Job Description

Job Title: Senior Director, Strategic Communications
Supervisor: Senior Vice President, Economic Development, Marketing + Strategic Communications
FLSA Status: Exempt

Summary
The Senior Director, Strategic Communications is the Downtown Austin Alliance's chief communications strategist and a senior advisor to the CEO and executive leadership. This position sets and leads an integrated communications strategy that advances the organization's mission, strengthens public trust, supports downtown vitality, and elevates the reputation of the Downtown Austin Alliance family of brands, including the Downtown Austin Foundation and Republic Square.

The Senior Director oversees all internal and external communications, including organizational messaging, executive communications, media and public relations, stakeholder and public affairs communications, crisis communications, and integrated marketing campaigns across multiple channels. Leading all functions responsible for storytelling, branding, marketing, social media, digital communications, photography, and events, the Senior Director ensures a consistent voice and message that reinforces the Downtown Alliance's vision of a vibrant, safe, welcoming, and economically competitive downtown.

Supervisory Responsibilities:
Directly oversees brand management, marketing, public relations, events, social media, digital content, and manages public relations consultants and outside vendors. Carries out supervisory responsibilities in accordance with the organization's policies and applicable laws. Responsibilities include interviewing, hiring, and training employees; planning, assigning, and directing work; appraising performance; rewarding and disciplining employees; addressing complaints and resolving problems; and building team capacity through coaching and professional development.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Strategy and Leadership

- Develop, implement, and evaluate the organization's annual strategic communications plan, aligned with organizational priorities and focused on building relationships, increasing trust, and growing awareness among members, key partners, and target audiences.
- Set annual messaging priorities and lead integrated communications campaigns across all channels and brands.
- Serve as a strategic advisor to the CEO and executive leadership; identify opportunities where communications can advance strategies, address issues, and strengthen alignment to achieve organizational objectives.
- Develop communications plans for major organizational initiatives, policy priorities, research reports, and downtown investments.
- Direct organization-wide editorial planning and the communications calendar, ensuring messaging consistency across all teams, functions, and channels.
- Establish and refine communications performance metrics and KPIs to measure effectiveness, progress, and impact, and report results to leadership.

Executive Communications

- Oversee the development of speeches, presentations, talking points, briefing memos, action plans, and executive messaging for the CEO and executive leadership.
- Draft executive articles, opinion pieces, letters, and thought leadership content.
- Prepare communication materials for public meetings, board meetings, and stakeholder engagements.
- Proactively identify speaking opportunities for leadership and staff to enhance the organization's visibility.

Media and Public Relations

- Serve as the organization's primary media relations lead, ensuring key messages are delivered appropriately and promptly through local, regional, and national traditional and online media outlets.
- Develop media strategies that elevate Downtown Austin Alliance priorities and achieve measurable impact through proactive and reactive media relations.
- Build and maintain relationships with media and stakeholders; manage press releases and media alerts, and coordinate interviews, press conferences, media events, and announcements.
- Respond to incoming media inquiries in a timely manner and oversee public relations contractors.
- Lead crisis communications and rapid-response messaging in coordination with the CEO and leadership.
- Monitor media coverage and identify opportunities to strengthen downtown Austin's public narrative.

Stakeholder and Public Affairs Communications

- Develop communication strategies supporting advocacy, placemaking, and economic development initiatives.
- Create communication plans tailored to key audiences, including members, property owners, downtown businesses, developers, investors, employers, community organizations, public officials, board members, and other stakeholder groups.
- Support advocacy and public affairs initiatives through strategic messaging and communication campaigns.

Marketing, Content, and Events

- In partnership with all teams, oversee the efficient and effective development of all print and electronic communications, including in-house materials and collateral produced with outside vendors, such as newsletters, annual reports, videos, brochures, and website content.
- Steward brand standards and a consistent voice across the Downtown Austin Alliance family of brands.
- Develop and oversee events strategy to curate and deliver educational events and opportunities that promote the organization's brand and elevate its presence in the community.
- Develop and oversee social media and digital content strategy to deliver on promotional and digital content for the organization.
- Support logistics and execution of the Annual Meeting of Members, including writing the script, managing production of the end-of-year video and presentation.

Operations and Team Management

- Traffic deadlines among communications team members, set priorities across initiatives, and delegate tactfully.
- Oversee procurement of communication and marketing vendors, managing key communication partnerships.
- Strategize with leadership to understand initiatives and ensure alignment across teams.
- Performs additional related duties, as assigned.

Required Skills/Abilities:

- Demonstrated success developing and implementing impactful, integrated internal and external communications programs.
- Proven experience providing strategic counsel to the CEO and executive leadership team members.
- Exceptional writing, editing, and proofreading skills, including speeches, op-eds, reports, business correspondence, and procedure manuals.
- Strong media relations and crisis communications experience, with established relationships with local and regional media preferred.
- Proven ability to lead, develop, and motivate a high-performing communications team.

- Ability to effectively present information and respond to questions from groups of executives, board members, public officials, stakeholders, and the public.
- Sound judgment and temperament in handling confidential and sensitive information and issues.
- Ability to read, analyze, and interpret general business periodicals, professional journals, technical procedures, or governmental regulations.
- Excellent time management and organizational skills; capacity to handle multiple priorities in a fast-paced environment.
- Able to work collaboratively and independently with a high level of self-motivation, initiative, and follow-through to meet goals and deadlines.
- Knowledge of downtown development, economic development, public affairs, or civic issues preferred.
- Demonstrated expertise in budget management, procurement, vendor negotiations, and contract administration.
- Proficient in Microsoft Outlook, Word, and PowerPoint.

Education and Experience:
Bachelor's degree in communications, journalism, public relations, marketing, public affairs, or related field required; master's degree preferred. Minimum of 8 years of progressive experience in strategic communications, public relations, or public affairs, including at least 3 years supervising communications staff; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Physical Demands The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this Job, the employee is regularly required to talk or hear. The employee is frequently required to stand; walk and sit. The employee is occasionally required to use hands to finger, handle, or feel and reach with hands and arms. The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 25 pounds.

Work Environment The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate. Occasional weekend and evening work is required.

The above job description is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of duties and standards of the position. Incumbents will follow any other instructions, and perform any other related duties, as assigned by their supervisor.

The Downtown Austin Alliance is committed to creating a diverse, inclusive workplace and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetic information, disability, age, or veteran status.

We offer a competitive benefits package including the following:

- 401K non-elective contribution of 3% plus additional 2% employer match with employee elected contribution.
- Employer-paid employee coverage for medical, dental, and vision
- Employer-paid Life Insurance
- Employer-paid Short/Long Term Disability
- 20 days of Paid Time Of
- 11 paid holidays (including one floating personal day)
- Paid winter break from December 26 – December 31st
- Summer Fridays
- Paid Parental Leave
- Cell phone stipend
- Home Internet stipend
- Commuter benefits
- Wellness benefits
- Bikeshare membership
- Professional Development
- Onsite Gym
- Onsite bike storage
- Fully stocked kitchen with beverages & snacks

Application Process

To apply, please submit your resume and a cover letter detailing your relevant experience to careers@downtownaustin.com.

We will begin interviewing candidates December 2026.