

Cristal N. Downing

Executive vice president and chief communications & public affairs officer

Cristal Downing joined Merck as executive vice president and chief communications & public affairs officer in 2021. In this role, Cristal leads Merck's Corporate Affairs organization and is responsible for the development, advancement and execution of the company's communications, public affairs, and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) efforts. Guided by business priorities and dedication to all who depend on the company's lifesaving and life-changing work, Cristal is focused on fostering a deep understanding of Merck's scientific contributions and impact on global health, ensuring public policy priorities stay aligned with business priorities, and enabling strategic engagement and impactful outcomes with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders.

Most recently, Cristal was vice president, Communications & Public Affairs, Medical Devices, at Johnson & Johnson, where she fortified and amplified the strategy that conveys how the business is elevating the standard of patient care. Prior to that, she held the role of vice president, Global Finance Communications at Johnson & Johnson, where she partnered with the chief financial officer to implement communications and public affairs strategies that enabled the CFO and CEO strategic platforms.

Cristal also co-led the development and implementation of "Our Race to Health Equity" — Johnson & Johnson's Racial & Social Justice strategy. She has more than 20 years of leadership expertise and capabilities, working in dynamic and complex organizations, including American Express, JP Morgan Chase, and Wells Fargo.

Cristal is a member of the board of trustees for the Ronald McDonald House of Central & Northern New Jersey and is affiliated with several key communications associations. Cristal received her Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Monmouth University.

