

Chief Communications Officer



City of Bellevue, WA



The Community

Bellevue is the fifth largest city in Washington, with a population of more than 130,000. It is the high-tech and retail center of the Eastside, with more than 140,000 jobs and a skyline of gleaming high-rises.

While business booms downtown, Bellevue's neighborhoods also thrive amongst a vast network of green spaces and recreational facilities. Bellevue is affectionately and passionately called "a city in a park." The city's schools are consistently rated among the best in the country.

Sales at downtown shopping complexes are always an attraction, but thousands are drawn to annual special events, such as the Family Fourth of July, Strawberry Festival, the Arts and Crafts Fair, Garden d'Lights at the Bellevue Botanical Garden, and the biennial Bellevue Sculpture Exhibition.

The city spans more than 31 square miles between Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish, and is a short drive from the Cascade Mountains. People can kayak within sight of downtown in the Mercer Slough_Nature_Park, a 320-acre wetland preserve.

There are almost 100 parks in Bellevue, with a broad range of amenities and features, including indoor_pools, lakefront beaches, community centers, golf courses, skate plazas, nature trails, indoor tennis courts and a boat launch.

Government

Bellevue operates under a City Council/City Manager form of government. An elected council sets the general policies of the City, which the City Manager and staff implement. Seven residents serve part-time as members of the City Council. Elected at-large, they serve staggered four-year terms. The council members, in turn, select a mayor and deputy mayor from among themselves.

The Position

The Chief Communications Officer is assigned to the Executive Office of the City Manager, will serve as chief spokesperson for the City, and will develop and implement comprehensive external and internal communication strategies with effective marketing and branding. The Chief Communications Officer shall act as principal consultant to the Executive Staff – City Council, Mayor, City Manager, and Deputy City Manager; and in an advisory capacity to the Leadership Team.

Value Added Essential Services

- **City's Chief Public Information Officer**
- Marketing/Branding Consultant for the City
- Press Management for City Council, Mayor, City Manager, and Leadership Team
- Assist with Strengthening, Developing and Implementing an Effective Internal Communication Plan/Strategy
- Advancing the Appropriate Use of Communication Technology
- Social Media, City Website, etc.



Essential Functions of the Job

- Serve as a chief consultant to all departments on the planning, development, implementation and execution of communications, marketing, and public relations policies, branding and strategies. Operate using a collaborative style to inform, educate and build relationships with staff, and to build continuity for effective communication systems both internally and externally.
- Directly supervise a small cadre of staff and contractors with backgrounds in communications, **public relations, social media, and television, within the City Manager's Office. Write and negotiate** communication-related contracts. Budget planning and management.
- Work effectively within a matrixed relationship structure with department Public Information Officers who report directly to department managers. Consult and collaborate with department staff on program specific communications, incident response events, social media issues and public relations activity. Work as a team to build fluid communication systems that effectively launch messages at the right time with targeted audiences, using appropriate branding, and use of social media.
- Provide management leadership for cross-departmental communications projects and programs, such as the year-end report, by identifying major issues, determining the scope of projects, and working in concert with management to establish schedules and allocate resources.
- **Develop the City's strategic Communications Plan and related policies that will include external public relations and media coverage and internal messaging and strategic communication.** Design, develop, organize and execute (through collaboration) the communication, marketing and branding of **the City's vision, values and central themes and messages to internal and external audiences.**
- Develop, organize, implement and maintain an internal communications plan to communicate information to employees, volunteers and contract staff, ensuring a consistent, effective and efficient process. Lead or facilitate interdepartmental communications team on City publications and communication opportunities.
- Apply a high-level of technical skills and expertise in the communications field to effectively advise elected officials and staff on aspects of policy communication; provide preparation to spokespersons; engage with media personnel, community associations, the business community, civic organizations, and regional partners to effectively build relations, respond to inquiries, and to better market the services provided by the City.
- Manage the dissemination of public information during emergency/disaster situations. Work in collaboration with first responder departments and their Public Information Officers to handle the dissemination of prompt and accurate public information during emergency and disaster situations. Participate as a communications consultant on the Emergency Preparedness Committee and provide advice and service as needed.

Education and Experience

- **A Bachelor's degree in communications, public relations or related field with a high-level of knowledge in media relations required; a Master's degree is preferred. Seven or more years of advanced-level professional and managerial expertise in the communications field which encompassed journalism, media broadcasting, public relations, marketing, use of social media, web content development, government and community relations, including spokesperson responsibilities for a complex public or private organization. Experience must include advanced-level, professional success within the industry using collaboration to build effective relationships, accomplish task and successfully deliver results. Or any equivalent combination of education, experience, and training that provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.**
- Experience as Chief Journalist/Public Information Officer involving a marketing/branding consultative role, acting as press management for the executive leadership with expertise in working within a politically sensitive environment dealing with complex situations requiring the analysis and development of effective solutions is essential.
- Experience speaking and writing on behalf of an executive of elected official demonstrating knowledge of local and regional issues is essential. Experienced communications strategist and advisor who can work in a collaborative environment to develop and implement consistent messages and branding. **Speech writing and preparation/coaching of speakers' experience required. Significant experience writing and editing with a high standard for quality of work product required.**
- Strong verbal, written, presentation, team leadership and interpersonal communication skills with demonstrated design and implementation skills in producing publications and communications in a multi-media environment.
- Experience managing development of TV programming, web content development and publication production processes a plus. Must have a good understanding of the value and impact of social media. Demonstrated experience and capability working with politically sensitive, complex situations, analyzing complex problems and developing creative solutions.
- Knowledgeable about current and future communication trends. Recognition and understanding of new technology/social media and commitment to provide guidance and facilitate, not control its use. Experience with current social media venues but also familiar with engagement platform options, personally and professionally connected with like- professional communities (GovLoop, MuniGov, etc.) Web-savvy not only understands how the web works and social media opportunities, but also understands what customers are looking for. Understands how to do usability studies that result in a dynamic and engaging City website.

The Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will be a seasoned communications professional who can develop and execute communication plans, branding initiatives, and public relation strategies for the City that positively shift perceptions and land appropriate messages to the right audiences at the right time. The successful candidate must be a superior writer and strategic thinker with the capacity to develop and follow through on long-range plans while managing emerging news, building brand recognition for the City, and delivering results.

The ideal candidate should be a Communications "Leader" who is action-oriented, politically savvy, a self-starter, has exceptional interpersonal skills that can build effective relations through collaboration, adaptability, education and mentoring. Knowledge of local and regional issues and an understanding of the demographics of Bellevue, WA will be beneficial. The successful candidate needs to be comfortable working within a matrixed organization with Public Information Officers reporting to managers within their departments. We are looking for the right combination of technical and interpersonal skills to help us further develop a high performance team of Communication experts that share a passion for developing and implementing strategic communications, branding, and public relation strategies. In addition, our ideal candidate should have:

The Ideal Candidate continued..

- Demonstrated ability to build and maintain effective working relationships within an organization as well as with media providers, including leading and motivating work teams and/or individual contributors.
- Collaborative, entrepreneurial spirit with the ability to illicit cooperation and resolve conflict.
- Skills in consensus building.

Salary

The City of Bellevue is offering a competitive salary commensurate with experience and a comprehensive benefits package. Relocation assistance will be available for the successful out of area candidate.

How to Apply

Applicants should forward a cover letter and resume to:

resumes@affionpublic.com

Reference: CCO2016

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