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## COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

### **DEFINITION**

Under general supervision, develops agency-wide communications and media strategies; plans, oversees, and participates in the Authority's communications, media relations, and digital and print content-generation and publication activities; creates and maintains a high level of positive public awareness of the Authority's mission, services, and accomplishments via dissemination of information through a variety of communications channels targeted to audiences including the general public, community groups, non-profit organizations, local government agencies, partner agencies, and the media.

### **SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED**

Receives general supervision from the External Affairs Manager. Exercises direct supervision over assigned internal staff.

### **CLASS CHARACTERISTICS**

This supervisory-level classification is responsible for providing professional support in strategy development, planning, design, and implementation of communications, media relations, content-generation, and publication activities. Incumbents require public relations and communications skills, as well as competence in coordinating assigned projects and programs with that of other programs and outside agencies. Successful performance of the work requires the frequent use of tact, discretion, and independent judgment, knowledge of Authority activities and priorities, and extensive staff, public, and organizational contact. This class is distinguished from the External Affairs Manager in that the latter has management responsibility for all functions and activities of the Community Engagement Department, including public information, media relations, community outreach, partnership development, educational programs, volunteer programs, and government affairs.

### **EXAMPLES OF TYPICAL JOB FUNCTIONS** *(Illustrative Only)*

*Management reserves the right to add, modify, change, or rescind the work assignments of different positions and to make reasonable accommodations so that qualified employees can perform the typical job functions.*

Under supervision of the External Affairs Manager:

- Develops agency-wide communications and media strategies; plans, oversees, and participates in the Authority's communications, media relations, and digital and print content-generation and publication activities.
- Creates, implements, and updates the Authority's communication and audience engagement plans, including researching, analyzing, and developing strategies and timelines for public information and promotional campaigns.
- Owns and manages the Authority's branding and image; maintains consistency and clarity in public messages and all uses of the Authority's brand.
- Contributes to the messaging and branding of Authority events, community meetings, and forums.
- Oversees the development and implementation of talking points for Authority staff and other

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## Communications Specialist

- representatives for major public-facing issues
- Plans and develops paper and electronic publications and other communications materials, brochures, newsletters, annual reports, press releases, advertisements, and other materials; serves as editor for paper/electronic publications; oversees design, production, printing, and distribution of all print and electronic collateral materials.
- Builds and maintains relationships with key media and editorial contacts; manages media list; responds to media inquiries and coordinates responses with consultant and Authority staff as needed.
- Oversees and reviews content development for all communication channels, including website, social media, video presentations, email, newsletters, annual reports, and special publications and reports.
- Establishes and develops new avenues of communication within the general public and community groups; develops methods, techniques, and materials to establish/maintain ongoing communication and cooperation with community organizations and associations served by the Authority.
- Oversees scripting, filming, production, and distribution of video presentations.
- Is responsible for and oversees maintenance of video and image library.
- In coordination with the Educational Program Coordinator, develops, manages, and promotes Authority programs and events.
- Oversees management of contracts for services; oversees review of documents, reports, and other work products prepared by consultants and provides feedback and corrections; assists assigned staff with analysis and problem resolution for consultant issues that may arise.
- Selects, trains, motivates, and directs assigned staff; evaluates and reviews work for acceptability and conformance with Authority standards, including program and project priorities and performance evaluations; works with employees on performance issues; implements discipline and termination procedures; responds to staff questions and concerns.
- Serves as a liaison with other agencies related to assigned area of responsibility.
- Serves as project manager for special projects as assigned; prepares staff reports, memos, and presentations Leadership Team review.
- Receives inquiries and provides information to the public regarding a wide variety of topics.
- Attends and participates in professional group meetings; stays abreast of new trends and innovations in the field of public information, social and other digital media, and community outreach; researches emerging products and enhancements and their applicability to Authority needs.
- Participates in the preparation and administration of the budgets for assigned projects and programs; forecasts additional funds needed for materials and supplies.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Knowledge of:**

- Principles and practices of communications, media relations, and digital and print content-generation and publication, especially as applicable to a public agency.
- Practices of researching communications-related, evaluating alternatives, making sound recommendations, and preparing and presenting effective staff reports.
- Basic principles and practices of graphic design and print production, including an understanding of design concepts and applications.
- Principles and applications of a variety of print and digital media communications and general publications, including talking points, brochures, newsletters, annual reports, press releases, fact sheets, advertisements, websites, social media, and other digital communication systems.
- Media writing and pitching techniques used in initiating and maintaining media relationships,

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- methods and techniques of writing and editing for public information purposes.
- Recent and on-going developments, current literature, and sources of information related to communications, media relations, and digital and print content-generation and publication.
- Basic principles and practices of budget development, administration, and accountability.
- Applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, and organizational policies and procedures relevant to assigned area of responsibility.
- Principles and practices of employee supervision, including work planning, assignment, review and evaluation, and the training of staff in work procedures.
- Record keeping principles and procedures.
- Modern office practices, methods, and computer equipment and applications related to the work.
- English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation.
- Techniques for effectively representing the Authority in contacts with governmental agencies, community groups, various business, professional, educational, and media organizations.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and Authority staff.

### **Ability to:**

- Plan, research, organize, coordinate, and implement a variety of communications and media relations activities and programs.
- Identify and implement effective course of action to complete assigned work.
- Interpret, apply, explain, and ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures.
- Effectively represent the Authority in meetings with the general public, non-profit organizations, and other governmental agencies.
- Develop effective communications and media relations strategies and campaigns; establish and maintain relationships with diverse groups of media outlets.
- Research, analyze, and evaluate new service delivery methods, procedures, and techniques.
- Analyze, interpret, summarize, and present administrative and technical information and data in an effective manner.
- Assist in the preparation and administration of assigned budgets; allocate limited resources in a cost-effective manner as directed by a manager.
- Plan, organize, assign, review, and evaluate the work of staff; train staff in work procedures.
- Prepare clear and concise reports, correspondence, policies, procedures, and other written materials.
- Make accurate arithmetic, financial, and statistical computations.
- Operate modern office equipment including computer equipment and specialized software applications programs.
- 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.
- Use English effectively to communicate in person, over the telephone, and in writing.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy, procedural, and legal guidelines.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

### **Education and Experience:**

*Any combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be:*

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Communications Specialist

Equivalent to graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with major coursework in public relations, communications, business administration, or a related field and three (3) years of increasingly responsible experience in strategy development, planning, design, and implementation of communications, media relations, content-generation, and publication activities, ideally for a public agency.

## **Licenses and Certifications:**

- Possession of a valid California Driver's License.

## **PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; to operate a motor vehicle and to visit various Authority and meeting sites; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person, before groups, and over the telephone. This is primarily a sedentary office classification although standing and walking between work areas may be required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects up to 25 pounds.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS**

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees may interact with staff and/or public and private representatives on sensitive matters and in interpreting and enforcing Authority policies and procedures.

EFFECTIVE: April 1, 2014  
REVISED: January 2018  
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