

## Sheila Roberts

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## Profile

Sheila is a seasoned communications professional with experience in corporate communications/public relations, consulting, web design and content development, journalism and advertising. Her support is available on a part-time, full-time or contract basis. Sheila has been acknowledged as a team player and team builder, a results-oriented communicator who collaborates to provide creative and strategic solutions.

## Experience

*2002 -present*

### **Communications Consultant, Editor and Web Designer/Manager**

- **Partner in consulting firm, *The Last Word Communications*.** The corporate and personal communications company offers a full range of public relations, communications and editorial services to businesses and individuals, including consulting, executive and personal support, and communication strategies and plans.

It also offers services in web design, content development and management; publications development and management; media relations; editing; speech writing; and freelance writing for business, the media and personal clients.

In addition, *The Last Word Communications* provides support for communications process improvement and success measurement.

Clients include local industry, the federal government, business coaches, motivational speakers, and volunteer associations.

*1986-2001*

### **Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce**

#### **Director, Corporate Communications (1986-1990 and 1997-2001)**

Reported to the Senior Vice-President, Corporate Communications and Public Affairs.

Senior-level position covered a full range of reputation management and brand management responsibilities including:

- **Communication strategies:** developing and implementing internal and external communication strategies aligned with business objectives
- **Leadership of people:** managing an in-house team of communicators responsible for employee communications, media relations, executive communications, and internal and external publications, in addition to management of relationships with external suppliers

- **Web and paper-based publications:** writing, editing and managing web, electronic and paper-based communications, including annual and quarterly reports, investor and employee publications
- **Cultural and business change:** enhancing the understanding of significant corporate cultural and business changes, such as the implications of potential mergers and acquisitions
- **Complex technical communications:** communicating highly technical initiatives in the areas of compensation and benefits, and financial reporting
- **Executive counsel:** providing communications counsel and advice, media relations coaching, speech development and coaching for senior management
- **Issues and crisis management:** member of issues management team and key member of Y2K communications planning team
- **Continuous improvement:** streamlining communication processes, including the approval system, quality management and introduction of a CIBC style guide
- **Measurement:** developing and implementing measures of communication success
- **Event management:** planning and implementing CIBC support for two major annual sponsorships – Canadian national music festival and ski championships for the physically challenged
- **Budget management:** accountable for a budget of several million dollars

### **Director, Service/Quality and Quality Management (1991-1997)**

Reported to Executive Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer.

Responsible for:

- **Process improvement:** leading process improvement efforts, including facilitating a team to overhaul CIBC's financial planning process and involvement with a multi-functional team to redesign the company's finance organization. Also taught process improvement methodology to senior managers
- **Customer satisfaction and customer satisfaction measurement:** leading the introduction of a service quality culture to CIBC's support groups, developing internal client satisfaction surveys and supporting the implementation of service improvements
- **Strategic planning:** facilitating the annual strategic planning process for CIBC's administration and finance leadership team

*1985-1986*

### **Canada Permanent Trust Company (The Permanent)**

#### **Assistant Vice-President, Employee Communications**

Reported to the Senior Vice-President, Communications and Technology.

Broad range of communications responsibilities including:

- **Communication strategies:** developing and implementing employee communication strategies, including planning for the merger with Canada Trust
- **Donations policy:** developing and implementing the first donations policy for The Permanent
- **Publications management:** writing and managing internal and external publications

*1980-1985*

### **Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario**

#### **Director, Information Services**

Reported to the Executive Director, the staff leader of the Institute. Responsibilities included:

- **Executive counsel:** providing communications counsel, including media relations advice, to institute executives

- **Publications management:** writing and managing marketing and member publications
- **Career information:** managing information programs to promote chartered accountancy as a career
- **Community outreach:** organizing and promoting community outreach programs, such as free tax clinics for senior citizens and low-income families

## Positions prior to 1980

Number of positions with community newspapers in Ontario, including reporter, editor and general manager. Newspapers included the Aurora Banner (now the Era-Banner), Richmond Hill Liberal, Woodbridge-Vaughan News and Alliston Herald. Responsibilities were wide-ranging, including content planning, feature development, news coverage, writing, copy editing, proofreading, photography, design and layout.

Senior Copywriter, Sears Canada Inc. and Radio Shack Canada.

## Education

**Bachelor of Arts**, English Language and Literature, the University of Toronto (1970), with additional studies in French and Italian.

## Professional development

**Web design:** studied design at CDI College (Canada); completed HTML and Macromedia Dreamweaver courses with the International Webmasters Association.

**Presenter:** *Web-Based Internal Communications*, International Quality and Productivity Centre, April 25-26, 2001, Toronto

**Process improvement:** accredited by Boston-based Forum Corporation as a process improvement facilitator and instructor (PROGRESS methodology).

**Computer applications:** Microsoft Office family, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Publisher; Adobe Photoshop.

**Adult literacy:** qualified and active as a senior tutor of adult literacy and numeracy, and currently qualifying as a trainer of adult literacy and numeracy tutors.

## Relevant memberships

Member of the International Webmasters Association and the HTML Writers Guild.

Member of the Literacy Council York-Simcoe (recipient of the 2004 award for exemplifying the mission of the council through her contribution and support).

Member of the Newmarket and Richmond Hill Chambers of Commerce.

Past member of the Humber College Public Relations Advisory Committee.

Past chairperson of the editorial board, *Canadian Banker Magazine*.

## References

Available on request.