Melanie Bernds

Director of Communications, Benson Hill

Melanie Bernds is an accomplished communications expert with a strong background in plant science and food technology companies. Melanie has over 13 years of experience in agriculture communications strategy and is currently the Director of Communications at Benson Hill, one of the fastest-growing food tech companies in the country.

Melanie maximizes the public's awareness and creates a greater understanding of the realities and benefits of the emerging growth company as it empowers innovators to unlock the global genetic potential of plants, benefitting people and our planet.

Prior to joining Benson Hill, for eight years Melanie served as the Director of Public Relations at the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center and led strategy and execution of internal and external communication outreach with local and national media and developed content for digital engagement with the scientific and nonprofit community.

Before that, she held the position as a Public Relations Account Supervisor at Black Twig Communications, a nationally ranked public relations, and marketing agency based in St. Louis. In this role, she led efforts to achieve business goals of the public relations agency's largest accounts including MERS Goodwill and the economic development agency Missouri Partnership, and managed teams for various clients.

Melanie is passionate about digital personal branding and developing thought-leadership to advance goals. She focuses on strategically developing and implementing communication approaches for organizations to maximize their brand and reach business goals through media relations, online digital and social media content, copywriting, advertising campaigns and experience events. Melanie holds a Master of Arts in Communications Management from Webster University and a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies with a concentration in public relations from Fontbonne University with a minor in advertising

Melanie currently advises on the board of directors at Gateway Greening, St. Louis Public Radio/NPR Leadership Council Generation Listen STL and previously served as the CO-President of the St. Louis Social Media Club. As an active member of the Danforth Center’s Young Friends Steering Committee, 39 North's innovation district Young Friends, the St. Louis Agribusiness Club, and volunteer to Missouri Cures as she works to enhance St. Louis as a world center for AgTech, bioscience, and other industries that are defining the future of the St. Louis region.

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