

TITLE: ASSISTANT COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
CLASSIFICATION: M42Z1

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Communications and Public Engagement (CPE), is the Government of Alberta’s central communications agency that provides communications services to all government departments through a central office in Edmonton, and branches embedded within government departments.

JOB OVERVIEW

Reporting to the communications director, the assistant communications director leads a team of communications professionals and administrative staff, delivering communications services and providing strategic communications advice for the assigned ministry. The team is the ministry’s key resource for public communications: communications advice and planning, writing/editing, social media, media relations and issues management, social media and website content, and announcement planning. Collaboration within the assigned ministry, with other ministries, and CPE central is crucial.

The role can be best described as an “air traffic controller” who manages the team, client needs/requests and the team deliverables simultaneously. The assistant communications director develops, monitors and maintains systems, processes, and policies to ensure that communications services are delivered efficiently and effectively and meet CPE and ministry objectives and requirements. This position also plays a key issues management role by identifying and flagging potential media issues and coordinating messaging and response methods.

The assistant communications director understands the ministry’s business, including familiarity with stakeholder groups, issues, trends and directions. The role supports ministry planning by participating on various internal and external committees/working groups representing ministry’s needs and interests, and supports government-wide communications strategies. The assistant director requires strong political acumen, and a thorough understanding of Alberta government decision-making processes and structure.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

Manages communications advisors and the creation and delivery of external communications materials (e.g., speaking notes, key messages, web content, social media, communication plans, cabinet communication strategies)

- Oversees deadlines; manages work flow and delivery and removes barriers when required
- Review/edits materials for quality, accuracy, effectiveness and adherence to GoA brand, style and visual identity guidelines. Ensures materials are aligned to ministry priorities
- Drafts and produces communications products (during times when staffing capacity is limited and/or timelines are tight)
- Ensures ministry announcements are executed

Coordinates media relations and issues management for ministry

- Oversees media monitoring, conducts environmental scans and monitors public perception to identify issues, opportunities and trends
- Works with the director to develop strategies and responses to ministry issues and opportunities

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- Coordinates response to external issues/media inquiries and collaborates with press secretary on media response strategies; and provides advice and guidance to ministry staff
- Provides project planning and issues resolution advice and guidance

Assists with implementing operational processes, policies and systems

- Solid understanding of CPE process and communication product/approval processes.
- Constant improvement focus; identifying new ways of doing things for more efficient/effective delivery
- Provides orientation and training for new staff; ensuring staff are fully trained and knowledgeable about department's policies and procedures, government roles and responsibilities, and CPE policies and procedures.
- Knowledge of the *Access to Information Act* and *Protection of Privacy Act* legislation, policies, and procedures
- Organizes branch resources to meet objectives, including managing staff workload and client projects, and recruiting staff to meet priorities
- Reviews/approves invoices and expense claims

JOB REQUIREMENTS

- Strong strategic communications planning and proactive/reactive issues management skills
- Strong media relations skills
- Strong initiative, problem solving, project management skills
- Strong knowledge of different communication tools and products such as media relations, social media, print and graphic design
- Considerable knowledge of writing styles, including plain language principles and Canadian Press Style Guides, to prepare/edit various materials including key messages, speeches, fact sheets, brochures, etc.
- Excellent leadership, management/supervisory and team building skills
- Strong political acumen. Experience working with senior management levels: Excellent client relations/ stakeholder management skills
- Knowledge of public consultation processes
- Degree or diploma in communications, public relations, journalism, English, marketing or a related field and at least six years' related experience
- Progressively responsible management experience including in coaching, developing and leading teams

BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

- **Creative Problem Solving**
 - Asks questions to get a deeper understanding
 - Identifies ways to improve activities and results by doing something that may be new/different
 - Explores different work completion methods, with goal of achieving more efficient and effective outcomes
 - Regularly reviews and debriefs on what made projects or actions successful. Shares learning with others and applies learning to other projects and actions
 - Collects a breadth of data and a variety of perspectives to make a choice between potential solutions and evaluate how effective the solution will be
 - Uses judgment to develop pros-and cons lists when evaluating alternatives considering the implications of proposed solutions
- **Drive for Results**
 - Clarifies objectives and taps into various 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
 - Sets and accomplishes goals/priorities to deliver outcomes consistent with Government direction, departmental objectives and public expectations
 - 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

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- **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 ongoing communication by setting up processes/structures that facilitate communication and collaboration
 - 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. 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**
 - Client focused approach. Understands stakeholder relationships are crucial initiative success. Seeks to understand perspectives/needs of colleagues, clients and stakeholders
 - Builds strong working relationships within their assigned ministry and across CPE
 - Follows through on commitments, demonstrating integrity, respect for others, and taking an interest in their work-related issues and activities
 - Effectively helps and follows through on inquiries, requests, and concerns from colleagues, clients and stakeholders
 - Informs key stakeholders of relevant information in a timely manner. Is aware of own impact on others and the impression being made through interactions. Is professional and respectful in all interactions

- **Systems Thinking**
 - Considers the inter-relationships among different aspects of an approach including how they relate to other programs or areas. Considers emerging trends when contributing ideas to the development of broader priorities, strategies and approaches
 - Seeks insight about the implications of different options from both a people and organizational perspective
 - Seeks information and analyzes long-term outcomes. Focuses on the goals and values in addition to the process
 - Identifies unintended consequences of a plan

- **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
 - Anticipates obstacles to change and thinks ahead about next steps. Stays focused on goals despite pressure/stress. Proposes clear rationale for change, offers alternative solutions 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
 - Finds ways to leverage strengths through job assignments, career moves or further developing strengths through formal training, volunteers for “stretch” assignments and taking on increased responsibilities
 - 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
 - Knows the people on their teams by connecting with and listening to them. Recognizes and values the diversity of knowledge, skills and abilities, making the best use of those talents. Encourages employees to own and be accountable for their personal development

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