



Position Description

Executive Vice President, Strategic Communications

The Forum for Youth Investment

FULL TITLE: Executive Vice President for Strategic Communications

SUPERVISOR: President & CEO

PURPOSE: The Executive Vice President, Strategic Communications leads all internal and external communications efforts for the Forum for Youth Investment whose mission is to change the odds that all children and youth are ready for college, work, and life. The person taking on this position will be a keen strategist and skilled tactician with expertise in organizational communications, employee engagement and change management communications, leadership/executive communications, media relations, and issues management. The EVP will be a trusted advisor as they represent the voice of communications to the leadership team, including the CEO and Board. They will coach Forum leaders on communications best practices and ensure programs meet the needs of the internal stakeholders. At the same time, the EVP will roll up their sleeves and handle day-to-day communications program implementation – from crisis preparedness to media relations to writing internal communications – and strive to achieve maximum results.

Organization & Background

Founded in 1998, the **Forum for Youth Investment** is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan “action tank” committed to changing the odds that all children and youth are ready for college, work, and life. The Forum connects leaders to ideas, services and networks that can help them make more intentional decisions that are good for young people, even in the face of limited resources. It helps leaders who are trying to improve & align policies, plan & partner for impact, and/or strengthen programs & adult practice across all the systems and settings where young people spend time.

The Forum is a thriving organization with a budget of \$11 million, a staff of 50, and headquarters in Washington, DC. The Forum overall is funded by a mix of foundations, corporations, and a fee-for-service contract base. For more information on the Forum, please visit www.forumfyi.org.

Position Responsibilities

First, provide strategic counsel to the President & CEO, the executive team, and the Forum's board to promote and protect the image and voice of the Forum. Second, collaboratively with the President & CEO and executive team, play a leading role in the Forum's brand positioning and advancement through strategic communications and unified messaging. Third, develop and execute comprehensive, creative, internal and external communications plans to drive achievement of organizational strategies and goals. These plans will incorporate all communication tools including employee communications, and media, partner, customer, and government relations. Position is responsible to provide support for issues/crisis management. Incumbent will deal with sensitive/controversial topics.

Specific responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

Strategic Planning

- Active participation in developing the organizational strategic goals, providing communications and brand development perspectives to the discussions and decision making.
- Develop short- and long-term strategic communications plans in support of achieving organizational business goals.
- Identify opportunities where communications can help advance strategies, address issues, or strengthen alignment to achieve organizational goals.
- Develop and enhance communications-related performance metrics to measure effectiveness, progress, and impact.

Internal Communications

- Develop an annual internal communications plan aligning with the organizational objectives as set forth by the leadership team.
- Create internal communications programs to support organizational change management initiatives, such as mergers or acquisitions.
- Establish procedures and channels for delivering internal information consistently, effectively, and efficiently.
- Ensure that clear, consistent, relevant messages are effectively communicated to employees regarding topics including (but not limited to): change management communications, leadership announcements, business updates, general and targeted FAQs, executive and management messages, employee benefits and updates, and general company news to ensure timely and consistent communications. This pertains to both message development and delivery.
- Liaise with Human Resources to develop and execute an effective employee communications program to ensure business awareness, enhance culture, and reinforce "branding."
- Develop written content aligned to a set of repeatable messages that will have memorable and lasting impact in inspiring, engaging, and educating employees.
- Leverage a multi-faceted set of traditional and non-traditional channels that will capture the attention of employees and will have a multiplier effect across all levels of employees.

Brand Advancement

- Collaborate and curate a unifying Forum brand proposition as the foundation for enhancing relationships with partners and clients.
- Develop an enterprise-wide brand guide and tools for all staff to embody the Forum brand – to include brand values, attributes, promise, and visual assets.
- In collaboration with other executive team leadership, define and cultivate trainings, materials, and education on Forum values, observable behaviors, and cultural indicators to align mission and culture seamlessly.

Media Relations

- Cultivate strong relationships with partner communications teams to advance shared messages and support initiatives. Bring creative opportunities for shared campaigns.
- Foster relationships with key traditional and digital media members.
- Promote the organization's or partner's visibility by identifying newsworthy stories and proactively pitching these to traditional and digital media outlets.
- Achieve measurable impact through proactive and reactive media relations.
- Respond to incoming media inquiries in a timely manner.
- Provide training to executive leadership to serve as public spokespersons.
- Prepare media engagement support materials for organizational spokespeople.
- Serve as primary spokesperson as needed.
- Write media materials such as releases, fact sheets, etc.
- Track and report on corporate/issues media coverage, including preparation of summaries and executive updates.

Executive Communications

- Support executive team with internal and external communication needs, and work to align these efforts to assure consistency, effectiveness, and clarity across the company.
- Provide savvy counsel to leadership on major communication initiatives or plans, announcements, organizational changes, etc.
- Ensure leaders are prepared and properly trained for media opportunities, speaking engagements, and related public events.
- Maintain a speakers' bureau program to achieve speaking opportunities at key events that further the Forum's position as an industry leader.
- Write executive communications materials, such as company announcements, speeches, presentations, etc.

Corporate Communications

- Develop and maintain an overarching brand identity and messaging hierarchy for the organization and ensure alignment and consistency in all communications and marketing efforts.
- Partner with FYI Units to enhance thought leadership programs to position the organization as an industry leader, and craft supporting materials such as bylined articles and white papers.
- In partnership with all units, ensure the efficient and effective development of all print and electronic communications, including materials generated in-house as well as collateral

material produced with outside vendors, such as newsletters, annual reports, videos, brochures, etc.

- Provide support to fund development regarding organizational impact, financial performance messaging, annual report development, etc.
- Support government affairs as necessary.

Issues Management

- Maintain and update as needed a crisis communications plan, including detailed responses for a variety of hypothetical scenarios.
- Support the leadership team by effectively responding to the challenges of a crisis as a seasoned public relations professional well versed in community relations, investigative reporting, and political strategies.
- Serve as organizational spokesperson as needed to ensure consistent and effective external communication.
- Prepare and guide senior executives through the crisis management process.
- Protect the organization's reputation by anticipating issues and proactively addressing those issues.

Digital Communications

- Execute communication campaigns through a variety of digital and social channels, including the company intranet site, corporate website, social media, brochures, e-mails, videos, etc. adhering to, and elevating the Forum brand.
- Write digital content, including website copy and social media posts.
- Maintain all graphical and digital assets (photos, videos, etc.).

Department Leadership

- Manage the communications department functions, including but not limited to, budgets, forecasts, staffing, compensation, and performance management to ensure organizational targets are met.

Performance/Character Requirements

We are looking for a communications leader with experience building exceptional internal and external communications programs that drive growth. In this role you will create a communications roadmap in partnership with the executive team and business unit leaders. Then it's time to get results through exceptional implementation of the communications plan with the help of the team you build. Characteristics of successful candidates include:

- **Manages Self** – You ask for feedback on impact of your behavior on others. You identify and follows through on actions in response to constructive feedback. You honestly assess own strengths and know what weaknesses need support.
- **Leads Courageously** – You act courageously to make changes that will improve the organization. You consistently drive to successful outcomes and stay composed and positive in challenging situations.
- **Communicates Effectively** – You communicate (both in writing and verbally) clearly, succinctly, and in a timely manner. You provide information people need to know to do their

jobs, make accurate decisions, and to feel part of a team. You are able to engage an audience and achieve the desired effect in a variety of formal presentation settings.

- **Builds High-Performing Teams/Develops Others** – You form and lead teams capable of getting results. You create a learning environment of creativity and engagement. You can effectively raise and resolve conflict with the team. You provide frequent and timely developmental feedback to others and construct compelling developmental plans. You take personal responsibility for mentoring high-potential employees.
- **Makes Quality Decisions** – You clearly state where you stand on issues, even if it is unpopular. You seek input from appropriate parties before making decisions, and still make timely decisions.
- **Demonstrates Strategic Agility** – You anticipate future consequences and trends accurately. You're able to align your goals to the overall organizational strategy. You can create breakthrough strategies and plans.
- **Demonstrates Business Acumen** – You understand and create opportunities to cultivate and support exceptional partnerships. You are able to make the case for decisions and initiatives. You adapt strategies and tactics to create a success defined by metrics.
- **Influences and Negotiates** – You influence others by building coalitions or alliances among diverse groups. You effectively adapt influence strategies depending upon the situation. You're skillful at removing barriers that get in the way of effective collaboration among groups.
- **Manages Vision and Purpose** – You inspire commitment to a compelling vision and shared values. You create a climate in which people want to do their best. You're able to champion change and lead the organization through a transition.
- **Thinks Strategically, Executes Skillfully** – You can see the forest through the trees and know how to craft strategic short and long-term programs that are aligned with organizational goals. At the same time, you can't wait to roll-up your sleeves and get the work done.
- **Is Goal Oriented** – We want someone who is a doer, with doggedness, a determination and commitment to reach a goal, and a strong bias toward action. You always find a way to make it happen.
- **Demonstrates Creativity** – While there are tried-and-true tactics in your toolbox, you explore new ways of thinking and continually strive to create best-in-class programs that move your organization and industry forward.
- **Handles Ambiguity** – You can effectively cope with change and lead others through it.
- **Communicates Assertively** – As a senior-level communicator, you express opinions directly, confidently, and accurately. You can also be very persuasive and influence the way others think, feel, or behave.
- **Collaborates & Values Relationships** – You can quickly gain the respect and trust of your direct reports, peers, and leadership team. You understand the importance of listening, asking probing questions, and allowing others to be heard.
- **Takes Risk** – The entrepreneurial spirit shines through in your willingness to experiment with new approaches and act even though the outcome is uncertain.
- **Models Diplomacy** – You have worked in diverse settings and understand the cultural sensitivities of doing business with partners and clients around the country. You are tactful in dealing with diverse people or situations.
- **Exhibits Professional Acumen** – You demonstrate confidence, experience, and poise under pressure.

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in communications, journalism, public relations, marketing, or related field required

- Advanced degree preferred
- 10+ years' experience in a strategic management/communications-related role
- 5+ years management experience
- Demonstrated success developing and implementing impactful internal and external communications programs
- Proven experience providing strategic counsel and guidance to executive leadership team members
- Solid judgment / temperament in dealing with confidential and sensitive information and issues
- Willingness to travel, as needed

Working Environment

Flexibility is required to adapt to the dynamic work environment of a non-profit "action tank" that has national clients and exposure. The climate is informal but mission-driven. Excellence is valued in every position. The Executive Vice President for Strategic Communications will be based in the Forum's Washington, DC office.

Position & Compensation

The salary range, duties and responsibilities of this position meet the requirements of Section 13 (a) (1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act and therefore qualifies as an "exempt" position. Please send resume and cover letter with salary requirements to: jobs@forumfyi.org. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. If your application is selected for an interview, you will be contacted directly. No telephone calls or inquiry emails, please.

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The Forum for Youth Investment is committed to creating a diverse work environment and is proud to be an Equal Opportunity Employer and drug-free workplace, and to comply with ADA regulations as applicable. All applicants are considered for all positions without regard to race, religion, color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical/mental disability, severe/morbid obesity, medical condition, military/veteran status, genetic information, marital status, ethnicity, alienage or any other protected classification, in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws. We encourage individuals of all backgrounds to apply. If you are a qualified candidate with a disability, please email us at jobs@forumfyi.org if you require a reasonable accommodation to complete your application.