

Senior communications officer

TITLE: Senior communications officer
GRADE: D
MANAGER: Head of communications

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

Transport Focus is an independent watchdog working on behalf of passengers and road users across Great Britain.

We need a senior communications officer to help us deliver top-quality external and internal communications.

We're looking for someone to:

- be part of our 24/7 press office
- help develop and deliver comms plans, including advising senior colleagues on handling
- help manage and provide content for the website, intranet, social media channels and newsletter
- produce compelling insight reports, including working with our talented freelance designers
- help deliver virtual and real-life events
- use analytics/evaluation for continual improvement.

OUTLINE

The senior communications officer will assist the head of communications in delivering both external and internal communications.

The senior communications officer will be a self-starter with a flexible and innovative approach, able to manage their own time. They will have a strong news sense and excellent writing skills, with absolute accuracy and an eye for detail. They will be experienced in relationship-building and managing competing stakeholder requirements.

TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic communication

- ➔ Assist the head of communications in developing and delivering communications strategies.
- ➔ Participate in relevant communications networks.
- ➔ Take responsibility for horizon scanning and forward planning (such as maintaining the grid0 as part of wider integrated communications and campaign planning
- ➔ Create and deliver integrated communications plans/materials for Transport Focus activities eg research, policy guides.

- Provide specialist advice on communications planning and channels to senior managers and staff ensuring external and internal messages are clearly aligned.
- Use evaluation for internal and external communication of successes, and also to inform future comms planning.
- Act as guardian of the Transport Focus brand, working with other staff to ensure the corporate identity is consistently applied.
- Support a 'digital by default' approach to all communications materials/projects

External communications

- Work as part of the press team, providing quality media handling advice to senior colleagues, responding to media enquiries and acting as spokesperson when required.
 - Participate in the out-of-hours duty rota, which can include working weekends and evenings.
 - Develop strong media and stakeholder relationships.
- Maintain log of press contacts and searchable record of comments / lines used.
- Proactively seek opportunities to promote messages to a wide range of media, including through our own digital media channels. Suggest ideas for, and assist in the development of, other channels of internal and external communications as appropriate.
- Create and deliver media monitoring emails.
- Undertake analysis of coverage (using Onclusive (ex Kantar) monitoring platform).
- Write articles and guest blogs.

Digital

- Contribute to maintaining and developing the website.
- Develop our social media presence and encourage colleagues to contribute to this activity.
- Suggest ideas for / help develop activity over social media channels as appropriate
- Oversee the social media monitoring and scheduling tools, helping colleagues to plan and deliver social media activity

Events

- Work closely with the head of communications and other colleagues to plan, manage and deliver internal and external events to the highest standard
- Represent Transport Focus at internal and external events as required.

Newsletters and publications

- Manage the production of corporate publications, liaising with a designer where appropriate.
- Help with scheduling and production of monthly newsletter.
- Help produce external publications, including proofreading in line with house style and liaising with a design agency where appropriate

Internal communications

- Build internal relationships and lead the process to source a steady supply of internal news
- Post internal news items to the intranet (using Sharepoint) and drive daily bulletin
- Develop and distribute internal communications activity
- Use evaluation to build internal engagement with communications team work.

Team support

Team admin (including suggesting improvements)

- Booking travel
- processing invoices

In addition to the above, you may be required to perform other duties that fall outside your job title or key duties.

TRANSPORT FOCUS - PERSON SPECIFICATION

EDUCATION / PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE & RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

ESSENTIAL:

- Demonstrated experience of working in a comparable role, working in a busy communications team.
- Excellent written and verbal communication and high level of speed and accuracy in all written materials.
- Strong news sense, with demonstrated experience of selling-in news stories and reacting to media enquiries.
- A good understanding of social media. Experience of using Twitter and LinkedIn
- Able to contribute to integrated communications strategies (incorporating social media); good understanding of social media.
- Personable, with excellent communication skills, including the ability to communicate effectively with a broad range of people at all levels.
- Ability to influence stakeholders, senior staff and managers, understanding the importance of building effective relationships.
- High level of organisational and time management skills with the ability to work independently and take the initiative, establishing priorities to meet conflicting deadlines with minimal supervision and the ability to manage complex and varied workloads to tight deadlines.
- Flexible and adaptable, able to react quickly to changing requirements and new challenges
- Willing team player
- Good political understanding

DESIRABLE:

- Front line experience working on a busy press desk to gate-keep media calls
- Experience of working on national campaigns
- An understanding of consumer issues

CORE SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

WORKING WITH OTHERS - Level 2

Works effectively as part of a team by collaborating with others and contributing towards team goals. Professional in approach. Demonstrates empathy and understanding of others' viewpoints in order to build rapport. Supports colleagues and works cross functionally to provide an effective input to the organisational team. Engages with others at all levels, sharing knowledge and best practice. Manages the expectations of others. Gains cooperation from others by talking through issues and solutions.

INFLUENTIAL COMMUNICATION - Level 3

Communicates in a way that can be easily understood. Speaks clearly and concisely at an appropriate pace, checking for understanding. Presents verbal and written information in a structured way. Actively listens to others and asks questions to indicate engagement or for clarification. Engages positively when communicating with others. Adapts communication style to the needs of the audience and situation. Conveys credibility when communicating at all levels of the organisation. Persuades and influences others, considering the implications of messages being given. Negotiates in order to secure positive outcomes. Demonstrates diplomacy when faced with objections or potential conflicts.

FLEXIBLE PLANNING AND ORGANISING - Level 2

Systematic and methodical when developing structured plans to manage own workload. Considers timescales and the materials available and manages these effectively in order to meet deadlines. Recognises the need to be flexible in approach to completing tasks. Thinks ahead and anticipates changes. Prioritises tasks in order to respond effectively to competing demands. Monitors progress by reviewing stages regularly. Responds flexibly to changing priorities by re-arranging own workload or adapting existing plans.

PROBLEM SOLVING AND CRITICAL THINKING - Level 2

Is able to assess problems from a variety of angles by recognising relevant and irrelevant information. Will formulate solutions based on the facts. Able to understand research information or data and link outcomes to objectives. Establishes key facts and identifies root cause issues. Identifies a range of possible solutions and assesses the associated risks. Makes objective and reasoned decisions based on facts and evidence. Is able to interpret research information or data correctly.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT - Level 2

Committed to continuously strive for results and takes pride in producing work to high standards. Committed to improving self through learning from own experiences. Proactively identifies improvements to processes and services, implementing own ideas in line with best practice. Appropriately challenges the status quo. Takes steps to identify a way to fill their own skills/knowledge gap and takes positive steps to address the gap.

TENACITY AND RESILIENCE - Level 2

Works well under pressure, focused on completing tasks. Delivers consistent quality representation of the organisation and retains business focus in difficult situations. Remains emotionally controlled when under pressure or in stressful situations. Self-starting with the ability to handle challenges and obstacles confidently. Determined to succeed, demonstrating persistence.

STRATEGIC THINKING - Level 2

Demonstrates organisational awareness. Understands the role of the organisation and who the stakeholders are. Recognises how own role impacts and links into organisational objectives. Thinks through the wider consequences of their actions and how these will impact on organisational goals. Considers wider strategic issues when developing approach to achievement of own objectives. Understands how key departments fit together and looks outside own team to link strategically and achieve wider organisational goals. Identifies both internal and external issues that might impact the organisation.

IMPORTANT WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Internal

- Communications team
- Transport user teams
- Board and Chief Executive
- Insight Team

External

- Media including national print and broadcast, plus expert specialist press.
- Key stakeholders, including the Department for Transport, Welsh and Scottish governments, city regions, MPs, road companies, Network Rail and train companies, bus / coach operators, and trade bodies.
- Specialist contacts.