Exempt Job Description

Job Title: **Communications & Media Relations Officer**Job Number: **X-289**  
NOC: **1221**  
Band: **6**  
Department: **Marketing & Communications**Supervisor Title:  **Manager, Communications**   
Last Reviewed: **December 5, 2017**

## Job Purpose

Reporting to the Manager of Communications, the Communications & Media Relations Officer is a key member of the Marketing and Communications and Recruitment and Admissions team, which is responsible for University recruitment and enrolment as well as managing Trent’s reputation. This position is responsible for overseeing the planning and development of internal and external communications supporting the Trent University reputation, brand and overall strategic enrolment management goals of the University, and increasing public profile through the development and coordination of a comprehensive national and international Media Relations Strategy. In line with the institution’s positioning and branding, this position takes a lead role in dimensionalizing the Trent story across all media platforms and in the digital realm. As a media and marketing/ communications expert, the successful candidate will contribute media and social media expertise to all plans, meetings, and discussions, also overseeing various aspects of marketing materials, publications, presentations and e-communications.

## Key Activities

### Media Relations

1. As the University lead and first point of contact for media relations, prepare and coordinate execution of a Media Relations Strategy as part of the University-wide Marketing Plan for both campuses with clear metrics for tracking and measuring success.
2. Proactively seek out, plan, manage, pitch and execute media opportunities and coverage, and create content for producing/coordinating communications material and events in support of the strategic Marketing & Communications goals to build reputation and awareness of Trent University.
3. Conduct quarterly reviews of media coverage, creating a dashboard that tracks metrics, keeps comparator data, sets new goals and allows for adjustments to the plan as required; constantly renew and refresh accurate media lists.
4. Conduct daily media scans, proactively identifying and acting on risks and opportunities and working with AVP, manager and senior administration on responses as required, .
5. Respond to all media calls and inquiries and prepare detailed reports on media issues with the potential for impact on University reputation for the Manager, Communications; prepare and update key messaging for issues arising, news releases, backgrounders, fact sheets, bios; create and support related internal communication strategies; craft backgrounders, presentations, briefing notes, and proposals.
6. Create and maintain relationships with members of the media (local, national and international) related to Trent’s key focus areas and actively pursue a match for media needs for content and experts with Trent’s faculty, students and alumni.
7. Meet with senior administration, academic and administrative department heads to effectively and strategically identify expertise, faculty, student and alumni successes, opportunities for commentary on topical issues, features and profiles – and activate use in media relations and marketing/communications materials
8. Oversee development of online database of Trent experts for media use.
9. Act as the main contact for the Office of Research to identify media opportunities, ensure timely announcements of research funding news and success stories, effectively highlighting the unique connection between research and teaching at Trent for media relations and marketing/communications materials.
10. Maintain an awareness and understanding of media trends, innovations and opportunities and act as MCRA departmental expert on media, both traditional and new (e.g. social)
11. Work with the Marketing & Communications digital team to contribute to a University-wide Social Media Plan with clear strategies for making connections with media.
12. Participate as the lead media and social media planner and advisor on various committees across the University.

### Marketing & Communications

1. Plan, write, oversee writers/designers and edit materials for all mediums directed at both internal and external audiences, consistent with the University's mission, vision and strategic directions, enrolment (recruitment and retention) and objectives set by the Marketing & Communications and Recruitment & Admissions portfolio. Materials include, but are not limited to: news releases, publications, web content, news stories, digital media, etc.
2. Produce quality of content and effective delivery of Trent stories using a brand journalism approach and through a robust contribution to the publications plan and e-delivery strategy leveraging university events and success stories.
3. Explore and implement creative ways to integrate written content with digital content, including video;
4. As a lead on social media content, track and identify any issues requiring response ensure media prominence and a high level of social media activity through involvement and attendance at high profile Trent events, announcements, occasions and celebrations (e.g. school launches).
5. Develop publications that provide an opportunity for the University to promote its researchers, faculty, students and staff;
6. Drive innovation by researching best practices, media trends, new digital strategies in using both new and traditional forms of communication to effectively engage with the University’s key target audiences including media, prospects and current students;
7. Plan publications and e-projects, write, edit, proofread and coordinate suppliers from concept to completion;
8. Assist with strategic development of University’s various social media channels and content related to recruiting new students;
9. Provide support and back-up as required to other communications and marketing functions related to project management, writing and editing both for print and online, social media, internal communications and other administrative duties
10. Assist with digital and other photography/video/podcasts to support marketing, communications, recruitment and admissions materials and initiatives
11. Coordinate and l liaise with designers, producers, photographers/videographers, and other marketing, communications and creative suppliers to facilitate timely delivery of marketing material for various campaigns, announcements, initiatives and events;
12. Participate in team meetings and brainstorming sessions identifying marketing opportunities and new approaches to positively position Trent University in building reputation, awareness and enrolment;
13. Provide a high level of general writing and project management support to Manager, Communications, including speeches, speaking notes, preparation for interviews, etc.
14. Post material to daily news and myTrent portals and other communications tools as they evolve.

### Emergency Operations & Issues Management

1. Act as back up to the Manager, Communications and/or AVP, Marketing & Recruitment on emergency communications and Emergency Operations Committee
2. Act on strategies for crisis/emergency communications as required, including emergency response, campus closures, issues management
3. Access and synthesize confidential and sensitive information, related to board governance, budgets, human resources, for backgrounders, speaking points, communications plans, etc.
4. Maintain discretion and confidentiality with regard to files and sensitive issues, attending meetings, interviewing senior administrators to support the Manager of Communications on communication plans and materials;
5. Develop briefing materials, backgrounders, speaking points for senior administration on media requests and confidential issues as required

### Administrative Duties & Support

1. Manage team of external freelance writers, setting up contracts and purchase orders, providing direction on Trent standards and writing guidelines, assigning and editing work, etc.;
2. Act as key member and contributor to University-wide Integrated Communications Group;
3. Assist in planning, development and implementation of public relations, marketing and communications, recruitment and admissions special events, including Open House;
4. Build effective relationships and collaborate with all administrative and academic departments on key messaging;
5. Oversee and provide direction on work of Marketing & Communications student employees;
6. Liaise with suppliers (e.g. freelancers, printers, sign companies, designers) to ensure deadlines are met;
7. Post material to daily news and myTrent portals, and other communications tools as they evolve;
8. Support distribution logistics for print and e-newsletters;
9. Estimate budgets for communications materials and projects and ensure timely, on-budget delivery
10. Contribute to management of materials library, assist with photo database, electronic and hard copy department files;
11. Schedule, take minutes and follow-up on action items of department meetings, standing or ad hoc committees;
12. Other duties as assigned.

## Education

Bachelor’s degree (Honours) in Marketing, Communications, Journalism, Media Studies or related field (or general degree with post-graduate diploma or specialization in any one of these areas) is required.

## Experience Required

A minimum of five years’ experience in professional writing and communications activities (using new and traditional forms of media), preferably in a large public sector or corporate setting, is required.

*Skills/Attributes/Qualifications:*

1. Demonstrated experience working with major national news outlets and/or magazine/trade/online publications.
2. Excellent written and verbal communications skills.
3. Proven record of securing positive press with key media, including magazine/trade/online publications at the national and international level.
4. Interest and appetite for the latest developments in marketing and media as well as experience in integrating social media and online media strategies.
5. Exemplary interpersonal, communications, conflict resolution skills with abilities to build bridges between complex stakeholder groups and individuals.
6. Outstanding strategic, creative, and conceptual writing and editing skills for various media
7. Well-honed issues management skills and ability to manage confidential information and display sensitivity during difficult situations.
8. Ability to manage diverse projects and shifting priorities within tight timelines
9. Recognizable and consistent social media presence as well as interest and expertise in new media technologies.
10. Excellent computing skills (Microsoft Office, Word, Excel, Project Management, email, internet, web content management, PowerPoint, etc.)
11. Excellent sense of discretion, judgment, tact and diplomacy.
12. Demonstrated knowledge and experience in marketing and understanding of target audiences;
13. Dedication to customer service and a student-centred environment.
14. Superior interpersonal strengths, conceptual skills, the ability to collaborate creatively and consult with others;
15. Conversant with new media technologies, social media, photography and videography;
16. Experience in proof-reading, editing and in managing publication projects;
17. Ability to work with constructive feedback and take direction;
18. Knowledge of the Ontario secondary and post-secondary system environments, trends and needs;
19. An understanding of complex stakeholder groups and diverse audiences

## Analytical Reasoning

Must display an issues management mindset and be able to project how evolving issues will impact the reputation of the department/University. The complexity of this role is tied to the multitude of projects and priorities that must be managed simultaneously, with tight deadlines. The output of work is very public in nature and special attention must be adhered to ensuring the accuracy of work that is published in the public domain. Intense conceptual thinking is required to define the correct path for successful project management (e.g. media relations, planning and coordination on confidential issues management topics).

This job requires analytical reasoning to apply to responsibilities that are diverse, complex and multifaceted. Judgment is exercised in adapting methods to arrive at solutions. Situations are broad in scope, and lack standard practice to resolve, thus requiring the recognition, analysis and creative definition of practical solutions. Work planning includes others, and occurs within broad time frames, but may require adjusting plans and priorities to respond to changing circumstances.

Logical and critical thinking is often required to define problems, develop alternatives, propose, plan and implement solutions.

## Decision Making

Interacts regularly with senior administration, including President, VPs, AVPs, Deans, as well as external stakeholders including media. In doing so, the Communications & Media Relations Officer provides support and messaging that has wide-reaching impact across the University, in the community and beyond. Sound judgement is required to maintain and cultivate relations with a variety of stakeholders in media, administration and internal/external communities. In broader consultation with Manager, Communications, this position is required to use sound judgement; decisions usually involve determining the best process to carry out the job tasks.

## Impact

Decisions taken by the Media Relations & Communications Officer have the potential of impacting the reputation and public image of the University. Work completed is frequently broadcast and shared in the public domain. The management of media inquiry, for example, has the potential of resolving an issue or extending a controversy, depending on decisions taken and acted upon.

Impact on the organization is likely to extend to other work groups and may also have some effect on clients and service partners: errors are normally detected before they become serious, but may cause interruption and loss of time to colleagues in the same section or other work groups to correct. Errors that go undetected may affect recommendations, decisions or actions, leading to a minor negative impact to the whole organization.

## Responsibility for the Work of Others

**Direct Responsibility for the Work of Others:**

* Contracted suppliers, including freelance writers, designers, photographers, and printers – often act as first point of contact in the department for contracted suppliers – manage work of freelance writers (assign stories, review and edit materials, provide feedback and act as mentor/provide direction for future pieces); designers – seek quotes on publications and projects, manage relationships with multiple designers.; photographers – provide creative direction of photo shoots and video projects; printers – seek quotes on publications and projects, manage relationships with multiple print houses, ensure work is distributed equally, etc.
* Student employees – provide direction to student employees on projects/tasks to be undertaken; review/edit written materials and photography; assist with training on various office procedures, etc.

**Indirect Responsibility for the Work of Others:**

* Liaises with other internal departments (e.g. President’s Office, Advancement, Risk Management, Facilities Management, Conference Services) on messaging and materials

## Communication

The Communications & Media Relations Officer is a direct point of contact for both the internal and external communities. Communication involves the ability to clarify ideas and messages, to summarize or synthesize the information according to the audience’s need, to use judgment in discussing problems, presenting information, making recommendations. Communication requires consulting on issues. Lack of judgment and discretion in communicating messages could result in damage to the organization’s image. Job responsibilities require communication with very diverse contacts, both inside and outside of the organization, including senior officials in the University, media, government representatives, prospective students and applicants, the community, and the general public.

**Internal Contacts:**

* University administration – President’s Office, Vice Presidents, Board of Governors, Deans, etc. (institutional messaging, speech and letter writing, briefing and background documents, internal memos/updates, press materials, etc.)
* Academic department heads, faculty and administrative assistants – all departments/programs, including undergraduate, graduate and professional programs (institutional messaging, press materials, profiles, brochures, marketing materials, online marketing/websites, photography, etc.)
* Administrative department directors and staff – all offices (i.e. Advancement, Alumni, Trent International, Registrar, Liaison, Career Centre, Library, etc.) (institutional messaging, profiles, brochures, marketing materials, online marketing/websites, photography, etc.)
* Students – undergraduate and graduate – regular contact with current students and alumni for profiles, press materials, online marketing/web content, events promotion, etc.
* Ancillary operations (Athletics, Conferences, etc.) (institutional messaging, profiles, brochures, marketing materials, online marketing/websites, photography, etc.)

**External Contacts:**

* Media – direct contact with members of the media; front-line media response for all levels of the University
* Suppliers, vendors (freelance writers, designers, printers, etc.) – arrange “contracts” with vendors (RFPs, quotes, etc.), act as liaison between university clients (including departments, offices and M&C) and suppliers on various projects, etc.
* Associations – COU, Universities Canada, etc.
* VIPs – honorary degree recipients, Chancellor
* General public – indirect contact through development of stories and messages for press releases, website stories and text, etc.; occasionally respond to direct inquiries from the public
* Prospective students and applicants – through printed materials and social media interaction communicate with prospective students and their families and influencers, including guidance counsellors, etc.
* Government representatives – work with government reps through Manager, Communications, press conferences and university events, news releases, etc.
* Counterparts or contacts at other universities or academic institutions – consult on best practices; work with them on various events and/or announcements (especially local institutions/Fleming College), etc.
* Representatives from various external organizations – includes community organizations (around events, press releases, etc.)

## Motor/ Sensory Skills

* Working at work station throughout the day, responding to telephone calls, large volumes of e-mails
* Keyboarding – require dexterity involving speed and accuracy
* Handwriting – required to capture notes from interviews (in person or on the phone) quickly and accurately
* Verbal – excellent verbal communication skills; engaged in extensive verbal communication in media and public relations role; pick-up on verbal cues in interviews (in person, on phone or through e-mail); communicate effectively with all audiences
* Visual – attention to fine detail and overall presentation of professional-looking materials; fit with Trent brand and identity; photography and videography best angles/lighting/set-up for various purposes

## Effort

**Description** **Job Tasks Required**

Sustained concentration – ability to maintain concentration on projects to ensure their completion in an accurate and timely manner in the face of constant interruptions, requests and emerging issues

Multitasking/competing demands – ability to manage multiple and critical projects with competing timelines; ability to adapt schedule for new priorities in a fast-paced, changing environment

Listening – understanding of complex stakeholder groups and diverse audiences; listen and work with constructive feedback; take direction; good customer service approach in a fast-paced, changing environment

Diplomacy – appropriate judgement, tact and discretion in dealing with confidential and sensitive information as well as various audiences and constituents, including media

**Physical Effort:**

**Description** **Job Tasks Required**

Keyboarding extended periods of time spent keyboarding; speed and accuracy required

Visual demand working on computers, writing, reviewing visual materials, etc.; photography skills

Duration working on computer and in office for sustained periods of time

Lifting/Carrying limited lifting and carrying – publication mailings, etc.

Walking/Standing event coverage and photography; travel/walking to various places on campus and throughout community to cover events and activities, conduct interviews, etc.; standing for longer periods of time for photography, etc.

Extended Hours /Mobility Work sometimes involves covering evening and

weekend events and activities

## Working Conditions

**Psychological Conditions:**

**Condition** **Condition Description**

Competing demands/Conflicting multiple and diverse projects with competing timelines

work priorities

Changing deadlines/time pressures ability to adapt to shifting timelines; ability to work under time pressures and produce accurate materials/information in short time frame

Stress position is part of a department that manages a consistent high volume of work and concurrent projects

**Physical Conditions:**

**Condition** **Condition Description**

Duration extended hours often required – covering events/activities, meeting deadlines, etc.

Interior/Exterior activities take place both internally and externally and

may require limited, local travel