principles

How to BE READY

Create trust.

With any given commodity, scarcity increases value and this applies just as much to trust as it does to gold. Given that trust is in short supply, today's leaders must nurture, cherish and preserve it.

Act with integrity.

Do what's right, not what's easy. While it's stressful to admit a mistake, it's much harder to repair your reputation following a broken promise or cover up.

Build relationships.

Listen to your stakeholders and communicate authentically - in person, online and through the media. You'll build customers and brand ambassadors.

Commit.

Do what you say you will do.

Stop the spin.

Spin is dead. There are no shortcuts. The only way to build an enduring reputation is to act and communicate authentically.

Apologize when necessary.

When you've messed up, there's nothing wrong with admitting it and apologizing. Your clients will appreciate the honesty and will leave the door open for you to repair the relationship.

“Genuinely good branding involves an examination of every single way the brand, the product and the experience is viewed. Everything that you do, everything you release, everything you say is the cumulative expression of your brand.”

-Stanley Hainsworth

BLACKCOFFEE

BRAND & REPUTATION

A brand and reputation agency for aspirational leaders and organizations
Offices in Calgary and Edmonton
Serving clients in Alberta and around the world

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