

Casey Murphy



Casey Murphy currently serves as the Product Owner for cat.com, Caterpillar Inc.'s product marketing website. Her position involves strategic planning, project management, and coordination amongst Caterpillar's internal business divisions and technical teams to develop digital marketing programs and functionality on cat.com. Prior to her time in this position at Caterpillar, she worked in public relations where she honed her skills in both internal and external communications with an emphasis on technology. Murphy received her B.A. in Communication from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 2008. She graduated Magna Cum Laude with Speech Communication Departmental Distinction and served as a Speech Communication Leader.

1. What is your favorite part about your current position? How did you get to where you are now?

I work at Caterpillar Inc. where I am currently the cat.com Product Owner. [Cat.com](http://cat.com) is our flagship global product website that reaches over 1.5 million visitors each month. As the Product Owner, my role is to translate business goals into technical functionality and to work with our website developers to implement that functionality on the live website. It's a mixture of strategy, project management, technical implementation and communication with our internal business units that use cat.com for their digital marketing programs.

This is my first role in marketing at Caterpillar. My previous jobs have been in public relations and employee-facing communications. In each of these previous roles, I gained invaluable project management experience that I use all the time in my current job. In addition, my previous tasks were centered on technology, which helped me build the technical acumen I need for my current role.

What I like best about my job is collaborating with different areas of the business to reach a common goal. I get to work with our business units to understand their marketing plans

and our website developers to set priorities and manage work on the website. Ultimately, seeing the enhancements go live on the site is very rewarding.

2. What aspects of your education as a communication student have been most beneficial to your career?

The classes I took at U of I that continue to help me today are the classes that urged me to step out of my comfort zone and that required me to work extra hard to get the grade. Statistics. I am way better at words than numbers, but I am so glad I took that statistics class. It was scary but changed how I approach numbers and forced me to build a skill set I never thought I'd need. And it turns out numbers are a huge part of my day job. I manage budgets. I read and articulate metrics reports to show the value of cat.com. Without this class, my learning curve would have been much longer.

I was generally better at taking tests than writing papers in college. I liked memorizing facts more than writing arguments, so I tended to take classes where I knew that there would be a test instead of a paper. It turns out that I have not taken a single test since I graduated from college, but I write all the time. I'm thankful for the classes - Advanced Organizational Communication and Advanced Interpersonal Communication come to mind - that required a paper at the end of the semester. It's important to know how to synthesize facts into an argument and to support your own ideas and thought process. Sharpening those skills in class ensures a smooth transition into professional communications.

3. What advice would you give to current communication students about the professional realm?

In any realm - not just the professional realm - building and nurturing a network is really important. Don't be afraid to reach out to someone who has a job like the one you want and talk to them. Ask them insightful questions. Tell them who you are and what you're good at. They'll never know if you don't. If you reach out and don't get a response, move on to the next and keep trying.

Also, it's fine to try and fail, but be honest with yourself and don't settle. No one wins when you're in a job that you hate. Just because you're good at something doesn't mean you have to love it or want to do only that for the rest of your life. Your skills will follow you wherever you go, so make sure you're putting your energy in a place that is good for you and the work that you're doing.

Finally, there is the dreaded group project. Embrace groups projects - they'll teach you a lot about how you manage yourself and others while working on a common goal. And that's important, because life in a corporate environment is one big group project.

