



Hedgeweek US Awards 2018

Best North American PR Firm

Winner: Peaks Strategies

Like alternative investments themselves, Peaks Strategies evolves to meet the changes and challenges of today's marketplace. Investment managers change themselves. The alternative investment sector continues to evolve.

Tom Walek is a pioneer in hedge fund PR and communications, having established his first firm, Walek & Associates in 1998. Following the sale of that firm, Walek unveiled a new strategic communications firm, Peaks Strategies, in April 2016, for public and private market companies in capital markets, traditional and alternative asset managers, fintech firms and financial and professional services.

Over the last two decades, Walek has been a driving force behind substantial change in hedge fund PR and communications.

"Recently, I saw a list of PR firms operating in the hedge fund space and it must have been four pages long! If I think back to 1998, that list would have been two or three firms," says Walek.

Hedge funds generally stayed out of the media, offering 'no comment'. They didn't want to be written about, they didn't seek visibility.

"When I started Walek, I talked about the need for managers to build a brand, and to manage that brand," says Walek. "I talked about running a hedge fund as a business and the need to think about smart ways to use marketing and communications. I lit that torch and carried that torch."

"Now, there are seemingly dozens of PR firms supporting hedge funds. The market has changed, the managers themselves have changed, and more executives appreciate that if they want to build a hedge fund business they need to go about marketing differently."

Just as the marketplace has changed, so too has Walek, regarding the establishment of Peaks Strategies as the next exciting chapter of his career. "Today, I'm working with fund managers to define their brands, and then articulate those brands through traditional media, social media, video, content/thought leadership, targeted events and other tools. I continue to

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embrace the boutique professional service model and believe that it offers by far the best knowledge, service and results for the client."

"There are many more channels of communication open to hedge fund managers today and Peaks Strategies brings deep experience to the table, extensive contacts, a long-term perspective and senior level service. That's what's getting me excited," says Walek.

Whereas there was reticence among managers 15 years ago, they have, in recent years, become far more open to expressing themselves. In part, regulations have opened up many more communications options for hedge funds.

And in today's marketplace, managers have little choice. Given the sheer volume of funds out there, being able to stand out and get noticed has become much more competitive. Fund managers, especially the next generation of Millennial managers, understand the power of brand building.

"We are working with managers in the USD500 million to USD1 billion AUM range, as well as next generation managers," confirms Walek, adding that the typical conversation with a new client often goes begins with, "We want to raise our visibility so that when potential investors do a search for us, they like what they find."

"We work with each client to decide upon the best strategy to make that happen. Whatever the strategy, how can we differentiate who you are and what you do? That's where it all starts; what are you doing that is interesting and different from other managers in your peer group?"

On winning this year's award, Walek concludes: "It's an honour to receive this Hedgeweek award for our work today. We see exciting times ahead as the innovation that drives our firm and the hedge fund industry shows no signs of slowing down."