Job Description

Job Title:	Associate Director, Digital Communications
Department:	Marketing & Strategic Initiatives
Reports To:	Associate Vice-President, Marketing and Brand Strategy
Jobs Reporting:	Manager, Web Strategy Social Media Manager
Salary Grade:	USG 12
Effective Date:	May 2024

Primary Purpose

This position is accountable to the Associate Vice-President, Marketing and Brand Strategy and is responsible to provide leadership and set best practices in digital marketing and communications across the university, its website, central social media channels and all associated systems. The Associate Director, Digital Communications will help build an integrated digital presence to advance the University of Waterloo in the digital space, which includes . overseeing development, implementation and management of the University's primary web-related strategies, facilitating the design and user experience of the University's web environment as well as developing and overseeing the University's digital accessibility strategy. The Associate Director, Digital Communications will also play a lead role in digital advertising and standardizing digital measurement and analytics practices.

The Associate Director, Digital Communications will work as part of a cross-functional team of marketing and communication professionals responsible for marketing and brand campaigns, issue and crisis management, government relations, executive communications, internal communications and media relations.

Key Accountabilities

The Associate Director, Digital Communications will serve as a leading expert across the University on digital marketing and communications and provide technical expertise and guidance to University stakeholders on matters related to web strategy, social media, digital accessibility, digital advertising and digital analytics. The Associate Director, Digital Communications will continually review or recommend new and emerging platforms, being aware of best practices and suitability to the institution's key audiences.

Digital Marketing, Communications and Public Relations

- Develop, implement and manage a multi-platform digital strategy that aligns and supports Waterloo's overall marketing and communications objectives.
- Ensure that web and social media strategies effectively support, amplify and integrate with the University's strategic initiatives.
- Work closely with key administrators – including the President's Office – to ensure an integrated and strategic approach to all aspects of the University's digital presence.
- Develop and prepare key digital communication messaging, presentation materials and coaching for senior management.
- Lead dissemination of messages and web/social media traffic between the University and key stakeholders including prospective students, government, donors, alumni, and others.
- Serve as point-person with vendors/providers for digital marketing efforts, including paid online media, search engine optimization, interactive marketing, internal/external partnerships, etc.
- Lead University-wide team responsible for strategy, content, design, analytics and maintenance of social media channels to leverage and manage digital resources strategically and ensure that the University's brand identity, reputation and messaging are protected and presented consistently and effectively across all digital platforms.

- Track and report on the impact of strategic aspects of the University's digital presence.
- Ensure strategy effectively supports, amplifies and integrates with other University efforts.
- Manage the University's digital response to crises and issues.
- Promote and provide coverage of high profile and reputation-building events through the website and social media channels.
- Stay current, champion and support use of industry best practices.
- Create, update and share standardized reports/analytics as appropriate, translating data into recommendations and plans for revising and improving future digital content and campaigns.
- Integrate data related to organic social media campaigns that run parallel to paid media campaigns to ensure a holistic view of the results/ learnings.
- Develop, maintain and communicate the University's social media strategy and guidelines.
- Manage all aspects of Waterloo's social media collaboration tools (e.g. Emplifi)
- Monitor and assess the digital activity of University competitors, industry as well as emerging digital trends and make recommendations.
- Act as strategic digital lead for key university projects including State of the University Report, Waterloo Innovation Summit, Convocation, Waterloo Magazine, Government visits and others
- Manage University's online response to crises by representing University Relations on multiple crisis communication committees.

Web Strategy

- Oversee the management, implementation, support, measurement and continuous improvement of web-related and other multi-platform digital projects including websites, web documents, and e-communications in alignment with the university's strategic priorities.
- Provide guidance in the direction and standard of excellence for design and UX/UI across front-end University web properties.
- Work collaboratively with content strategists, web designers, the Information Systems & Technology (IST) team and others as required to develop effective, forward-thinking solutions for the University's websites and other digital requirements.
- Together with the Manager, Web Strategy, review and approve University website requests and design deliverables.
- Define and contribute to the improvement of relevant team processes.
- Work with digital teams to define website modifications to improve Search Engine Optimization (SEO).
- Demonstrate leadership in B2B and B2C marketing strategies, requirements and related metrics. (e.g. funnels, conversion etc.) and how they are supported by an online environment.
- Evaluate and provide recommendations re: emerging platforms and digital trends.
- Monitor and report on metrics for web and digital initiatives (e.g. Google Analytics).
- Provide counsel and support to marketing and communications colleagues regarding effective digital and content marketing best practices, platforms and processes.

Digital Accessibility

- Lead organizational efforts in the area of web accessibility compliance across the institution
- Thorough understanding of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) international standard and how they apply to the University's web and social media content

Community Engagement

- Oversee the development of a content distribution network by way of social media channels.
- Drive online conversation, both minute-by-minute and in support of campaigns. Engaging the University and broader community through smart, strategic and timely communications.
- Guide other campus units to promote a cohesive and consistent voice for the University, while building shared identity and a sense of community.
- Support and educate colleagues managing other official University social media accounts. Ensure these University accounts contribute effectively to the overall online community and adhere to the brand.
- Develop and maintain an editorial calendar for digital content to increase collaboration among official University feeds.
- Build and maintain influencer relationships and manage external partnerships that amplify the University's reach and reputation.

Content Generation

- Lead the development of an integrated content strategy and execute this strategy – including a comprehensive content calendar for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, WeChat and any other emerging/relevant platforms.
- Chair a committee that integrates departments and units generating their own ongoing content.
- Oversee the University's central social media feeds and ensuring a presence on new platforms by keeping abreast of emerging social media platforms and trends.
- Ensure that all activities further the digital marketing communications strategy, in support of the University's overall mission, vision, strategic plan and stated priorities.
- Be a thought leader for social media at the University and provide the necessary leadership and support.
- Act as a key point person with vendors, third party apps and agencies for digital marketing efforts.
- Work collaboratively with the Director, Marketing and Brand and others as appropriate on projects involving paid online media search engine marketing, digital partnerships, etc.

Training and Support

- Provide web, social media and digital accessibility leadership, training and support to senior leaders and departments/units to improve their effective use of digital communications channels and tools.
- Develop active, informed and engaged web and social media communities that value digital best practices in support of the University's goals.
- Respond, develop, and implement training for campus constituencies including professional development on relevant topics; identify problem areas, develop solutions, and create online resources.
- Develop and provide templates and guidance to campus partners for creating digital content and measurement of success.
- Train, mentor and supervise the Manager, Web Strategy and the Social Media Manager, ensuring the vision for the University and long-term goals are reached.
- Ensure consistent and cohesive "voice" for the University's website and core social accounts.

Web and Social Media Monitoring

- Monitor social channels and web communities for content that may harm the University's reputation as well as emerging trends. Report and make recommendations as appropriate to leadership.
- Ensure responsiveness on digital platforms as questions/ comments arise. Responses should be timely, and handled with diplomacy - not necessarily adhering to a 9am-5pm schedule.
- Track and measure campaigns, present findings and make recommendations to various stakeholders.
- A core member of the crisis communications and issues management teams, oversee and manage the University's web and social response to crises and issues.

Collaboration and Outreach

- Play a key leadership role in integrating digital marketing and communications across all functions in University Relations, while maintaining positive work relationships.
- Work closely with the President's Office to ensure strategic requirements of senior-level web and social outreach are executed flawlessly and meet planned outcomes.
- Guide and enable other departments to promote, protect and enhance their reputation, identify social influencers and coordinate actions on all digital channels.
- Plan and implement enterprise-wide, multi-platform digital activities that position the University as an institutional and sector thought leader.
- Maintain strong relationships and continue to build a network of colleagues involved with web, social media and digital accessibility.
- Partner with internal and external content managers, editors, designers, developers, and other University staff to ensure sites meet both client and institutional needs, align with the brand strategy platform, and meet University web standards.

Managing & Motivating People

- Responsible for the direct supervision of the Manager, Web Strategy and the Social Media Manager.
- Indirect supervision of the Web Developer and Specialist, Digital Communications.
- Recruit, manage and develop co-op students; provide leadership, guidance, support and coaching as required.

**All employees of the University are expected to follow University and departmental health and safety policy, procedures and work practices at all times. Employees are also responsible for the completion of all health and safety training, as assigned. Employees with staff supervision and/or management responsibilities will ensure that assigned staff abide by the above, and actively identify, assess and correct health and safety hazards, as required.*

Required Qualifications

Education

- Bachelor's degree, or higher, in a field related to Marketing and/or Digital Communications, or equivalent combination of education and experience is required

Experience

- 12+ years of experience in digital marketing management/communications
- 6+ years of experience in IA, UX and SEO strategy development
- 6+ years of experience in web content management systems
- Extensive experience working with digital advertising and media agencies and/or as part of an in-house digital marketing team
- Extensive experience in the development and implementation of social media plans including use of related content and analysis tools.
- Extensive experience with planning and use of social media channels including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, WeChat and Reddit.
- Demonstrable track record of leading, line managing and developing teams of professional staff and of balancing conflicting and pressing demands.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- An advanced understanding of digital behavior and the ability to apply these insights to develop better digital experiences.
- Advanced knowledge to identify and implement social media processes related to the development, posting and measurement of content and to make continuous improvements.
- Advanced knowledge of IA and UX design (eg. user behavior, complex taxonomies, metadata frameworks, and templates for content management systems, navigation, usability, accessibility standards, etc.) and measurement
- Advanced social media skill; maintains a personal mix of participatory expertise across all pertinent channels.
- In-depth knowledge of Google analytics
- In-depth understanding of paid, owned and earned media and how they interact
- Demonstrated knowledge of and ability to apply key metrics for effective ROI analysis.
- Discretion to identify risk and opportunities in user-generated content.
- Ability to ensure the strategic and tactical use of social media to leverage our differentiators to enhance the University's reputation and further inform and engage stakeholders.
- Effective time management skills, ability to multitask, confidence in decision making under pressure.
- Positive energy and attitude, willingness to be "on call" 24/7 and work flexible hours.
- A passion for and commitment to the University of Waterloo and commitment to developing its experience for all stakeholders (including students, faculty and staff, alumni).
- Critical thinking and analytical skills to understand the complex nature of higher education and the issues of concern to stakeholders.
- Effective interpersonal and written communication skills. Ability to quickly produce and distribute quality, thoughtful, creative and engaging content.
- Keen sense of responsive client service.

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:**
  Internally interacts with colleagues across the University. Externally the position interacts with the broader community on a global basis and represents the University as the face of social media at key events.

- **Level of Responsibility:**
  The Manager, Web Strategy and Social Media Manager report to the Associate Director, Digital Communications.

  The incumbent will use their proven ability; extensive experience and understanding of integrated marketing and communications strategies to promote protect and enhance the University's reputation.

  Within a highly complex institution and a competitive marketplace, the incumbent will leverage digital communications and new technologies in support of the university's strategic priorities.

  The position is responsible and accountable for effective online communications – both content and community building to achieve specified goals.

  The position demonstrates a deep understanding of new and emerging media and is expected to bring innovative approaches and new concepts and models to communications programs.

- **Decision-Making Authority:**
  The incumbent will use sound judgment and discretion in making content decisions (often under tight time pressure) on behalf of the institution. The timeliness and quality of online content contributes to the overall reputation of the University and to achieving the University's goals.

- **Physical and Sensory Demands**:
  Minimal demands typical of a position operating within an office environment.

- **Working Environment:**
  Minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions typical of a position exposed to stress and pressure associated with management level responsibilities. Work outside the normal operating hours of the institution can be expected in this role.