

KATHRYN SHEA DUNCAN, MBA, CDME

STRATEGIC TOURISM MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS LEADER

CONTACT

- 📞 337 384 8235
- ✉️ kduncan@visitlakecharles.org
- 📍 Lake Charles, Louisiana
- 🌐 kathrynsheaduncan.com/portfolio

PROFILE SUMMARY

I'm a senior tourism marketing and communications leader specializing in data-driven strategy, destination storytelling, and partner alignment. I bring a blend of creative vision and analytical precision, ensuring every campaign, report, and initiative is grounded in measurable outcomes and meaningful audience insights.

EDUCATION

MCNEESE STATE UNIVERSITY

2022-2023

Master of Business Administration

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA LAFAYETTE

2014-2018

Bachelor of Science in Marketing

AWARDS & HONORS

Destinations International (DI) 30 Under 30
Southeast Tourism Society (STS) Rising Star
eTourism Emerging Tourism Star
Bronze HSMAI Adrian Award - Digital
Leadership Southwest Louisiana Graduate
Louisiana Tourism Leadership Academy Graduate

CERTIFICATIONS

CERTIFIED DESTINATION MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVE (CDME)

May 2025 | Destinations International

PROFESSIONAL IN DESTINATION MANAGEMENT (PDM)

Nov 2023 | Destinations International

ORGANIZATIONS

DI 30 Under 30 Alumni Council

Committee Member · Jan 2026 - Present

STS Recognition Pillar Committee

Committee Member · Apr 2022 - Present

Imperial Calcasieu Museum

Board Member · May 2021 - Present

DI Public Relations & Professional Development Committees

Committee Member · Jan 2023 - Jan 2025

WORK EXPERIENCE

Visit Lake Charles - Louisiana's Playground

Senior Director of Social Media & Communications | Aug 2023 - Present

Director of Social Media | Jan 2022 - Aug 2023

Media/Public Relations Manager | Sept 2019 - Jan 2022

- Overhauled organizational communications to be fully data-driven; integrated tourism datasets into executive reports, newsletters, and community publications to influence policy and community engagement.
- Oversee all marketing and communications for Just Imagine SWLA, a 50-year master plan, translating complex development initiatives into accessible narratives for residents, civic leaders, and media.
- Built the first dedicated social media strategy, managing multi-brand content, paid/organic campaigns, influencer collaborations, and analytics to drive measurable growth.
- Oversee a \$120K agency-managed social media budget, a \$70K in-house communications and social media budget, and the cooperative marketing budget for Just Imagine SWLA.
- Recruited and lead a high-performing team of communications professionals and interns.
- Led public relations strategy and secured high-impact placements in publications such as *The New York Times* and *Southern Living*.

Acadia Parish Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development

Special Projects Coordinator | May 2018 - Sept 2019

- Led multi-channel communications and media outreach; analyzed digital engagement metrics to guide strategy and strengthen member and community relationships.
- Managed planning and promotion of major Chamber events, building partnerships with community and government stakeholders to strengthen regional relationships and drive membership.

Kathryn Shea Duncan, L.L.C.

Owner | May 2023 - Present

- Deliver integrated digital marketing, website, and photography solutions for hospitality and agricultural brands, blending strategy, content creation, and high-impact visuals that power advertising campaigns and strengthen brand presence.

KATHRYN SHEA DUNCAN, MBA, CDME

STRATEGIC TOURISM MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS LEADER

Kathryn Shea Duncan is a senior tourism marketing and communications leader specializing in data-driven strategy, destination storytelling, and partner alignment. She brings a unique blend of creative vision and analytical precision, ensuring every campaign, report, and initiative is grounded in measurable outcomes and meaningful audience insights. She thrives at the intersection of analytics and storytelling, bringing clarity to complex data and strategies that inspire action, whether the audience is a local resident, a city council member, or a global traveler.

Her path into tourism was anything but accidental. During her senior year of college, Kathryn Shea was crowned Queen of the 81st International Rice Festival in Crowley, Louisiana, where a town of 12,000 welcomed more than 200,000 visitors over just a few days. That experience revealed the transformative power of events and storytelling to draw people from near and far. "That's when I realized I love travel and tourism, and how much it can do for small communities," she says. It was the moment she knew she had found her calling.

At her core, Kathryn Shea is a storyteller and a visual thinker. She picked up her first camera from her mother and went on to blend a design and photography background into a broader skillset spanning marketing, social media, and communications leadership. Travel remains both a professional pursuit and a personal passion, having introduced her to cultures and ways of life that continue to shape her perspective and deepen her understanding of the world.

As Senior Director of Social Media and Communications at Visit Lake Charles, Kathryn Shea oversees multi-brand marketing strategies and leads high-profile communications initiatives across strategic planning, resident sentiment analysis, executive communications, crisis management, stakeholder consulting, and influencer marketing. Key highlights of her work include serving on the steering committee for Visit Lake Charles's multi-year strategic plan, managing paid, organic, and influencer campaigns across multiple brands using analytics from Zartico, Longwoods, and Sprout Social, contributing to crisis communications during four federally declared disasters, and advancing from Manager to Senior Director while building the organization's first dedicated social media program and mentoring a growing communications team.



Having joined Visit Lake Charles in 2019, Kathryn Shea earned her Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME) credential in May 2025, the tourism industry's highest educational achievement. She has been recognized as a Destinations International 30 Under 30 honoree, Southeast Tourism Society Rising Star, and eTourism Emerging Star, and her work and expertise have been featured in The New York Times, Travel South USA, PRSA Strategies and Tactics, CrowdRiff, and the University of Louisiana Alumni Council. She has spoken at Southeast Tourism Society, Louisiana Travel Summit, and other industry forums on digital strategy, data-driven storytelling, and influencer partnerships.

Tourism is not just a career for Kathryn Shea. It is the industry she was born to be in. She brings to it an unrelenting drive to learn, grow, and push the boundaries of what destination marketing can accomplish. Looking ahead, she is equally passionate about investing in the next generation of tourism leaders, sharing hard-won lessons, opening doors, and helping emerging professionals find their footing in an industry she loves deeply.