

**Job Description**  
**COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR**  
**Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church**

**Job Summary:** The director of communications directs and coordinates the planning, implementing and evaluating the overall marketing communications efforts of the conference. The director of communications oversees conference social media strategy, web presence, public relations, promotion, advertising, media relations, as well as conference news and information as a means of relating the Great Plains Conference mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This individual will be located in the Lincoln, NE conference office. This is a full-time, exempt position.

**Qualifications:** All staff of the Great Plains Conference shall have at a minimum the following:

1. Be sympathetic with the Christian faith and the purposes of The United Methodist Church.
2. Exhibit a strong faith commitment to making disciples of Jesus Christ.
3. Possess the special aptitudes, skills, and capacities that are required in their respective fields of work. In this position that includes:
  - Familiarity with the organization of the UMC and its polity
  - Willingness to travel
  - Ability and commitment to function as a member of a team
  - Advanced computer and email skills
  - Safe Gatherings certified
  - Must hold a drivers license
  - Must be able to carry/lift 25 pounds
  - Commitment to quality and excellence
  - Maintaining and keeping confidences
  - Ability to train and facilitate

**Duties and Responsibilities**

- Act as the primary strategist for communications and communications marketing efforts for the Great Plains Conference
  - Work with leadership team to identify priorities and set direction for communications efforts on behalf of the Great Plains Conference
  - Take the lead in social media and website strategy development and implementation, assist with content
  - Collaborate across departmental lines as needed to produce the best possible communications vehicles (distribution methods), content and communications support our missional priorities
  - Work closely with United Methodist Communications to network and capitalize on global resources, including grants, training, etc.
  - Provide media training to conference leadership to enhance their ability to manage and relate to local, statewide and national media. Take the lead in crisis communications situations, working with the Bishop and appropriate designates to relate and manage the media.
  - Develop and coordinate in-house communications
  - Develop and implement budgets
  - Maintain the public relations function of the organization. Establish and maintain active relationships with secular, denominational and interfaith media
  - To the extent possible, the marketing communications department is a service agency to the conference working on marketing communications projects to further the priorities of the general and local church
  - Oversee the circulation function and database support for marketing communications in the Great Plains Conference, including media lists, advertising contacts, clergy and laity lists for uploading to the website directories, etc.
  - Develop and/or oversee the preparation and distribution of news releases to secular, denominational and interfaith media to promote conference events and activities, publicize

special announcements from the Bishop or Conference agencies, and help the conference achieve its priorities. Plan and facilitate press conferences when appropriate

- Accountable as senior writer/editor and executive producer for all conference communications activities
  - Responsible for the overall successful implementation of plans and strategies carried out by communications team
  - Provide assistance and counsel to departmental staff as needed, as is appropriate for job descriptions and assignments
  - Set the example for an environment of creativity, innovation and problem solving.
- Provide innovative consultation on the best communications practices
  - Expertise on best modes of delivery
  - Expertise on content development
  - Experience in multi-versioning material for different delivery platforms, including print
  - Readiness to learn, keeping current of communication developments, and providing leadership for the Conference on marketing communications
  - Collaborate with the communications team to meet the growing demands of an active conference
  - Set high standards of production practices and quality
  - Identify communications contacts in local churches and provide support and networking opportunities. Provide support to districts in communications skills building and training
- Media support
  - Ability to create content suitable for the social media and the Great Plains website
  - Some ability to create other graphics in support of the team
  - Maintain and uphold brand standards for Great Plains UMC
- Event set-up and support
  - Represent communications in various settings to provide counsel and advice on the development of program, processes and events
  - Oversee and work with communications staff in the production preparation for conference and educational sessions, serve as executive producer
  - Assign and help produce social media campaigns as needed for specific events
  - Be accountable and responsive to customer service needs, including providing advice to individual groups and or congregations on the use of communications in all of its various forms, including planning for communications
- Provide support for staff
  - Work effectively with peer staff
  - Willingness to fill in for communications team members when necessary for taking photos, notes on meetings, event support and other writing assignments
  - Understand web content manager and provide leadership
  - Cover events and/or travel to locations to cover stories of United Methodist ministries in the Great Plains as needed
  - Provide training opportunities to direct reports to enhance their spiritual formation and skill sets needed to do their work.
- Quality assurance
  - Collaborate on proofing and quality assurance, adhere to brand standards
  - Know how to use the Adobe software suite (Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, etc.)
  - Edit published materials to ensure that they conform to a high standard of grammar and presentation
  - Edit marketing materials and newsletters produced by other departments to ensure brand standards, grammar and style guidelines are maintained
- Other duties as assigned

**Credentials and Experience**

The communications director must exhibit evidence of developed vocational identity through:

1. Minimum of 5 years in journalism, public relations, mass media field required
2. Bachelors degree in communication or related field required
3. APR, ABC, or RCC certifications helpful
4. Supervisory experience

**Supervisory responsibilities:** Communications coordinator and other employed or contracted persons assigned (4 FTE, various vendors)

**Accountability:** This position is supervised by the assistant to the bishop/director of clergy excellence