Access to Experts

Maril MacDonald , CEO , Gagen MacDonald

Maril is a nationally recognized leader in communications and strategy execution. She has pioneered a discipline that collaborates with corporate leaders to optimize business performance by engaging and mobilizing stakeholders behind a company's strategic goals, its culture and its brand. Her clients include some of the most recognized brands in the world. Maril is CEO and founder of Gagen MacDonald, a leading strategy execution and change leadership firm. She's also CEO of Son&Sons, the pioneering branding and identity firm. In 2011, Maril founded and launched Let Go & Lead, an online community dedicated to new philosophies and strategies for leadership. In addition, Maril is a past president of the Arthur W. Page Society, a membership organization for chief communications officers (CCOs) of major corporations, dedicated to advancing the management policy role of the CCO. She continues to serve on the Board of Directors. Maril previously served as vice president, corporate communications, and was a member of the Executive Management Committee for Navistar, and its operating company, International Truck and Engine Corporation. In addition to leading communications, organizational development and brand strategy, Maril worked closely with CEO John Horne, to direct the company's highly successful cultural turnaround. This was a key factor in Navistar's resurgence from the brink of bankruptcy to being named in the Wall Street Journal's "top 10 Performers" list and Business Week's "Top 50 Companies." Prior to joining Navistar, Maril was vice president of communications for Pitman-Moore Inc., the then leading international animal health company. There she led a global initiative across 120 countries to leverage the strengths of several key acquisitions under one brand, corporate identity and ethical packaging system. Previously, she held leadership positions spanning operations, communications, and human resources with Bayer USA Inc., The Standard Oil Company / British Petroleum and a Cleveland-based public relations firm. Her broad range of corporate experience has allowed her to claim "the white space between the silos" as her ultimate functional expertise. Maril was recently recognized by PR Week as one of the top 25 leaders in the industry, and has been named by them as one of "The 50 Most Powerful Women in PR." She was also recognized as a "PR All-Star" by Inside PR. She is frequently invited to speak at major conferences and universities. Gagen MacDonald has been named by the Holmes Group as "Employee Communications Firm of the Year" and "Strategic Agency of the Year." Maril serves as a Trustee for the Institute of Public Relations, a non-profit organization that conducts PR research and sponsors public relations education. She is also a member on the Georgetown University Master of Professional Studies Strategic PR Communications Advisory Council.

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