

Communications Director

Northwest Minnesota Foundation, Bemidji MN

The Northwest Minnesota Foundation (NMF) is one of the six Minnesota Initiative Foundations (MIFs) established by the McKnight Foundation in 1986 to assist Minnesota's rural regions during the farm crisis in the 1980s. As the region's MIF and the only community foundation in the region, NMF has been serving the vast nonprofit community in northwest Minnesota for more than 30 years.

NMF provides grants and loans to organizations and small businesses and scholarships to individuals within the 12-county region and the two tribal nations. Since its founding, NMF has invested millions to help make the region a better place to live and work.

Position Description

The Communications Director position is accountable for leading the Foundation's communications strategy, focusing on developing and implementing an integrated, organization-wide strategic communications plan to broaden awareness of the philanthropy sector and strengthen the brand identity. This includes creating a brand/marketing/public relations strategy that enables NMF's Board of Directors, leadership team, and staff to cultivate meaningful relations with external audiences. The Communications Director will ensure communications strategies are inclusive and equitably accessible.

Duties & Responsibilities

- You will lead the Foundation's communications strategy including but not limited to developing and implementing an integrated, organization-wide strategic communications plan to broaden awareness of the philanthropy sector and strengthen the Foundation's brand identity across key stakeholder audiences.
- You will create a brand/marketing/public relations strategy that will allow NMF's Board of Directors, leadership team, and all staff to cultivate and enhance meaningful relations with targeted external audiences.
- You will work with the board and staff to recognize internal and external communications opportunities and solutions and define and execute appropriate strategies to support them. You will work with the board and staff to ensure that communications strategies are inclusive of all audiences and equitably accessible.
- You will manage the communications operations and oversee the continued development, adherence to, and use of the NMF brand. Some duties will include but not be limited to: oversee and execute all copy intended for public consumption to ensure its alignment with the strategic

Job Details

Industry

Community Foundation

Employment Type

Full-Time

Employment Status

Exempt

Job Functions

Communications

Public Relations

Direct Reports

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Position Reports To

SVP of Advancement

Career Pathway

IC400

communications plan; oversee or execute the development of all print and branded materials; oversee or execute the development of electronic communications including NMF website; curate content and increase audience engagement on NMF's social media channels; advise on any new communication platforms that will enhance our branding and messaging; exercise judgement to prioritize media opportunities, prepare talking points, speeches, presentations, and other supporting material as needed; serve as a lead point person on media interactions that help promote and/or impact the organization and actively cultivate and manage press relationships to ensure coverage of issues of strategic importance to the sector, as well as NMF's programs, special events, public announcements, and other projects; manage relationships with any communications-related vendors or consultants; oversee the communications budget.

- You will support team development and manage a communications support team, relying on shared staff, and intern talent, to support the development and execution of the communications strategy. You will develop a culture where staff are NMF brand advocates.
- You will work closely with the Philanthropy team to support fundraising and development needs including consulting on case statements and use of events and curating stories to share the power of philanthropy in Northwest Minnesota.
- You will work closely with the Programs team to support the sharing of programs' work through white papers, conference presentations, video testimonials, press releases, eBlasts, website announcements, and/or curating stories to share the impact of NMF programs.
- You will work with NMF leadership to establish an ongoing evaluation of NMF's communications strategy, internal guidelines, and ensure that the communications strategy is being continuously improved.
- You are responsible for all other duties as assigned.

What success looks like:

- You are an effective leader within the Foundation and you nurture a culture that reinforces people-centered, mission-driven, impact-focused and operational excellence. You will be the Foundation's "Chief Brand Officer" and help lead the organization to deliver on our brand promise every day.
- You are a person who excels at both the strategic and tactical elements of a communications leadership position. Your ability to think strategically and collaborate with board and leadership on the execution of a robust communications strategic plan contributes to the advancement of the Foundation's mission and the impact of the Foundation's work in the region for our constituents/customers.
- You are a person who is curious about the organization, the region, the philanthropic sector, and the issue-areas that are a part of the Foundation's strategic framework. You actively seek out best practices and new trends in the communications/marketing/public relations field and you apply that information, as appropriate, to the work of the Foundation.
- You are a person with a very high attention to detail and will ensure that all information released from the Foundation is accurate and free of errors. You will ensure the Foundation has in place systems and processes for the creation and release of approved communications content that is clear and concise and meets the communications' objective for both the Foundation and the target audience.
- The Northwest Minnesota Foundation is committed to fostering a welcoming and inclusive workplace that reflects the communities we serve. You actively seek opportunities to grow your skills and strengthen our work across the region.

Obligations

Ownership of:

- The varied and integrated communications products and services such as newsletters, website, social media, etc.
- The development of and roll-out of the NMF communications strategic plan
- The management of the NMF brand and image identity
- The establishment and reinforcement of systems and processes for the release of content and collateral.

Will collaborate in:

- Advancing the Foundation's position with relevant constituents, as well as to drive broader awareness and support for the organization.
- Mentoring and developing staff using a people-centered, supportive, and collaborative approach on a consistent basis.
- Positively and productively impacting both the finance and administrative initiatives of the Foundation.

Qualifications

Required:

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent in marketing, communications, public relations, journalism or related degree
- 5 years of related experience

Preferred:

- Master's degree in a related field
- 2 years of experience leading an organization's brand identity and/or communications strategic plan
- Demonstrated ability to integrate new and emerging technologies – such as generative AI – into communications strategies to enhance storytelling, efficiency, and audience engagement.
- Extensive successful writing and editing experience (externally focused) with a variety of print and online communications media.
- Advanced expertise in graphic design and website management
- Experience with website management and search engine optimization
- Experience with photography and videography
- Innovative thinker, with a track record for translating strategic thinking into action plans and output
- Superior management skills: ability to influence and engage direct reports and indirect reports and peers.
- Excellent and persuasive communicator
- Energetic, flexible, collaborative, and proactive; a team leader who can positively and productively impact finance and administration initiatives.
- Passion for the mission of the Northwest Minnesota Foundation

Job Information

The Northwest Minnesota Foundation follows an equal opportunity employment policy and employs personnel without regard to race, creed, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, physical or mental ability, pregnancy, veteran status, military obligations, and marital status. This policy applies to hiring, wages, internal promotions, training, opportunities for advancement, and terminations.

- This position offers a competitive salary (minimum of \$64,385 to a maximum of \$104,626), commensurate with experience and qualifications.
- The primary location for this position may be a remote home office located in the twelve counties, or two tribal nations served by the Foundation. A successful individual in this position will spend adequate time in person at our Bemidji offices to foster collaboration and effective team building.
- This position will require travel locally, regionally, state-wide, and potentially nationally.