

Conway Fraser

Partner & Advisor at Fraser Torosay

Waterloo & Toronto, ON, CA

Communications Fixer.

Description

Conway Fraser is a strategic business mentor and communications advisor with Fraser Torosay, based in Waterloo, Ontario. Communications is the language of leadership -- and Conway is a specialist in helping executive leaders build and protect their personal and brand reputations through the implementation of various strategies and tactics. His process includes asking unconventional and challenging questions that expose weaknesses and reveal opportunities. Conway is known for speaking truth to the highest levels of power -- telling the people he works with what they need to hear and not what they want to hear.

In a previous life, Conway was a Gemini Award-winning CBC journalist. He has travelled the country and the world in various roles including National Reporter, Investigative Journalist and Senior Producer. Conway has worked on Parliament Hill, at Queen's Park, covered crisis situations and had many people being held accountable on the opposite end of his microphone. Over the course of this career, he has seen first-hand what works and doesn't work in effective leadership communication.

These days, Conway implements those experiences and skills into his client work -- with specialities in executive communications counsel, issues management, media coaching, corporate storytelling, communicating transformational change and stakeholder relations. He works with senior leadership -- bringing his unique approach into environments requiring a fresh approach to challenges -- both old and new. He helps establish successful narratives.

Conway is an extremely active community volunteer, serving on various non-profit Boards and doing extensive pro bono work as a mentor for tech-startups.

Availability

Keynote, Moderator, Panelist, Host/MC, Corporate Training

Industry Expertise

Public Relations and Communications, Professional Training and Coaching, Business Services

Topics

Public Relations, Stakeholder & Public Engagement, Corporate Communications Strategies, Media, Media Training, Media Relations, Message Development, Reputation Management, Issues Management, Speechwriting, News Media, Crisis Communications, Story-Telling, Political Communication

Affiliations

Health Sciences North, NORCAT Innovation Mill, ICAN, TimeHero, ExpertFile

Sample Talks

Preparing for the Shit Storm

A crisis will happen eventually with your organization. It always does. Conway Fraser has seen it in on both sides of the coin -- as an award-winning journalist covering major crisis situations -- and now as a PR advisor who helps companies and executives navigate through these issues. Like anything, Conway says the hard work needs to happen long before a crisis happens. In this talk, Conway goes through the steps needed to prepare for the inevitable shit storm that awaits you. It may be the best investment you ever make.

How To Destroy Your Reputation in 20 Minutes

You can spend 20 years building a reputation and just 20 minutes destroying it. And, in the majority of situations, it's not because the media dug something up -- it's because someone simply does something stupid. Conway Fraser has seen it more times than he can count -- as both an award-winning investigative journalist and now as a strategic communications advisor. In this talk, Conway talks about the key ways to protect and build your reputation -- and how to be on the lookout for risks that may threaten that reputation. He shares anecdotes of people who got sloppy and paid the ultimate price. This presentation is good for everyone from CEO's to front-line workers because, at the end of the day -- if everyone is protecting their personal reputations -- the company or organization simply benefits by default. It's an interactive presentation where, quite often, the best stories come from the floor.

What's Your Story?

In today's rapid fire media world, everyone is blinded by the ever-changing social mediums for delivering messages while losing sight of the basic principle of sound, story telling. Conway Fraser is an award-winning storyteller and knows what makes a good story that will connect with your intended audience. Through sharing entertaining and insightful anecdotes, Conway leaves the audience with easy-to-understand guidance on how to tell an effective story and connect with people. This is the kind of presentation everyone will find useful, from the experienced communicator to the corporate CEO or manager.

Reporters Are People, Too!

All too often, leaders in various sectors seem to be afraid of the media -- thinking reporters are only out to "get" people. Conway Fraser disagrees. He spent 20 years at the highest levels of journalism and he says reporters, for the most part, just want to get quick and accurate information to help them tell their story. They are people just like you. They are educated professionals. They have families and they have bills to pay at home. These days, Conway helps companies with their media relations and in this talk, he addresses some of the key questions, concerns and fears people have about the media. He does this through the use of some colourful anecdotes and opens the floor up to questions. The end goal is help participants better understand what journalists want which is the first step in ensuring respectful, productive two-way media relationships.

Media Training 101 (workshop)

Conway Fraser knows what the media wants from an interview subject. He spent 20 years in the media and is an award-winning former journalist who now works as a public relations advisor. His full-day media training workshop takes the most inexperienced public speaker and gets them up to speed on how to prepare for a media interview and how to take on challenging questions. This workshop is for a maximum of 6 people due to the fact that each participant will be interviewed on-camera twice and will receive on-the-spot feedback and tips. This workshop can be done for larger groups but it will impact whether they get on camera for a mock interview or not.

Past Talks

Judge/Panelist - Pitch 2016 Competition
NORCAT's Pitch 2016

Marketing and Communications for Startup Businesses
Entrepreneurship 101

The Role of Media in Telling Your Story
Keynote Speaker - Chartered Accountants Association AGM

Guest Lecturer (various dates past 4 years)
Sports Administration Program - Communications Program

Why We Need to Protect Our Media
Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities AGM

Keynote Convocation Speaker
Convocation

Alumni Speech to Graduates
LU Convocation

Communicating Through Workforce Planning
Sudbury & Manitoulin Workforce Planning AGM

Education

Laurentian University
BA Political Science

Canadore College
Diploma Broadcast Journalism

Accomplishments

Gemini Award

The Gemini is the Canadian version of the American Emmy Award. Conway received this one for a documentary he produced for "The National" -- a national news magazine program for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

22 various journalism awards

Over a 20-year career, Conway was a winner or finalist for 22 journalism awards including a number with the RTNDA and Canadian Association of Journalists -- national awards.

Top 40 Under 40

Received when Conway was still considered "young".

National Public Health Social Media Challenge

Fraser Torosay produced a video for the Sudbury District Health Unit which finished 2nd in Canada in terms of social media viral uptake -- second only to the Toronto Health Unit.

Laurentian University Young Leader Award

Awarded when Conway was able to use "young" and "leader" in the same sentence.

Testimonials

Andrea Loziuk

"Conway and his partner conducted media coaching sessions with IDC Canada's team of research analysts in the spring of 2016. The chemistry and dynamic between the two cannot be matched -- together they make a great team who have experience in both the print, online and broadcast channels of journalism and did a great job training our team to play to their strengths. Our analysts had nothing but positive feedback following the sessions, and I've seen an increase in not only the responsiveness and willingness of analysts to work with the media, but also an increase in the number of media mentions IDC Canada receives in the news. He has been integral to a positive cultural change on the IDC team, arming them with the skills they need to be successful in the press."

Peter Evans

Conway gets my (coveted) 5 Star Rating. His experience as an award-winning investigative journalist has prepared him well for what he does as a trusted advisor with a variety of companies. But it's his passion for storytelling and his acute understanding of how the world of media works today that sets him apart. Conway has the insights that you can only get from somebody who sees a story from both sides of the camera. I have sat in on his workshops and they are simply incredible. Every executive or subject matter expert who needs to communicate better would benefit from what he teaches in these sessions. He has a unique way of de-jargoning a topic and making smart people (experts) feel more at ease with his easygoing style and a very sharp sense of humor. At ExpertFile, we selected Conway to offer a media coaching workshop tailored to select corporate and institutional clients in the US and Canada. This partnership has been a major win for us. I couldn't say better things about Conway.

Don Duval

Over the past three years, I have worked with Conway Fraser on a variety of initiatives while serving as the CEO of NORCAT. Conway has demonstrated outstanding skills and passion as an advisor working and mentoring early stage tech companies on marketing, communications, PR, and pitching to investors. In addition, he delivers an outstanding media training workshop and is one of the highest rated speakers in our entrepreneurship education program at NORCAT. I and our clients that he has worked with can't say enough about Conway, both personally and professionally. On the personal side, I can say that Conway has become a great friend and always willing to engage in a healthy debate on whatever topic he thinks he can win at. On the business side, we will continue to recommend him to companies seeking a creative, passionate, and trusted PR, media, or communications advisor.

Scott Brooks

Conway Fraser is the kind of advisor every tech-based company should have on its roster. Conway has the uncanny ability to take the most complicated processes and distill them down into clear, concise and effective messaging that connects with whatever audience you're trying to reach – potential customers, interested investors and prospective employees. He is a natural storyteller and an analytical, strategic thinker. His background as a journalist is evident in the boardroom when he asks the kind of questions that makes a team work hard to see things they hadn't seen before – making them better and improving the product. His value lies well beyond strategic communications. He is an advisor who approaches his clients with the kind of passion and vigour that you would expect from someone who actually has ownership in the company. He is highly recommended.

Shawn Poland

"Conway Fraser's media training is the best I've ever seen. Conway was recruited to work with our faculty experts in order to provide them with the tools and confidence to handle media interviews with authority. His coaching is practical, informative and engaging. As a result, our experts are fast-becoming 'go to' sources for media, helping to build our College's brand with potential students and our stakeholders in both the community and corporate world."

Cecil Rosner

"His ability to put people at ease and encourage them to tell their stories is superb. I still use some of his stories in my ongoing training sessions. If he is teaching you about how media operate, rest assured he can do it as he knows the subject inside out."

Alison Crawford

"From 2003 to 2006 Conway and I worked in close partnership on the award-winning CBC Winnipeg investigative unit. Working with Conway was a pleasure, not only because he is almost always calm but he is a thorough researcher, planner and interviewer. Conway can see any story from every point of view, anticipate problems and was already prepared with back-up plans. He's also one of those journalists who truly is a good listener. Whether through his sense of humour or compassion, Conway always helped make all our interview subjects feel comfortable in front of the microphone and camera."

Jon Treen

"I worked closely with Conway in the areas of media training, message preparation, and crisis communications -- areas that are not native to mining professionals and our everyday responsibilities. Conway Fraser was able to help me understand the value in clearly communicating, both externally with the media and internally with employees. His counsel in this area was invaluable and his training helped me prepare for tough questions. He was an invaluable asset in getting our message out. The added value is the fact that Conway isn't like other professional communicators -- he truly understands the mining sector and the challenges it faces in getting its message out in a positive manner. I would highly recommend Fraser Torosay for strategic communications."

Kelly Strong

"I've worked with Conway on a number of projects with all of them having very positive outcomes. He's helped me develop professionally in the field of communications and strategic thinking. I would definitely recommend Conway to other clients."

John Pollesel

"I highly recommend Conway as a business partner for any company seeking to strategize and execute media relations. He is excellent at taking complex issues and distilling them to simple terms with clients to ensure that their communication to the intended audience(s) is very effective. Conway is very practical in his approach and provided me and my team invaluable media training to manage very difficult issues in extremely sensitive situations. He is highly capable in formulating communications strategies that reflect the business objectives and values of our company; he is by far the best media and public relations consultant that I have worked with in my career."

Guy Venne

"I have recommended Conway Fraser to many of my clients and friends needing effective communication strategies to deal with sensitive business issues. Conway is a master of communication, he is able to distill subject matter to its essence and then prescribe the best strategy to achieve the desired outcomes. From the words chosen, to the tones used to communicate them, one can easily conceive of the successful alchemy. Many of my referrals have thanked me for recommending Conway. Affirmation enough for me to continue."

Chris Mercer

"What can I say about Conway that hasn't been said - he is a trusted advisor, a creative problem-solver and someone who you can rely on on either your best or worst day. Conway is a savvy professional who I have hired on multiple occasions and would not hesitate to do so again. No matter the complexity of the job, he and his team always find a way to deliver positive results for your company. Any organization can benefit from his guidance, whether it be related to communications, marketing, media relations, crisis communications, organizational strategy, and/or reputation management. You won't regret making the call."

Dominic Giroux

"I highly recommend Conway who can serve as an effective, external strategic sounding board for any senior executive in the private or public sector. He is smart, versatile, serves as an excellent devil's advocate to identify the weaknesses of your corporate strategies. If you have to lead a major transformation, I can't think of a better external resource to help you sharpen your strategy, develop and align key messages for your various audiences."

Mike Edgell

"I worked with Conway at CBC News. He is someone who strives to find the truth, and the better way. He asks the right questions, and the tough ones, while respecting the implications of the those questions for those involved. He does the hard work necessary to find solutions. Plan B is not enough."

JP Rains

"Conway and I have worked together on many projects throughout the past 5 years, all of them have been home runs (mostly due to his side of the project!). We've worked collaboratively on anything from promotional videos, web strategy, communications strategy and social media advertising. His counsel has been greatly appreciated over the years and has been a tremendously positive influence."

Nick Davis

"Conway Fraser was one of the most efficient and talented reporters I have had the pleasure to work with. His ability to turn stories around in a fast and accurate manner, and the professional way he approached his work was a good example he set for younger journalists like myself."

Mike Beauregard

"As a former colleague and co-worker at the CBC, I highly endorse Conway Fraser. The skills he accrued as an award winning journalist put him head and shoulders ahead of most of his competitors. He has an intimate knowledge of how the media operates, tremendous writing and communications skills, the ability to produce effective material and strategies for public consumption and an impressive list of media contacts throughout the world."

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