



DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Basic Purpose and Responsibilities:

The Director of Marketing & Communications provides strategic leadership and day-to-day oversight of all marketing, public relations, media relations, and environmental communication functions for the Buffalo Zoo. This individual is a visionary brand steward, hands-on leader and chief storyteller responsible for growing attendance, deepening community engagement, and advancing the Buffalo Zoo's mission through compelling, multi-channel communications, including digital communications (social media, website, email); paid and earned media; on-grounds environmental communications; and graphic design. This position reports directly to the Chief Advancement Officer, is a member of the Advancement Team, and serves on the Zoo's Leadership Team. The Director manages an internal communications team, external agency, and oversees vendor and advisor relationships to deliver campaigns that drive revenue, elevate the Zoo's reputation, and amplify its conservation voice. The Director partners closely with Zoo leadership in Advancement, Animal Care, Guest Experience and Conservation Education departments to realize revenue targets; and achieve fundraising and engagement goals.

Compensation / Benefits / How to Apply:

This is a full-time, exempt position. Annual salary range is **\$70,000 - \$85,000** commensurate with experience. Some of the benefits available include health plan, HRA/HSA, FSA, life insurance, long term disability insurance, dental, vision, 403B retirement plan, annual leave, holiday, and sick time benefits. Benefits are available after the successful completion and passing of a probationary period review at 60 days of work (*sick time available upon hire*).

To Apply: Please send resume and cover letter in **Word document or PDF** using subject line: Marketing Director by email to: buffalozoojobs@buffalozoo.org

No telephone calls please. Position open until filled. For more information about the Buffalo Zoo, please visit our website by using the following link: <http://www.buffalozoo.org>

The Buffalo Zoo:

As one of the crown jewels of Western New York's cultural and recreational attractions, the Buffalo Zoo welcomes 400,000+ guests on an annual basis. The Zoo sits on 23.5 acres and is home to over 850+ animals, supports many conservation programs, and is a highly regarded educational facility. Being the third oldest zoo in the country, the Buffalo Zoo is proud to have several buildings of historic significance on its campus. The Zoo is operated by the Zoological Society of Buffalo, Inc., under a lease agreement with the City of Buffalo. Our mission of **Building Community → Creating Connections → Saving Wildlife** is guiding our strategic plan and campus development plan – both updated in 2025. These plans will guide the growth and development of the Zoo for the next ten years.

Essential Functions:

Department Director Competencies & Expectations:

- Demonstrate initiative and ownership in leading their department, setting direction, and driving continuous improvement. The person in this position should actively seek information, ask informed questions, and stay aware of operational, organizational, and departmental developments rather than waiting to be directed.

- Maintain high standards of excellence in daily operations, staff performance, and guest experience.
- Be accountable for department outcomes, decisions, and use of resources.
- Build trust with team members through consistency, transparency, approachability, and follow-through.
- Foster an environment where employees feel supported, informed, and empowered to succeed.
- Align departmental goals and actions with organizational strategy and values.
- Department Directors are accountable for the day-to-day performance of their teams, the quality of work delivered, and the culture they create.

Brand Strategy & Leadership:

- Develop and implement annual marketing and communication plans aligned with organizational strategic plan and goals for attendance, membership, revenue and mission awareness.
- Ensure all content reflects the Zoo's brand strategies, conservation mission, and accessibility best practices.
- Lead campaign development from concept through execution, including seasonal promotions, special events, new exhibit launches, conservation initiatives, and donor engagement efforts.
- Provide leadership and day-to-day management of the Graphics Coordinator, Communications Coordinator and assigned marketing/PR associates, including assisting in the selection of personnel, training, resolution of performance issues, and the evaluation of personnel performance. Provide a motivating environment for associates to perform and develop to their best potential.
- Coordinate cross-departmentally with Advancement, Guest Experience, Conservation Education, and Animal Care teams to align messaging and promotions.
- Stay abreast of industry trends and emerging technologies to keep the Zoo at the forefront of marketing and communications innovation.

Marketing, Paid Media & Advertising:

- Oversee the development of all marketing collateral, brochures, signage, promotional materials and campaign creation.
- Plan, negotiate, and manage the Zoo's full paid media portfolio, including paid social (Meta, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and emerging platforms), out-of-home advertising (billboards, transit, airport displays), television, radio, streaming, and print.
- Optimize budget allocation, creative testing, audience targeting to drive ticket sales.
- Partner with media buyers and advertising agencies as needed, providing strategic direction and reviewing all creative and placement recommendations prior to execution.
- Manage the annual marketing budget, ensuring efficient allocation across channels relative to seasonal attendance goals and campaign priorities.
- Evaluate media performance using audience reach, impressions, conversion data and return on ad spend to continuously improve the media mix and overall marketing effectiveness.
- Establish KPIs for all marketing activities and present performance reports and strategic recommendations to senior leadership.

Website & Digital Content:

- Manage website, organic social media, email, and other digital content strategy.
- Own the development, governance, and user experience of the Zoo's website, overseeing regular updates, SEO optimization, performance analytics, and periodic redesign or platform migrations in coordination with internal staff and external developers.
- Direct organic social media strategy across all platforms, including content calendars, community outlets, brand ambassadors, and influencer partnerships.
- Oversee the creation of platform-specific creative content for social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.) that develop target markets and promote Zoo events, exhibits, and initiatives.
- Manage email marketing strategy, including design, list management, segmentation, development of automated workflows, and campaign performance reporting.

- Oversee the production of digital content including photography, video, graphics, and written copy that serves both the website and organic social channels.
- Utilize Google Analytics, Meta Business Suite, CRM data, and other social media monitoring tools to continuously refine content strategy to demonstrate and achieve increases in audience engagement.

Public Relations & Media Relations:

- Designate and prepare appropriate staff spokespeople for media interactions.
- Cultivate relationships with local, regional, and national media outlets across print and digital outlets to secure press coverage and manage media inquiries. Oversee the development and distribution of media releases and editorial pitches, manage media inquiries and requests, schedule interviews, and organize press conferences.
- Working with senior leadership and external advisors, oversee crisis communications planning and serve as lead communications coordinator during reputational, animal care, safety or operational incidents requiring public response.
- Monitor media coverage and maintain a comprehensive earned media tracking and reporting system for leadership review.

On-Grounds Communications:

- Lead the strategic development and maintenance oversight of all on-grounds visitor communications, ensuring a welcoming, engaging, and cohesive on-brand experience from the moment guests enter the Zoo through their entire visit.
- Develop and manage marketing and promotional signage for internal-facing audiences focusing on on-grounds paid experiences such VR ride, carousel and train, and special happenings including seasonal shows, keeper talks, and special activities, with a focus on driving guest participation, upsell opportunities and overall satisfaction.
- Develop and manage marketing and promotional signage for external-facing on-grounds communications to drive visitation, membership, and community awareness.
- Partner with Conservation Education and Animal Care teams to ensure interpretive and habitat signage reflects current animal residents, species information, and conservation status in a compelling visitor friendly format.
- Partner with Guest Experience and Facilities teams to audit the on-grounds communications environment regularly, identifying gaps, outdated materials, or wayfinding deficiencies.
- Manage all communication touchpoints including pre-visit emails and confirmations, digital guides, apps, social content, and website landing pages that build anticipation, communicate the full range of onsite experiences, and encourage guests to plan and purchase add-on attractions.
- Ensure all on-grounds and external-facing communications reflect consistent brand standards, accessibility requirements, and multilingual needs where appropriate for the Zoo's visitor demographic.
- Oversee an inventory of all on-grounds signage and printed communications materials, managing a regular replacement and refresh cycle to ensure the physical environment remains, current, clean, and visually compelling.
- Oversee the coordination of external vendors, fabricators and designers on the production and installation of all experiential marketing elements.

Position Qualifications:

Education (Minimum Desired):

- Bachelor's degree in communications, marketing, journalism, or related field.

Experience (Minimum Desired):

- Seven years of progressively responsible marketing and communications experience.
- Two years' management experience.
- Proven ability to lead, motivate, and develop team.
- Demonstrated experience managing integrated campaigns across digital, paid media, PR, and social channels.
- Proven success in negotiating and managing paid media buys.

- Experience leading website strategy and CMS-based content management.
- Demonstrated experience in crisis communications and media relations.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to craft compelling narratives and press releases.
- Creative thinker with a demonstrated ability to generate innovative ideas and solutions.
- Exceptional project management skills with the ability to multitask and meet deadlines in a fast-paced environment.
- Ability to work effectively both independently and as part of a collaborative team.
- Ability to create and manage marketing plans (multi-channel, segmented, campaigns) and utilize owned, paid, and earned media to build brand affinity and drive key revenue lines.
- Candidate must exhibit a passion for the mission and direction of the Buffalo Zoo.
- Experience managing and monitoring a budget is a plus.
- A self-starter, energetic and resilient, with the enthusiasm and determination to ensure that deliverables, timelines, and objectives are achieved.
- Exceptional communications, sales/promotions and customer service skills, must be adept at multitasking and extremely detail oriented.
- Entrepreneurial spirit.
- Must deliver exceptional customer service by engaging with guests on a regular basis to create a friendly, memorable and positive experience. Ability to respond to common inquiries, requests, or complaints from guests and/or staff in a kind and courteous manner.
- Possess a can-do attitude, be resourceful, and communicate respectfully with everyone.
- Interact with courtesy, professionalism, and respect to staff, docents, volunteers, and guests consistent with the organization's mission and core values.
- Exercise of discretion and independent judgment with respect to matters of significance.
- Perform other duties as assigned by the Chief Advancement Officer.

Other

- Must support Buffalo Zoo's Vision, Mission, and WILD Core Values.
- This is an in-person, onsite position based on Buffalo Zoo grounds and requires a regular physical presence to effectively lead marketing initiatives and staff.
- Will be required to work before or after normal business hours, including weekends, early mornings, evenings, and holidays, as necessary.
- Required to be able to respond in a timely fashion as necessary to emergencies.
- Schedule, attend, and participate in regularly scheduled department meetings, all-staff meetings, and leadership meetings.
- Must possess or be able to obtain within 30-days of employment a valid New York State driver's license and have an average or better driving record based on the evaluation process of our insurance company. Retention of position is contingent upon maintaining required license. Must upgrade to classification appropriate to requirements (non-CDLC or CDL class).
- Successful completion of a post-offer pre-employment general medical screen and drug test.
- Successful completion of a post-offer pre-employment background check.
- Must understand the requirements, essential functions, and duties of the position as per the job description and certify such by signing the job description acknowledgement form prior to first day of work.
- Must be able to operate a computer, two-way radio, telephone system, and software on computer, printer, etc. after training.
- Must be willing to comply with department's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) policies and procedures.
- Must provide proof of negative TB test at hire (within the last 12 months). TB test conducted annually.
- Regular attendance and punctuality are essential functions of the position.

Physical Demands:

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to stand; walk; use hands; reach with hands and arms; stoop, kneel, crouch, or crawl and talk or hear. Use computer hardware and software for extended periods of time (repetitive motion). Sitting for long periods of time. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, peripheral vision, depth perception, and ability to adjust focus.

The overall work environment while performing this job includes exposure to all weather conditions and the noise level is usually moderate.

While this job description attempts to describe the essential functions of the position, it does not prescribe or restrict the tasks that may be assigned. It does not restrict management’s right to assign or reassign duties or responsibilities to this job at any time. The employee is expected to adhere to all policies and to act as a role model in the adherence to the policies.

The Buffalo Zoo is an at Will employer and all Buffalo Zoo employees are subject to employment eligibility and background security checks as well as testing for illegal substance use as allowed by law.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER