

TITLE: COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR
CLASSIFICATION: PROGRAM SERVICES 4
ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

The Communications and Public Engagement Office, more commonly known as CPE, is the Government of Alberta's consolidated communications agency. It provides communications services to all government departments through its central offices in Calgary and Edmonton and branches embedded within government departments.

JOB OVERVIEW

The Communications Advisor works closely with the Communications Assistant Director or Communications Director and is responsible for providing senior professional communications counsel to the department in keeping with branch, client ministry and Communications and Public Engagement business plans. The Communications Advisor works with a large degree of independence providing total information development and dissemination to a division or a number of branches of a ministry. This is the advanced level of communications work.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

Provides strategic communications counsel and professional communications support to senior management and assigned program areas, based on the branch business plan, to support the ministry.

- develops, implements and monitors communications strategies for internal and external audiences
- provides strategic communications planning and consulting
- creates and implements e-communications strategies
- participates in cross-department and ministry communication committees as needed

Provides effect, pro-active issues management support through the Communications Director to the Minister, Premier's office, and senior department staff in accordance with the branch and ministry business plan.

- identifies and monitors emerging issues
- develops effective and timely strategies and key messages to proactively address and deal with issues

Uses media relations effectively and strategically to support major communication activities in accordance with the department's media relations policy

- proactively monitors and analyzes media coverage
- coordinates technical briefing and information to respond to media inquiries
- writes, coordinates and distributes news releases, information bulletins and media information
- arranges news conferences and media availabilities, coordinates media interviews
- acts as department spokesperson on variety of topics including contentious or sensitive issues
- acts as media trainer/support for technical experts in the department
- proactively profiles department programs and initiatives through media relations efforts
- adheres to government/Ministry processes and standards

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Provides strategic writing support of very complex and/or sensitive information materials for internal and external audiences

- plans, coordinates, writes and edits news releases, information bulletins, media notices, letters, briefings, brochures, reports, speeches, presentations, newsletters and other publications
- develops content for the web (intranet and internet), monitors web trends and opportunities (i.e.: social media) and provides communications counsel to clients in using the web effectively as a communications tool
- ensures all materials are written in plain language and are effective and audience/medium appropriate
- ensures materials targeted to the media are written in Canadian Press (CP) style

Supports the department's public consultation initiatives

- provides communications counsel and advice on the consultation process
- provides strategic planning advice on tools for public consultation
- keeps abreast of new techniques for public engagement and government standards
- serves as contact to the other government resources to provide up-t-date knowledge of issues
- coordinates and provide communications support throughout the consultation process

Co-ordinates graphic design and promotional material production as required ensuring government guidelines and standards are met

- provides design and production advice and counsel
- co-ordinates production with contract staff, suppliers and advertising agencies directly and through Communications and Public Engagement Outreach team
- ensures timely quality products within budget

Responsible for event management for both internal and external events.

- manages project, timelines, strategy, budget and evaluation
- organizes logistics, including venue, presentation materials, multimedia, collateral materials, catering services and media relations
- acts as a resource for junior communications staff involved in event management

Provides functional supervision to staff and project positions within the branch as required

- provides guidance and acts as a coach/mentor to junior communications staff and students
- provides guidance to administrative staff, along with input on assessment as required
- provides input into staffing needs and requirements
- serves as coordinator and lead on key projects and assignments
- serves as acting assistant or acting communications director

Optional Ministry Specific Accountabilities:

Placement for these roles is between the 21 branches that support the current government ministries, split between economic and social portfolios.

JOB REQUIREMENTS

- in-depth knowledge of communications planning
- media relations skills
- critical thinking and problem solving skills
- strong research, writing and editing skills
- knowledge of communications role in arranging news conferences and media availabilities
- knowledge and understanding of the web as a communications medium
- issues management skills

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- knowledge of public consultation/engagement processes and techniques
- knowledge of Canadian Press style guides
- knowledge of Minister's style guide for correspondence
- advanced consulting skills
- creativity
- project management skills
- coaching skills
- knowledge of advertising design, placement and GoA advertising policy, GoA Communications Policy and GoA Website Standards
- understanding of graphic design and print production techniques
- knowledge of Government of Alberta visual identity guidelines
- operating knowledge of information and communications technology and electronic production
- computer skills
- strong interpersonal skills
- organizational skills
- ability to work as team player with minimal supervision
- knowledge of how government works (bills, orders in council, standing policy committees etc.)
- knowledge of department and Communications and Public Engagement policies and procedures, regulations, legislation and core business
- knowledge of Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation, policies and procedures
- degree or diploma in public relations, communications, journalism or a related discipline

BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

- Creative Problem Solving
 - engages different perspectives in seeking out root causes
 - looks for ways to improve activities and results by doing something that may be new and different in the organization
 - accesses resources, information and technology from other areas, and uses it to analyze issues, resolve problems and improve performance
 - continuously engages others to scope and solve issues and find the best solutions. Encourages debate and idea generation from across the organization. Assesses and addresses risks while providing guidance to move new ideas forward
- Drive for Results
 - clarifies objectives and taps into a variety of available resources within the organization; ensuring that roles and contributions are clear. Sets performance standards and monitoring processes to ensure deviations from the plan are identified at an early stage
 - openly acknowledges personal responsibility for outcomes, even when not all elements of a situation are within direct control but could have been managed through influence
 - holds true to principles and confronts problems directly; takes steps to rectify problem situations, even if they prove unpopular
 - sets and accomplishes goals and priorities in order to deliver outcomes consistent with Government direction, departmental objectives and public expectations
- Build Collaborative Environments
 - engages others to think broadly about impacts of projects, brings differing perspectives together and encourages debate. Works with others to identify and remove barriers
 - ensures communication is ongoing by setting up processes or structures that facilitate communication and collaboration

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- anticipates and takes action to reduce and resolve conflict at the outset, by encouraging on-going open two-way communication among all stakeholders and groups
 - appropriately credits others who have made significant contributions to achieve results. Gets the talent of the groups recognized outside of the team
 - promotes collaboration and positive relationships (even in challenging circumstances) within and across groups and builds commitment to reach desired results.
- **Develop Networks**
 - looks broadly inside and outside the APS to identify key stakeholders. Actively engages them early and ensures their voice is heard and their concerns are acknowledged
 - builds relationships by following through on commitments, demonstrating integrity, respect for others, and taking an interest in their work-related issues and activities
 - considers how changes might impact colleagues, clients and stakeholders, and actively seeks their input and/or involvement regarding those changes
 - communicates regularly with stakeholders, setting up opportunities for mutual sharing of information. Maintains relationships even when no specific project/initiative is underway
- **Systems Thinking**
 - considers and plans for how current policies, processes and methods might be affected in the short, medium, and long-term by broader trends
 - anticipates outcomes and potential impacts across interrelated areas and factors this into planning. Seeks to understand a range of stakeholder perspectives and how they interrelate
 - seeks information and analyzes long-term outcomes. Focuses on the goals and values in addition to the process
 - works with others to identify and address interdependent activities that require collaboration
- **Agility**
 - Identifies alternative approaches or courses of action in unclear and complex situations. Supports others to identify, assess, and use alternative approaches.
 - Proactively explains how anticipated change will affect work processes or structures in general.
 - Remains calm and composed even in difficult or stressful situations. Is able to see the positive side to a difficult situation. Remains optimistic and perseveres in finding solutions.
 - Anticipates obstacles to change and thinks ahead about next steps. Stays focused on goals despite pressure and stress. Proposes a clear rationale for change, offers alternative solution(s) and identifies the benefits.
 - Makes decisions and takes action even when there is not enough clarity to predict the consequences with certainty. Includes a back-up plan in case predictions are incorrect.
- **Develop Self and Others**
 - Models continuous learning by designing a personal action plan in line with career goals. Proactively engages in own development using a variety of learning activities beyond formal training. Reflects on learning experiences and creates plan on how to apply to the work environment.
 - Takes initiative to stay current on a broad range of topics with new approaches and/or technologies that may impact his or her area. Takes courses, continuously reads and learns through experience and others.
 - Supports the development of others by providing specific, constructive, timely and regular feedback. Gives individualized suggestions for improvement. Contributes to team learning by initiating and contributing to group reflection and discussions. Uses this information to plan future activities and projects.
 - Understands the strengths and development needs of direct reports. Actively coaches and mentors relative to day-to-day work.

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