

Public Information Specialist

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
Established Date: May 1, 2001

DESCRIPTION:

Under general direction, develops and implements department-wide public information programs and campaigns related to the department's mission, including marketing, outreach, and/or customer service activities; may act as departmental spokesperson; may supervise staff; and performs related duties as required.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Public Information Specialist is an advanced journey-level, professional class. Incumbents develop, administer, and coordinate all public information activities for a department. Incumbents act with considerable independence and are distinguished from Public Information Assistants by their responsibility for collecting and analyzing market research data, developing program recommendations, designing marketing and public information campaigns, providing professional marketing advice to executive staff, and acting as departmental spokespersons. Incumbents in the Public Information Assistant class work under closer supervision and are primarily responsible for the preparation and dissemination of program or project information to the community through a variety of media.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES:

1. Plans and directs the development and implementation of media programs or campaigns designed to keep the public informed of departmental services, accomplishments, or agendas; studies departmental mandates, objectives, and policies in order to promote the department's services, missions, and goals; designs departmental or program logos; establishes departmental or program brands; and designs, procures, and distributes promotional items to convey the department or program's goals, message, presence, image, and/or effectiveness.
2. Establishes research methodologies and designs formats for data gathering, such as surveys, opinion polls, or questionnaires; collects and analyzes data to measure public opinion and determine whether customers' needs and expectations are being met; translates complex numerical/statistical data into non-technical, written text; prepares reports and graphic illustrations of findings; makes recommendations to management to establish new or modify existing programs or services; and prepares related grant applications.

3. Prepares and distributes fact sheets, news releases, and public information announcements to media representatives and others; selects promotional media to most efficiently and effectively reach target market; purchases advertising space and time in various media; and may act as departmental spokesperson, including participation in television, radio, and print interviews.
4. Designs, writes, edits, and produces public information materials such as display advertising, brochures, flyers, direct mail materials, newsletters, and videos; develops, designs, and updates departmental Website; and prepares and edits in-house materials and publications.
5. Plans and conducts event marketing activities; represents department at public and business gatherings; selects and arranges for guest speakers for staff events, training, seminars, and conferences; and hosts lectures, exhibits, workshops, and informational exchange forums.
6. Develops and conducts community outreach campaigns, including establishing partnerships with local government and non-profit agencies to educate the public about the existence and availability of departmental services and to increase program participation among groups that have shown a hesitance to utilize the department's services; makes presentations to government bodies, schools, employer groups, and community organizations; and represents department on local boards, commissions, and committees.
7. Develops, conducts, and arranges for customer service and other training for departmental staff based upon market research; evaluates the effectiveness of existing training programs and makes recommendations to management for training modifications; makes recommendations to management for modifications to departmental policies and procedures as needed; and counsels staff in effective ways of communicating with the public.
8. May interview, select, and train clerical and/or paraprofessional staff; assign and review work; evaluate staff performance; and participate in disciplinary action.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS:

1. Possession of a bachelor's degree in marketing or closely related field and three years of professional experience developing and conducting public information or marketing campaigns; or,
2. Possession of an associate's degree in marketing or closely related field and five years of professional experience developing and conducting public information or marketing campaigns; or,
3. a combination of training, education, and experience equivalent to one of the employment standards listed above and that provides the required knowledge and abilities.

Knowledge of: principles and practices of marketing business services, including advertising, graphic design, and establishing brands; media production, communication, and dissemination techniques via written, oral, and visual media; principles and practices of public relations, including client-media relations; customer service standards and techniques, including needs assessment techniques, quality service standards, and customer satisfaction evaluation techniques; English grammar, spelling, punctuation, and syntax; statistics; research methods;

and presentation and desktop publishing software programs.

Ability to: communicate effectively, both orally and in writing; make presentations to large and small groups; work effectively with a variety of individuals and groups; gather and analyze data, draw conclusions, and make recommendations; work independently; learn and apply principles and practices of supervision; prepare written correspondence and reports; compile and prepare statistical reports; establish, balance, and adjust priorities; read and learn department-specific policies, procedures, and related laws and regulations; identify consequences of actions; listen effectively; influence and promote change; persuade others to approach issues and ideas differently; motivate and train staff; maintain confidentiality of information; effectively handle political and sensitive issues; represent the department accurately to the media; use a personal computer and standard software applications; and learn and use programming languages such as Java and HTML.