



I've never had the pleasure of working with another individual as highly skilled or motivated to excel as Joe Loudon. More than the quintessential "Jack of all trades," he is the master of many: a brilliant writer... a gifted photographer... a fantastic graphic artist... an outstanding website designer... a methodical project manager... a savvy media relations specialist... a super smart strategist... all rolled into one. I would have liked to have had Joe cloned, so he could have worked full time in each of these capacities, during the time I served as the Jackson County, Missouri public information officer.

I soon realized in a Jackson County Communications Department of eight people one person stood out. First, I was shocked to learn that on a staff that size—for an organization that complex, with a dozen elected officials, nearly two dozen departments, about 40 commissions and countless other programs—Joe was the lone copywriter. He had to write it all, everything from condolence letters to the State of the County Address. That's more work than one person could typically handle. Joe made it look easy. He always got the job done on time, and the work he produced was, without exception, exceptional. (As a copy editor, I never had it so easy.)

By the way, Joe had another full-time job. As the county's web master, he kept six websites up and running in an antiquated management system that required him to be a different kind of writer, writing code. Honestly, I never understood the technical side of the web work he did. I just know he continually kept those websites from crashing.

Joe's other skills were more obvious to me. During my career in print and broadcast journalism, as well as public relations, I never met a more talented or more versatile writer. Joe's writing grabs your attention and holds it. He knows how to make the complex understandable, if not simple. He can create feature articles that stir your emotions and ad copy that generates a real buzz. Any national news magazine or prestigious marketing agency would be thrilled to have Joe on its staff.

Joe's media acumen as a former newspaper reporter made him an invaluable resource for me as the PIO. He wrote most of our news releases. He anticipated the most difficult questions journalists might pose, understood how to "control the message" and stressed "getting out front of the story."

What may have impressed me most about Joe was that he seemed unflappable. Though highly organized, he was also flexible—able to adjust priorities seamlessly. Deadline pressure never fazed him. He kept his calm when others who were less organized and often prone to panic would frantically turn to him to help complete their projects at the last minute. (Joe was the go-to guy to save the day.)

Finally, Joe's ability to genuinely connect with everyone at Jackson County, from the highest elected officials to the maintenance staff emptying the trash cans speaks volumes about his character. He treats everyone with respect. He's intelligent, creative, polite and always willing to lend a hand. I miss him. If you have an opportunity to hire Joe, seize it. It'll be one of the best decisions you ever make.

Sincerely,

Lisa Carter – NBC News Radio National Anchor