

Head of Communications

Recruitment Pack January 2019



Message from David Johnstone, Chairman



From campsites to community owners to country estates, our members represent a diverse community passionate in promoting rural Scotland, and we've acted as their voice for over 100 years.

Our vision is to have the true contribution of rural land-based businesses recognised and valued, publicly and politically. We do this by championing and supporting rural businesses that provide economic, social and environmental benefit to the countryside.

If you're passionate about using your communications and media expertise to help rural Scotland thrive then we'd love to hear from you.

We're looking for a driven, inspiring and talented leader who can help us achieve our vision.

You will be responsible for managing a small team and our overall work across events, publications, public affairs and digital channels, while also leading our media relations activity.

As an organisation we're making some exciting changes to prepare us for the future and this team will be crucial to delivering these. So, if you're as positive and ambitious as us, then please get in touch.

Job Purpose

As a membership organisation, in one of Scotland's key sectors, good communications is pivotal to the success of our work. This role is responsible for achieving a step-change in our approach, combining their technical skills – particularly in media relations - with leadership, vision and strategy to do this.

The postholder is also responsible for driving and inspiring the wider communications team to deliver its work to an excellent standard in a culture of continuous improvement. They will use their energy and dynamism to secure buy-in and practical support from the wider organisation, including colleagues, board members and members.

Essential Information

Location: easily accessible offices by the River Esk in Musselburgh, with occasional travel to other locations in the UK, including some of the most beautiful locations in the country

Reports to: Executive Director, Sarah-Jane Laing

Direct reports: three officers working in public affairs, events and publications, and digital comms

Other key contacts: regional support officers, Head of Policy, Head of Business, Board Chairman, other board members, retained communication/marketing/digital agencies

Salary: c£50,000 per annum

Hours: 34.5 hours per week (9 – 5 Monday to Thursday, 9 to 4.30 on Friday), with some flexibility required

Holidays: 30 days per year including 6 bank holidays, along with additional leave to cover office closure between Christmas and New Year

Benefits: Generous training and CPD allowance, contributory pension, free parking at office, supportive and friendly working environment.

Main duties and responsibilities

Leadership and management

Work with the Executive Director, other senior colleagues and the communications team to develop and deliver an overall communications programme

Line manage the communications team and manage the team budget

Produce management and board reports on the team's work

Keep up to date with best practice in communications and marketing, adapting to this as appropriate

Manage the relationship with retained communications agencies and oversee the effective use of other communications and marketing suppliers

Proactive and reactive reputation

Identify issues that could potentially damage the organisation's reputation and recommend actions to mitigate this risk

Identify story opportunities, internally and externally, and use these to further SLE's messages in mainstream, trade and other media

Write news releases, reactive statements, feature/op ed articles, case studies and other material for use in the media and via other channels

Maintain a database of media contacts and manage distribution of releases

Organise photocalls and other events to support media relations

Liaise with partner and stakeholder organisations on opportunities for joint activities or on handling issues of mutual interest

Produce publicity plans for proactive story promotion and handling plans for issues / reactive queries in collaboration with team colleagues

Provide a fair and robust enquiry response service to journalists

Adapt story material for use in other publications or channels, internal and external, including SLE's Land Business magazine and social media

Branding, channels and assets

Manage SLE's brand, including messaging and visual identity through the use of brand toolkits, tone of voice documents etc.

Oversee the production and quality of SLE's suite of publications and other printed material

Oversee the management and updating of SLE's website and social media channels

Manage internal communications channels

Produce photo, video and other creative briefs to support storytelling, and manage these suppliers

Ensure monitoring is in place for Scottish, trade and wider media for relevant content, with a weekly briefing to colleagues on stories of interest

Other duties

Support other members of the communications and marketing team as required, especially during busy periods or absences

Build capabilities within the rest of the team through sharing best practice and development skills

Carry out any other activity as required to support SLE's communications strategy as appropriate to a role of this level and scope

Identify measurable objectives and report on progress towards these, in agreement with senior colleagues

About you

The most important attribute we are looking for is at least five years' strong, recent experience in a communications role, with a good understanding across the breadth of communications disciplines.

Other essential requirements are:

Experience of managing a small team of communications staff and the overall work of such a team

At least three years' strong, recent experience in media relations in an in-house or agency role

Experience of devising and delivering proactive media relations strategies

It would also be helpful if you could offer:

Experience of handling controversial issues

Experience of working in a membership organisation

Experience of achieving a significant and demonstrable improvement in communications team performance

Experience working with bloggers and other digital 'influencers'

Degree qualification in a relevant discipline, e.g. public relations

Post-graduate qualification in a relevant discipline

In terms of your professional knowledge and skills, we are looking for:

Excellent interpersonal and influencing skills for building and maintaining relationships with internal and external stakeholders

Strong project, budget and people management skills

Excellent problem-solving skills

About you

In terms of your professional knowledge and skills, we are looking for:

Excellent interpersonal and influencing skills for building and maintaining relationships with internal and external stakeholders

Strong project, budget and people management skills

Excellent problem-solving skills

Excellent writing skills, especially for reports and media outputs including news releases, feature articles, op-eds and web copy

Strong knowledge of the Scottish media landscape and good knowledge of relevant trade and broader UK media

Able to prioritise and manage multiple and sometimes conflicting deadlines or demands

Solid grasp of Microsoft Office applications, particularly Outlook, Word, Excel and Powerpoint

We are also seeking a range of personal attributes, including:

Flexible, in being able to support the wider team and deal occasionally with out-of-hours activities, including media enquiries, social media enquiries and events

Able to work to tight deadlines and to support others in doing so

Motivated, proactive and enthusiastic

Comfortable dealing well with people from a wide variety of backgrounds

Confident, tactful and diplomatic

Calm and confident under pressure

Creative

How to apply

Please send us your CV along with a covering letter outlining how you meet the requirements of the person specification and how your experience, skills and knowledge and personal attributes make you the ideal candidate for this role.

You may include any other information that you consider appropriate to your application.

Send your letter and CV to joyce.karch@scottishlandandestates.co.uk by Monday 28 January. We will be holding interviews on 13 and 14 February.