



## 2026 Page Spring Seminar



**Cristal Downing**  
**Former Executive Vice President**  
**and Chief Communications &**  
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**Merck & Co., Inc**

Cristal N. Downing is executive vice president and chief communications & public affairs officer of Merck & Co., Inc. Cristal's remit encompasses the discovery, design and delivery of Merck's global reputation, policy and sustainability platforms, which comprise areas and efforts inclusive of global communications, public affairs, government relations,

sustainability, health equity and philanthropy. She and her team focus on shaping a favorable operating environment for the company amid one of the most challenging geopolitical, societal, and economic eras in history. Before joining Merck, Cristal honed her skills at Johnson & Johnson through dynamic roles, including Vice President of Communication & Public Affairs for the Medical Devices segment and Vice President for Enterprise Strategy & Finance Communications. She has also led strategic business and communications efforts at TE Connectivity and ITT, and spearheaded business and communications planning and execution at American Express, JPMorganChase and Wells Fargo. Cristal has received notable industry honors and recognitions of her leadership and contributions, and just this year was named PRWeek's Most Purposeful In-House Communicator and received ColorComm's Circle Award. Cristal is an Advisory Board member of the University of Southern California Center for Public Relations and a member of the board of trustees at Rutgers Cancer Institute Board.