



COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

JOB DESCRIPTION

Department: Executive	Division: Administration
Work Location: Urbana City Building	Percent Time: 100%
Job Type: Civil Service	FLSA Status: Non-Exempt
Reports To: Mayor	Union: Non-Union

JOB SUMMARY

Working under general supervision of the Mayor, the Strategic Communications Specialist develops and edits communication materials that promote a positive public image of Urbana to various audiences. This position also collaborates with others in the organization to achieve brand consistency, content and message coordination, and the highest standards for internal and external communications. Additionally, this position supports the marketing and promotion of Downtown Urbana and the Cunningham Avenue Corridor.

Defining Class Characteristics:

Work assignments involve frequent direct contact with the public, as well as performing various research support functions. Employees in this class have frequent contact with the public and answer a variety of questions requiring knowledge of City and departmental news, events and information. As this level, the incumbent is expected to have substantial administrative and technical work experience. Work involves providing significant support services to others both within and outside of the department that substantially influences decision-making processes. Work activities are complex and others rely on the accuracy and reliability of the information, analysis, or advice to make decisions, and affect the overall image of the city.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Planning

1. Designs and implements communications programs and plans that promote the vision, goals, activities and positive image of Urbana to citizens, neighborhoods, business community and community leaders, in alignment with City Council goals and TIF District Plans. Works at the direction of City leadership to implement annual communication goals including objectives, strategies, and activities.
2. Assists City departments to develop communication and marketing materials; coordinates cross-departmental communications.

Marketing and Communications Activities

3. Develops marketing strategies to effectively promote City projects/programs while educating the public on issues.

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4. Writes and edits key external communication materials, using a style that is engaging, concise and appropriate in tone for the organization/audience; ensures accuracy of information and quality control over outgoing products; develops messages appropriate for a wide variety of subjects and diverse audiences.
5. Creates printed and electronic material by utilizing available desktop publishing software and becoming proficient in new software programs and versions.
6. Develops/oversees web communications strategy and content that is sensitive, high priority, cross-departmental, and/or related to key initiatives; coordinates messaging for external websites; advises on tone, look and feel of websites.
7. Maintains and manages social media interaction on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to enhance communication with the public; ensures compliance with social media standards; develops social media content in coordination with other departments.
8. Maintains sufficient understanding of multimedia production techniques to support the work of City staff; manages the City's photo and design archives.
9. Oversees and develops the production and distribution of a variety of information and marketing materials, such as: the Mayor's City video, internal and external newsletters, communications provided to new residents and businesses, and coordinating with UPTV on various video productions.
10. Operates within budgets and deadlines established for various publications by following an established production schedule.

Media Relations

11. Maintains contact information with the news media to ensure accuracy of disseminated information. Provides assistance to department media liaisons as requested.
12. Prepares and disseminates news releases regarding City events, services and regulations in conjunction with departments, coordinate media conferences, and arranges media coverage for special events.
13. Promotes a positive and professional image of Urbana by being knowledgeable about City programs, news and events, appropriately answering questions and referring questions or issues beyond the scope of expertise to the appropriate City official.
14. Refers media requests for information to an appropriate spokesperson or information source.

Administration

15. Prepares cost estimates for recommendations; submits justification for requests. Develops requests for proposals and scopes of work parameters; administers and manages contracts with vendors to provide services for communications, design, and other related services.
16. Maintains records and files using automated and manual methods; enters and retrieves data using various computer systems; completes reports as needed or required.
17. Prepares a variety of written correspondence, reports, procedures, and other materials.
18. Perform other related duties as assigned.

JOB FACTORS

Education & Experience

Any combination of education and experience that would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities would be:

- Bachelor's degree in Journalism, Communications, Marketing, Business Administration, or a related field; equivalent experience will be accepted in lieu of post-secondary education.
- Two years of progressively responsible experience in marketing and communications, public information, graphic design or a related field.

Knowledge of

- Communications and Media—media production, communication, and dissemination techniques and methods. This includes alternative ways to inform and entertain via written, oral, and visual media.
- English Language —structure and content of the English language including word usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary and punctuation.
- Sales and Marketing —principles and methods for marketing and promotions.
- Customer Service —principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.
- Clerical — Knowledge of administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, and other office procedures and terminology.
- Law and Government — Basic knowledge of relevant laws (e.g., copyright); basic principles and practices of public agency budgeting, financial recordkeeping and reporting; applicable City policies and practices.

Skills

- Communication Skills—excellent verbal, written, graphic design and interpersonal communication skills, including an ability to effectively present information and engage diverse audiences.
- Strong proofreading and editing skills.
- Organizational, planning, and project management skills.
- Working knowledge of various software programs, including MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.), Adobe software, e-mail marketing systems and social media platforms operating in a Windows environment.
- Communication and customer service skills sufficient to deal effectively with the public, vendors, and staff, using written and/or verbal communication.
- Time, project management and problem-solving skills.

Ability to

- Advise on marketing, communications management and public relations programs. Plan and prepare media releases and news conferences.

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- Determine story emphasis, gather and verify news information through interviews, observation and research, and present stories/articles suitable for publication. Exercises sound judgment in the release of information.
- Maintain composure during difficult situations; possess problem-solving skills.
- Adapt to frequent changes in workload.
- Interpret, apply, and explain applicable policies, procedures, and laws.
- Analyze situations and identify pertinent problems/issues; collect relevant information; evaluate realistic options; and recommend/implement appropriate course of action.
- Understand and carry out complex oral and written instructions.
- Establish and maintain a variety of filing, recordkeeping, and tracking systems.
- Organize and prioritize a variety of projects and multiple tasks in an effective and timely manner; organize own work, set priorities and meet critical time deadlines.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and harmonious working relationships with those contacted in the course of work. Work well independently as well as a cooperative environment.

Licenses, Certifications and Memberships Required

- Must possess a valid State of Illinois driver's license or obtain one within fifteen (15) days of employment.

Supervision Received

- General supervision is exercised by the Mayor. After initial orientation, the incumbent is expected to work independently, developing procedures for performance of a variety of duties and performing complex duties within established policy guidelines.

Level and complexity of the supervision exercised

(List the job classification and working titles of those directly trained and/or supervised by this person).

- This position is not responsible for supervising any staff positions.

Work Hours and Environment, Physical Requirements, and Additional Information

- Standard office setting. Normal working hours and days: Mon - Fri; 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.; 1 hr. meal break. Overtime, including flexibility for evening/weekend assignments, as needed.
- Work Environment: Work is primarily performed in an office setting; some work outdoors may occasionally occur.
- Physical Demands: Continuous: sitting, standing, talking, using effective verbal and written communication, handling stress & emotions, concentration on tasks, recalling details, making decisions, and adjusting to changes.

For HR/Finance Use

Title Code	Pay Grade 35
EEO Category 2- Professional	