

# Scott Thompson

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**January 2020-present:** Director of marketing and communications, Great Falls College MSU. I am responsible for building and managing the college's brand identity, communication and marketing strategic plan, all public relations and marketing initiatives, and the department budget. I lead a planned, cohesive and disciplined approach in Great Falls College's communications and marketing presence with local, regional and state media. I coordinate with other college staff members to identify and grow targeted market share. I also work closely with Montana University System colleagues. I proactively communicate the college's mission, programs, services, and value to the public to grow the presence of Great Falls College in the region. I support the CEO/Dean with external communications by preparing press releases, drafting public remarks and doing media interviews. I facilitate public relations, marketing, website design, photography, social media and other communication tools to ensure a consistent, recognizable, positive college brand image. I design, write, edit, proofread and approve college communications. I provide leadership for internal and external publications and communications. I provide oversight to graphic design, web design and photography. I coordinate and facilitate design of Great Falls College marketing materials with University Communications at Montana State University and with outside agencies; possess basic design skills and use of software products to serve in a backup capacity for marketing design production. I coordinate and facilitate communications with Montana State University and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. I ensure compliance with copyright laws, federal and state regulations, policy and graphic standards in all digital assets usage and college publications. I participate in crisis management by providing effective communication.

**November 2018-January 2020:** newsroom director/site leader, Great Falls Tribune. I led operating committee meetings to keep all departments on the same page, collaborating with other department heads who report to Gannett Corporation managers across the country to implement company initiatives to ensure consistency and local brand identity. This role required strong communication skills. I fostered an environment that encouraged innovation and vision for the Tribune in a time of great transformation while setting a comprehensive strategic plan that made clear priorities to move the media company forward. I made sure the newsroom hit budget as I monitored payroll, travel expenses and dozens of syndicate services for everything from Dear Abby to crossword puzzles and comic strips as well as investing in newsroom training opportunities. I participated in Western region editor meetings to set the course for local newsrooms. I led the local newsroom team, planning daily and weekend content for the Tribune's print paper, website, apps and social media. I worked with reporters, photographers/videographers and graphic artists to create stories that resonated most with readers on all platforms. I then worked with the Digital Optimization Team and Design Studio in Phoenix to design the print pages and create attractive online layouts to draw readers into the stories. I was responsible for ensuring our stories hit the mark on Search Engine Optimization and had a strong social media strategy. I managed website and social media analytics to track the effectiveness and progress of the Tribune's content. I managed events such as community forums for political candidates, discussions on

the health of our water ways, the What Women Want Expo and the Northcentral Montana Sports Awards banquet. I was the lead editor for the Tribune for every legislative session from 2011-2019. I consistently led and motivated a diverse staff full of competing viewpoints and personalities by getting buy-in from every member of the staff in my time at the Tribune. I attracted, built, led and retained a strong core staff during tumultuous times in the industry. My 22 years in journalism gave me a great ability to oversee and execute multiple projects simultaneously while working effectively under pressure of last-minute deadlines and changing priorities. We won numerous quarterly and annual awards in the 110-newspaper Gannett Corporation competitions. I also served as a page designer when those duties were performed in Great Falls.

**March 2015-November 2018:** content coach, Great Falls Tribune. In addition to much of the above responsibilities, I was responsible for the news and sports content of the paper. I ran the daily morning meeting in which we strategize which stories the reporting staff will work on each day and then come up with a production schedule of when the stories will be posted to the website, social media and the print paper. I also worked with the local team to develop photo, video and graphic plans for the larger packages in coordination with the Digital Optimization Team and the print Design Studios in Phoenix. I also ran the afternoon meeting to decide story play for the print Tribune.

**April 2013-March 2015:** city editor, Great Falls Tribune. I was responsible for the daily and major weekend content, balancing the needs for a strong daily product with our most important duty of delivering strong watchdog journalism. I was in charge of motivating, training, developing and hiring a staff of about 15 reporters. I ran daily meetings and worked with reporters, photographers, graphic artists and designers to coordinate the most effective presentation for the printed paper while transforming the newsroom into a digital-first operation. We broke major stories such as a federal judge out of Billings sending out racist jokes about President Obama and his mother and an incredibly prescient look at the division in the state Republican party in front of a biannual legislative session that mirrors the state of the current GOP internal divide both locally and nationally. We also took an incredibly critical look at former Democratic Gov. Brian Schweitzer's ties with dark money as he was exploring a presidential run. He declared he was not running hours before our report hit the web and print. We don't feel that was coincidental.

**February 2007-April 2013:** news editor, Great Falls Tribune. My primary duties included motivating, training and hiring a copy desk of 12 copy editors. I also was a primary designer, laying out everything from A1 to the metro section to wire pages. I was heavily involved in the process of determining story play and writing headlines and captions. I was a leader in ensuring the Tribune observed copyright laws. I also wrote the manual on emergency operation plans in the event of sustained power outages or press breakdowns. I also wrote training manuals for new employees. Many nights, I also supervised the reporting staff, and I frequently served as a frontline editor, helping reporters shape content from the reporting stage through the writing and editing stages. I also was in charge of scheduling the copy editors to produce three daily sections (A section, News and Life pages) and more than 100 special sections each year, ranging from monthly magazines (such as What Women Want) to annual sections (such as Western Art Week, Glacier guide and the State Fair guide) to weekly sections (such as the Hot Ticket). We did not miss deadlines.

**January 2006-February 2007:** assistant news editor, Great Falls Tribune. My duties were very similar to when I became news editor as I ran the day-to-day operations of the copy desk so that the news editor could concentrate on larger projects.

**October 2003-July 2006:** sports copy editor, Great Falls Tribune. I was the lead copy editor and designer for the sports department, laying out and deciding story play for the section. I wrote headlines and captions and was the primary editor for local copy. I attended news meetings and budget meetings for the sports department. I also occasionally wrote enterprise packages and game stories.

**June 2001-October 2003:** sportswriter, The (Twin Falls, Idaho) Times-News. I was responsible for covering approximately 30 high schools in nine counties across southern Idaho. I wrote a weekly prep sports column that took a critical look at everything from minority coaching and officiating opportunities in the area to taking on a powerful group of helicopter parents who were trying to take over the Twin Falls athletic department to an appreciation for a gritty student-athlete known for her competitiveness. The Martin Luther King Day column I wrote about the dearth of minority coaches and officials in an area that is about 30 percent Hispanic was placed in the new-hire manual for Minidoka County schools. I also did the staples of game stories, agate and features.

**November 2000-June 2001:** editor, myprepteam.com in Missoula. I was in charge of developing a website that had homepages for all 180 or so Montana High School Association-affiliated high schools along with landing pages for premium content for a statewide audience. I recruited and trained a staff of three full-time reporters, a copy editor and several clerks. Staff members were located in Missoula, Helena and Billings as we developed a network that was the state's first-ever statewide sports news source. I also recruited community members to submit stories and photos from their hometown schools before curating reader content was a trend. The content shattered viewership expectations and was growing exponentially each month, but the advertising side was unable to monetize the content and the site failed as the Web economy crashed.

**February 1999-November 2000:** outdoors editor, (Helena) Independent Record. I was responsible for all aspects of the outdoors section, from story, photo and graphics to frontline editing and layout. I supervised a staff of three reporters, whose first priorities were on news beats, and a part-time assistant outdoors editor. I also was the primary reporter and photographer. In addition, I designed and edited the weekend sports sections, writing headlines and deciding story play.

**June 1997-February 1999:** copy editor, (Helena) Independent Record. My duties were split between news and sports. On the news desk, my primary responsibility was to design the front page and write the headlines and captions while also giving a final edit to the copy. I also was in charge of the sports desk on weekends.

**August 1996-June 1997:** editorial assistant, The (Helena) Associated Press bureau. I re-wrote member copy, took sports scores and wrote news briefs and broadcast packages. It was a fast-paced environment where I learned to work quickly and accurately.

## **COMMUNITY**

I serve on the Great Falls Development Authority board, volunteer for Montana Rush soccer and spent five years as assistant coach for the Great Falls High Bison girls' soccer team. I also was an active classroom volunteer at Morningside Elementary when my children attended the school, and I have coached travel soccer and basketball teams.

## **EDUCATION**

B.A., journalism, University of Montana. I concentrated my studies on reporting, photojournalism, editing and design.

## **SKILLS**

Mircrosoft Office suite, Adobe Photoshop, Hootsuite, Social News Desk, search engine optimization, Slack, Teams, iMovie, digital photography/videography, Chartbeat, Adobe InDesign, basic Adobe Premier, familiarity with Adobe Omniture.