

## Kristina Schake

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### Career Overview

Kristina Schake is a communications expert who has built a career working at the nexus of politics, entertainment, business, media, philanthropy, and technology. She is skilled at every aspect of strategic communications and public affairs – including public education campaigns, brand cultivation and positioning, reputation management, profile building, speech writing, and crisis communications – and has led teams that changed national opinions about marriage equality, won voter approval for California initiatives on education funding and stem cell research, and drove the media strategy for First Lady Michelle Obama. Most recently she was the Global Director of Communications for Instagram, serving as a primary advisor to the company's founder and CEO, and overseeing the communications and digital divisions in North America, Latin America, Europe and Asia. She currently leads the communications, branding, and digital efforts for the Obamas' production company Higher Ground.

At her core, Kristina is an idea generator who is at her best when she is conceptualizing and executing national public education campaigns to affect opinions and behavior on important health and civil rights issues. This is demonstrated through her work planning *Let's Move* on behalf of First Lady Obama and co-founding the American Foundation for Equal Rights, which filed the federal court challenge to California's Proposition 8 and executed a national campaign to change public opinion through advertising, influencer and celebrity engagement, and personal storytelling. The Foundation's work returned marriage equality to the nation's most populous state, as captured in the HBO documentary, *The Case Against 8*. She has built and executed public education campaigns to support stem cell research, early childhood education, anti-smoking, and clean energy.

Kristina is a specialist in building teams and scaling organizations. The fourth employee hired by Hillary Clinton for her 2016 presidential campaign, her role was to hire the diverse 100-person communications team in national headquarters and battleground states, steer the campaign through internal and external crises, and set up the necessary organizational structures to handle daily press interactions and navigate the tumult of 2016's unprecedentedly complex media landscape.

An experienced spokesperson and external advocate, Kristina regularly served as the face of the Clinton campaign on television, appearing on NBC, Fox, ABC, CBS, CNN and local television, in addition to traveling the country to speak on behalf of the candidate to donor gatherings. She was able to effectively leverage her extensive relationships and strategic understanding of the media to help position the candidate publicly across an array of the nation's top print, digital and broadcast outlets. She has delivered speeches and presentations to diverse and influential audiences, from the National Governors' Association to the Sundance Film Festival.

### Work Experience

#### Higher Ground Productions

*Communications Consultant, July 2019 – Present*

Leads the media, digital and branding efforts for the Obamas' new production company Higher Ground, which creates films, television series, documentaries, and children's shows for Netflix, and podcasts for Spotify. Higher Ground's first production *American Factory* won the 2019 Academy Award for Best Documentary. The first podcast, *The Michelle Obama Podcast*, is now on Spotify.

#### Michelle Obama's *Becoming* Book Tour

*Communications Director, March – June 2019*

Led the media and digital strategy to promote the book and arena events in the US, Canada and Europe, as well as grow and engage her followers. While she managed her social media, her Instagram account gained more than 150,000 followers a week and reached 30 million. Traveled with the former First Lady to manage

all communications activities. Examples of her work include Instagram and People Magazine's special Mother's Day coverage of the Obama family.

### **Instagram**

*Global Communications Director, March 2017 – March 2019*

Led a team of 50 communications and social content experts in the US, Latin America, Europe and Asia to advance Instagram's brand, launch new products and tools, manage crisis situations and conceive of targeted campaigns to reach our community and policy makers. Directed the reorganization of the entire Outreach team to prepare to scale globally and drive strategic planning with consolidated goals across Marketing, Partnerships, Policy and Communications to achieve greater impact. Combined Instagram's social content team with the communications team to better infuse the company's values and vision into all external channels. Transformed the way Instagram does communications to use visual storytelling, be social first, resonate with teens, treat influencers as media outlets, and expand beyond traditional press to reach target audiences.

### **Hillary for America**

*Deputy Communications Director and TV Spokesperson, February 2015 – November 2016*

Was responsible for developing and executing Clinton's national and battleground state media strategies, managing a communications team of 100, and orchestrating all of the candidate's media interviews from 60 Minutes to The Ellen Show. Pitched and executed unique media appearances to reach specific targeted voters and drive news coverage, including Broad City and Between Two Ferns. Served as a national television spokesperson. She was covered by *The New York Times* ("This Woman Is In Charge of Shaping Hillary Clinton's Image") and *Vogue* ("These Two Sisters Couldn't Be Closer—Or More Politically Opposed") for her work in this role.

### **L'Oréal USA**

*Chief Communications Officer, 2013 - 2014*

Reporting directly to the CEO, was responsible for protecting and building L'Oréal's reputation by leading communications, public affairs, government relations and philanthropic programs. Worked closely with the company's 30 leading beauty brands, across all divisions, to advance and communicate the organization's mission, global sustainability commitments and impact on the 13 American states in which the company operates with 10,000 American employees.

### **The White House**

*Special Assistant to the President & Communications Director to First Lady Obama, 2010 – 2013*

Conceptualized and managed every element of the First Lady's profile and communications strategy, served as her key strategist, determined her activities and schedule, prepared her for all appearances, and handled all sensitive political and press situations. Developed and executed the First Lady's national public education campaigns *Let's Move* and *Joining Forces*. Expanded the First Lady's media profile utilizing non-traditional opportunities, including producing viral videos with Jimmy Fallon, securing her as the first guest editor of iVillage, and pitching her for the cover of *Better Homes and Gardens*, the first person to appear on the cover in decades. Built partnerships with Disney, Nickelodeon, MLB, NFL, NASCAR, the Olympics, Walmart, Darden and Walgreens to advance the First Lady's initiatives. She was covered by The Washington Post ("Kristina Schake: What She Did For Michelle Obama's Image") for her work for Mrs. Obama.

### **Griffin|Schake Strategic Communications and Public Affairs**

*Co-Founder and Principal, 2005 – 2010*

Founded Griffin|Schake with business partner Chad Griffin (former President of the Human Rights Campaign) to conceive and implement national media relations campaigns on behalf of progressive leaders, foundations and non-profit organizations. The firm affected public policy from renewable energy to civil rights, and secured billions of dollars in funding for issues from public education to medical research. Griffin|Schake also

specialized in communications for high-profile legal cases, having been retained by the nation's top appellate and defense firms to devise the public positioning for their cases and clients. Clients included the American Foundation for Equal Rights, California First Lady Maria Shriver, the California Endowment, US Green Building Council & LEED, Cures Now, the Science & Entertainment Exchange, and the Entertainment Industry Foundation.

Prior to founding Griffin|Schake, Kristina worked as Senior Vice President at GMMB. A graduate of Johns Hopkins University with a degree in writing, she began her career as a speechwriter for Los Angeles Mayor Richard J. Riordan.

**Contact**

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