



job description

Job Title: Communications Manager

Reports to: Chief Executive Officer

Responsible for: *n/a – no direct reports at current time*

Background:

The Equity Release Council (ERC/the Council), a not-for-profit organisation, is the industry body for the equity release sector. It aims to represent and facilitate the safe growth of the equity release market by helping to create the conditions which enable the market to develop effectively. Built on the legacy of a predecessor body called SHIP (Safe Home Income Plans), the Council was launched in 2012 and represents over 300 member firms and nearly 1,000 individuals; including lenders, qualified financial advisers, solicitors/conveyancers, surveyors, and other industry professionals – each committed to the Council's aim of ensuring good outcomes for the consumer where protections and safeguards are a continuing feature.

The Equity Release (ER) industry has seen significant recent growth and this is set to continue, with some projections putting the potential for growth at over 500% in the next five years. As such the ERC will play a critical role in lobbying, providing thought leadership, driving standards and conduct, and being 'the conscience of the market'. We aim to be seen by our corporate members as a value driven, proactive and progressive representative for their organisations.

Purpose of the role:

The ERC considers building a strong communications platform to be a central pillar of its business plan at a time of transformational change. The Communications Manager will drive all stakeholder communications planning. S/he will provide proactive and reactive communications for a range of audiences across print, digital and social media channels.

Contextual information:

ERC has, to date, worked on a 'hub and spoke' system. Two full time staff (CEO and COO) work predominantly from home (with access to meeting facilities), engaging the services of contractors and outsourced agencies as required. However, with recent and continuing growth, the ERC wants to build a strong and solid communications platform that will increase its profile, support market growth, and deliver an enhanced communications programme. It is therefore now looking to bring the bulk of its communications activities in-house. It is expected that a central London (Zone 1) premises will be acquired during 2019, where the post-holder will be based.

In the short-term the post-holder needs to have suitable facilities to work from home (after completion of a self-assessment health and safety check), with the flexibility to attend meetings in central London or at senior executives' homes as required. This system of agile working will make it particularly important that the incumbent can self-manage his/her own work.

As a newly created role with a diverse range of responsibilities it is also vital that the incumbent can evidence flexibility and a 'can-do' attitude.

Some UK travel to events and conferences may be required from time to time. The nature of the role may necessitate occasional delivery to out-of-normal-hours deadlines.

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS & ATTRIBUTES

['E' = essential; 'D' = desirable]

EXPERIENCE

- Meaningful (minimum 3 years') experience in an influential communications role within a public or membership body (E)
- Experience in the financial services sector (D)
- An awareness of the later-life / retirement planning / equity release landscape (D)
- Experience of working in a small and/or high-growth organisation (D)
- An established network of media contacts, ideally within financial services (D)

QUALIFICATIONS

- A marketing or communications qualification (eg CIPR, CIM or equivalent) – (D)
- Degree level qualification (or equivalent) – (E), ideally in a communications, marketing or related subject (D)
- A-level qualification (or equivalent), with at least one A-level in an arts / essay-based subject with minimum grade B (E)
- GCSE-level qualification to C grade (or equivalent) in English and Maths (E)

SKILLS (all E)

- Outstanding written skills, with ability to tailor the tone and content of written outputs according to audience and medium
- Ability to write clear and insightful summaries based on complex information
- Exemplary organisation and time-management skills
- Effective stakeholder management skills
- Excellent oral communication skills with confidence in telephone communications
- Ability to self-manage work and work without direct supervision
- Ability to work to tight deadlines

ATTRIBUTES (all E)

- Flexible
 - Self-starter
 - Resilient
 - Self-motivated
 - Strong work ethic
 - Organised
 - Logical and analytical
 - Creative thinker
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MAIN ACCOUNTABILITIES

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

- To work closely with the CEO to produce and update a rolling communications programme that support the ERC's business plan.
- To incorporate the communications programme into a broader calendar of key events and deadlines, including (but not limited to) industry events, submission deadlines, industry awards, key legislative milestones etc.
- To create visibility for the programme and calendar with members
- To position the ERC as a 'go-to' provider of information and opinion for stakeholders

MEDIA RELATIONS

- To manage all day-to-day PR activities and lead on the ERC's relationship with the trade press, national press, and other media outlets

- To act as the first point of contact for all enquiries from journalists
- To work closely with the CEO to deliver fleet-of-foot “crisis communications” and to manage defensive responses to adverse media coverage of the industry if required.
- To track media coverage of the industry (possibly through a media monitoring service)

COPYWRITING

- To produce high quality written outputs for a range of audiences including (but not limited to) proactive and reactive press releases, opinion pieces, and speeches / slide decks for the Chairman / CEO
- To help shape public opinion on key issues through the use of targeted opinion pieces
- To write articles and thought pieces for external stakeholders and members based on bespoke research and/or co-sponsored academic studies.
- To create compelling blogs that support the ERC’s position on key industry issues

SOCIAL & DIGITAL MEDIA OUTPUTS

- To develop and execute the ERC’s social and digital media strategy, identifying appropriate media channels
- Supporting other ERC colleagues in the use of social media channels to ensure a consistent and cohesive approach
- To support the development of the ERC’s website as a communications platform and to have extensive input on its re-design as appropriate

MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

- To liaise with the Membership Services Manager to ensure there is a comprehensive programme of communications with members including website, blog and social media comms.
- To liaise with the Membership Services Manager in producing compelling collateral materials for prospective members and existing members (in particular to support the subscription renewal process).
- To liaise with the Membership Services Manager to create pertinent member survey questionnaires
- To build a network of key communications personnel within larger membership organisations

BRANDING

- To work closely with the CEO and Board to create a brand strategy for the ERC
- To work with the ERC Standards Board to develop a strong link between the ERC brand and its standards, giving consideration to the creation of an ERC endorsement mark.

OTHER DUTIES

- To assist with other duties and projects as may reasonably be required

This Job description provides a broad outline of the role. Job Descriptions may be revised and updated from time to time to ensure the role continues to meet the changing needs of the business. It is expected that the role of the Communications Manager will evolve following a managed transfer of knowledge from ARC (current out-sourced providers).