

Director of Communications, Education First

Overview of the Opportunity

The Director of Communications will lead all external communications, foster brand alignment, and deliver high-quality, on-brand, and timely work. We are seeking a seasoned & strategic communications professional with demonstrated success in thought leadership, content development, brand strategy, project management, and relationship building. Our ideal candidate is a self-starter with strong writing, creative, and critical thinking abilities, and a passion for storytelling across digital and print channels. You'll be comfortable working in a fast-paced virtual environment managing multiple projects including various internal and external stakeholders.

About Education First

Education First is a mission-driven education policy consultancy dedicated to ensuring that all students – and particularly students in poverty and students of color – are prepared for success in college, careers and life. We work with organizations that are shaping the future of P-16 education across the nation, including school networks and districts, state departments of education, policy and advocacy organizations, youth empowerment organizations, talent organizations and foundations.

We help these system leaders catalyze change through our services:

- § Conduct research and analysis on policies and provide contextual recommendations and strategic support to translate findings into concrete, sustainable action
- § Develop and implement visionary, coherent strategies and strategic plans by prioritizing inclusive voices, focusing on the right problems, and providing space to explore
- § Plan and facilitate meaningful convenings for organizations and individuals to learn, problem solve, collaborate, and advance their work
- § Design actionable and equitable solutions that meet client needs, achieve program goals, and implement initiatives with clarity and quality
- § Support grantmakers, funders, and foundations to develop thoughtful, high-impact investment strategies that align with their goals, interests, and resources

We are a team of more than 60 former teachers, district and state education leaders, policy advisors, and grant makers who live and work virtually in more than 20 states and DC. Because of our experience, we approach the challenges our clients face with humility, realistic solutions, and a commitment to follow-through. Our culture is built on genuine care for our clients and for each other. We celebrate original thinking, collaboration, entrepreneurialism, authenticity and fun.

Our Equity Commitment

We recognize that in order to pursue our own organizational mission at Education First, we must approach our work by studying gaps and inequities, asking tough questions about structural racism and more deliberately engaging diverse voices in problem-solving. We've been building our own skills to deliver solutions that center racial equity, with particular attention to equitable ways of thinking and working, and we are committed to helping our clients do the same in projects that have a goal of increasing equity at their core. Within Education First, we have committed to building a race equity culture – creating the conditions to adopt antiracist mindsets and actions.

We believe:

§ Black lives matter. We are collectively responsible to amplify and support Black students, families and leaders.

§ People are experts in their own experience. We cannot effectively support our clients to problem solve and innovate without centering the people they aim to serve.

§ Racism and inequity were designed, and can be redesigned. People make up the systems, policies and processes that govern our experience, and we must support our clients to explore their role in reimagining what could be possible.

For greater detail about our Equity Commitment, please visit our website.

Primary Responsibilities

Reporting to the Chief Strategy & Equity Officer, the Director of Communications will collaboratively work with a team and direct the work of others to promote Education First's research, learnings, and services which collectively advances the broader movement toward education equity. You will (in partnership) create integrated communications strategies, develop and maintain creative assets, and deploy assets across appropriate business development channels. The primary responsibilities of the Director of Communications are:

Content Creation

§ Lead the writing, editing and publication of original thought leadership content that is aligned to business development strategy (videos, microsites, blogs, articles, op-eds, email campaigns, etc.)

§ Create visionary and compelling messaging & presentations

§ Identify opportunities for content development by staying up-to-date on work happening across the organization and current events related to our work

§ Oversee and update brand guidelines (e.g. editorial, style, social, design, photography)

§ Establish content arcs focusing on services and content areas each quarter; aligning all external messaging

§ Support research projects and reports by providing writing and copy editing assistance

§ Develop, create, and manage email marketing campaigns (draft content, create templates, troubleshoot issues) using Salesforce and Pardot software

§ Lead the creation of cross-channel brand campaigns to improve brand loyalty and brand sentiment and broaden general brand awareness

§ Develop social media strategy and ensure social media presence reflects Education First's role as a thought-leader

§ Serve as a strategic thinker, content creator, and thought partner to staff and leadership

Content Management

§ Project manage the development of high-quality, on-brand content that furthers the Education First brand across a variety of channels and mediums, including email, social media, print, digital, photo, and video

§ Manage concept definition, briefing, and production of high-quality, audience-focused content across different marketing channels, and partner with external agencies and freelancers as needed

§ Maintain content calendar that includes blogs, op-eds, and other thought-leadership content

§ Manage the creation and execution of processes and resources that ensure brand strength, alignment, and efficiencies across the organization

§ Ensure content is consistent with Education First's voice, style, and tone

§ Define Key Performance Indicators and measure, track, and report the success of communications tactics

§ Oversee website maintenance and updates

Content Strategy

§ Create strong project plans with key communications strategies and objectives, and ensure alignment and efficiency across teams, external agencies, and freelancers

§ Set the vision for evaluating the brand, how to position the organization externally and evolving messaging to fulfill long-term strategic plans

§ Bring new and big ideas to the table, as well as collaboratively build on others' concepts

§ Develop and effectively manage workflows with external agencies and creative freelancers; set expectations, provide access to assets, resources, and training as needed, and deliver clear, actionable feedback

Business Development

§ Drive future business to the firm and influence the national market landscape

§ Identify opportunities to expand and communicate Education First's services

§ Partner with Business Development Manager to strategically highlight services and focus areas in collateral and proposal language

§ Participate in the business development process by supporting with pitch preparation, presentation and research as required

§ Strengthen Education First's brand and messaging in service of deepening and expanding client relationships, amplifying project work and stories, and influencing the education field

People Management

§ Mentor, guide and manage team members; support inclusive project teams that challenge and empower all team members to grow and reach their potential

Experience & Qualifications

§ 8-10 years of communications experience, including experience strategizing, producing, and executing integrated campaigns across different marketing channels, including but not limited to email, social, web, print, video, etc.

§ Superior writing skills and flexible writing style with an ability to synthesize information and tailor communication style to accommodate diverse audiences

§ Proven track record writing and publishing content such as blog posts, reports, or other publications

§ Strong written and verbal communication and storytelling skills; copywriting experience preferred

§ An astute attention to detail and understanding of tailoring creative content

§ Creative thinker with ability to think long-term, envision end results, and observe/notice key opportunities as they arise

- § Ability to think strategically while also delivering on execution and reliably moving multiple projects forward at time
- § Good eye for design, attentive to best practices, and strong understanding of brand consistency
- § Strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills
- § Demonstrated ability to manage creative projects and articulate actionable feedback involving both internal and external stakeholders
- § Ability to manage many competing priorities and communicate effectively when priorities shift
- § Strong relationship management skills with a proven track record of successfully managing internal and external relationships
- § Demonstrated ability to work effectively independently and as part of a team
- § Comfort with change in a fast-moving environment
- § Comfort operating in ambiguity/uncertainty, and ability to pivot, change course, and remain confident and flexible amid evolving circumstances
- § Experience in education, policy or public affairs
- § Previous experience working at a nonprofit organization or foundation preferred
- § Demonstrated understanding of current education reform issues, players and organizations desirable
- § Proficiency in Microsoft Office
- § Proficiency with content creation tools (Adobe Creative Suite, Canva, etc.)
- § Experience managing social media for a business; proficiency a plus across Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Snapchat
- § Familiarity with utilizing Salesforce (Pardot) preferred
- § Master's in public policy, public administration, business, communications, journalism, education, JD or related fields a plus but not required

Who You Are

- § You are committed to the vision of a more equitable education system in the U.S., including a willingness to examine the role of privilege, structural barriers, and inclusion in changing the trajectories of students furthest from opportunity
- § You are self-motivated and results oriented

§ A resourceful problem solver who is able to take initiative on projects with a high degree of autonomy and to anticipate and adjust for unexpected barriers to success

§ Highly organized and a detail-oriented self-starter committed to quality and results

§ You proactively and strategically multi-task a high volume of assignments in a high volume environment

§ Able to lead by influence, establishing open lines of communication on project teams and incorporating the perspective of others

§ You provide and receive feedback with ease

§ Ability and desire to work independently in a virtual office environment

§ Flexible, resourceful and good humored in a deadline-driven, results-oriented culture and organization on the move and always striving for excellence

Location & Compensation

You will primarily work from home, but you should be able to travel for firmwide engagements a few times a year (roughly 10% of the time) once it is safe to do so from a public health perspective.

Education First offers a market-based competitive salary, comprehensive and generous benefits package (including PPO health insurance, six weeks of paid time off/holidays and extended leave), work-life flexibility and professional development opportunities. The salary range for this position is \$104,000 - \$152,000 (with 20% of the offer supplemented by local market trends if that market is higher than the national market). We typically set initial starting salaries between the minimum and the 25th percentile of the pay range (\$104,000 - \$116,000) to ensure there is room for growth over time.

Application Process

We are excited to receive applications from a broad range of applicants as we grow our team to better reflect the diversity of the communities our firm is committed to serve. Enthusiastic candidates should apply online to submit their resume and a detailed cover letter describing how your qualifications match the job responsibilities. Please submit all completed application materials by October 10, 2021.

We plan to conduct screening interviews on a rolling basis and share performance tasks with select candidates. Interviews with top candidates will occur in November. Ideally, we'd like our newest Director Communications to start in January 2022.

Education First actively engages our team with a robust Race, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (RIDE) strategy to build our staff and organizational capacity to lead on issues of equity and to increase diversity, equity and inclusion at all levels of the firm. As a proud equal opportunity employer, we strongly encourage applications from candidates of all races, national origins, ages, religions, creeds, veteran or disabled statuses, sexual orientations, gender identities or gender expressions.

Apply: https://recruiting.myapps.paychex.com/appone/MainInfoReq.asp?R_ID=3969598