



Manager, Media & External Communications

Position Description

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|--------------------|--|------------------|------------------------|
| Team: | Stakeholder Engagement & Communications Team | Location: | Auckland or Wellington |
| Reports to: | GM Stakeholder Engagement & Communications | | |
| Role Type: | Permanent | | |

About Us

KiwiRail's Role in Aotearoa, New Zealand

KiwiRail, a proud State-Owned Enterprise, delivers sustainable and inclusive growth for our customers, communities, and people.

For more than 150 years, rail in New Zealand has connected communities, delivered freight and passengers around the country, and showcased our spectacular scenery to the world. Our purpose — Hononga Whaikaha, Oranga mo Aotearoa (Stronger Connections, Better New Zealand) — speaks to connection with our customers and the future needs of their businesses, connection with the communities we serve and operate in, and connection with each other. KiwiRail is carrying this legacy into the future, delivering connected rail and shipping transport services that create economic, social, and environmental value for New Zealand and New Zealanders.

Our Workplace

At KiwiRail, our values define the behaviour we expect from everyone. We have a team of over 4500 people, and every connection we make with each other, our union partners, our customers and all our stakeholders must be of the highest standard.



Safety, health, and wellbeing are our number one priority, ensuring our people return home safe and healthy every day.

About the Role

Purpose of the role

KiwiRail has a vision to become our customers first choice and is delivering on a significant five year plan to modernise and grow our business.

The Manager Media & External Communication shapes external perceptions through traditional and online media and social media content and multi-channel approaches and corporate publications and messages to protect and enhance the organisation's corporate reputation and the value of rail to New Zealand.

The role ensures integrated, consistent and high-quality enterprise level communication across key external audiences using stories that resonate to the audience from a consistent narrative and using a multi-channel approach where appropriate, aligned to the company's strategic and performance focuses. Strong collaboration will occur with relevant parts of KiwiRail to ensure consistency, authenticity and a fact-based approach from an enterprise perspective.

Leading a team of specialists, the role drives performance, capability and continuous improvement, and ensuring communications are audience-focused, insight-led, and responsive to a dynamic and complex external environment.

Key Accountabilities

Within the area of responsibility, this role is required to:

Strategic leadership

- Deliver strategic communications externally that support the company's strategy that guides all internal and external communications.
- Lead the development and delivery of KiwiRail's media and enterprise external communications strategy.
- Ensure alignment with organisational priorities, stakeholder engagement focuses and brand positioning.
- Anticipate emerging issues and opportunities, and position KiwiRail proactively and provide strategic advice internally to support this.
- Contribute to enterprise stakeholder and communications strategy, planning and reporting.

Media and external communications

- Ensure high-quality external communications that protect and enhance KiwiRail's reputation through leading media, digital and social media content, including through the use of proactive storytelling aligned to strategic and performance focuses of the company through multi-channels and tailored content and use of visual approaches.
- Lead issues and crisis communications and enterprise stakeholder coordination, ensuring timely, accurate and effective responses.
- Ensure the direct reporting team collaborates and coordinates with brand, marketing and shareholder/finance or other parts of KiwiRail to deliver coordinated communications, tailored as appropriate to the audience while adhering consistently to core messages.
- Maintain strong relationships with media and key external stakeholders (including leveraging the insights of other team members on those stakeholders).
- Implement the media and social media policy including assessment and use of approved media spokespersons and training and preparation support.

Content and channel oversight

- Design and implement effective processes and channels for external communications to maximise reach and impact of positive stories enhancing the value of rail for New Zealand and mitigating negative impacts on reputation
- Provide oversight of external content and channel initiatives to ensure they are integrated while audience focused and optimised for impact.
- Ensure appropriate coordination with internal communications and other teams to ensure opportunities for re-use of content, consistency and authenticity internally and externally supporting credibility and trust.

Performance and insights

- Ensure communications are informed by data, insights and performance measurement.
- Monitor external environment, media landscape and emerging risks.
- Use insights to continuously improve communications effectiveness and impact

Leadership and capability

- Lead, coach and develop a high-performing communications team
- Foster collaboration across Communications and the wider organisation
- Promote a culture of safety, wellbeing and continuous improvement.

Key challenges & Opportunities

- Enhancing and protecting reputation in a complex, high-profile operating environment.
- Balancing proactive storytelling with a high volume of day-to-day issues, reactive responses and/or incident or crisis management.
- Ensuring alignment, consistency and teaming for effective use of expertise and subject matter knowledge within the stakeholder and communications teams and across a large organisation.
- Influencing and aligning senior stakeholders in a dynamic and fast-paced environment.
- Adapting to a rapidly evolving landscape.

| Key Relationships Here are the key relationships relevant to this role | | Manage /Lead | Deliver to | Collaborate with | Advise or inform |
|--|---|--------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Internal | GM Stakeholder Engagement & Communications | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Media & Communications Team | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Stakeholder & Communications Team | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Executive Leadership Team | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Senior Leadership Team | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Brand, Marketing & Customer Communications Team | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Business specialists (eg: key SMEs or key specialist stakeholder managers (eg: regulatory, Treasury)) | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| External | Media / NZ Public | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Ministers' Offices | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Government agencies | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Stakeholder and community representatives | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

What you will do to contribute

Health Safety and Wellbeing

- Actively promote and lead a strong safety culture
- Ensure content reflects KiwiRail's commitment to Zero Harm
- Support and promote wellbeing through effective communication practices
- Actively promote and maintain a strong safety culture
- Ensure channels support and reflect KiwiRail's Zero Harm commitment

Customer Focus

- Provide a positive customer experience
- Support a customer-focused culture at KiwiRail
- Know our services well and explain them to customers
- Respond quickly to customer needs
- Develop solutions to meet customer requirements
- Solve complex customer issues
- Work with colleagues to improve customer outcomes
- KiwiRail is a 24/7 business and Managers and the team are to agree and share responsibility for after hours (evenings, nights and weekends) for KiwiRail media phone, significant incident or crisis management processes by roster system ensuring appropriate capability or build of capability and workload allocation and resulting flexibility.

High Performing Teams Skills

- Lead and develop a high-performing team
- Set clear expectations and provide coaching and feedback
- Actively seek diverse perspectives in problem-solving
- Identify opportunities for coaching and mentoring
- Contribute to a collaborative and high-performing team environment
- Support capability uplift in channel management across the organisation

Commercial Acumen

- Plan and monitor resource allocation to achieve team objectives
- Consider financial implications when making recommendations
- Understand and comply with procurement guidelines
- Work with suppliers to ensure quality outcomes
- Recognise how financial decisions impact KiwiRail's overall position

Leadership

- Work with the GM Stakeholder Engagement & Communications to ensure there are clear and visible enterprise and team plans so that the team has line of sight to their part, coordination and collaboration to build relationships, trust and reputation of the company.
- Lead and support staff to achieve the aims of KiwiRail's stakeholder engagement strategies.
- Inspire and encourage staff to maintain a consistently high standard of work
- Lead and build capability, performance and a constructive culture within the wider stakeholder and communications team
- Lead the directly reporting team including cascading and translation of goals, providing support, feedback and development to enable team members to perform to their maximum potential and grow.

External Communications Leadership

- Lead best practice in media, content and channel integration
 - Drive innovation and continuous improvement in communications
 - Ensure alignment across media, customer and stakeholder communications, particularly during high-risk or operational event
 - Lead media readiness, including spokesperson support, interview preparation and key message discipline
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Decision Making

Key decision making follows the company's delegated authority policy and delegation financial authorities.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Human Resources Delegations | Senior Leader |
| Direct reports | 5 (total staff reporting, approx.5) |
| Finance Delegations | Nil Operating Nil Capex |
| Budget (operating and capital) | Nil |
| Travel Delegations | Yes approves national travel |
| Statutory powers | Nil |

Physical demands and the nature of work

This role is administration-based and requires:

- prolonged sitting and high computer usage
- limited walking, standing, twisting, bending (at the waist), crouching (bend knee)
- carrying of laptop and paperwork when alternating between home and office
- limited lifting of up to 7 kg archive boxes

Your role may include other tasks suited to your level, as your manager directs. This job description shows your current duties. We'll review and update it with you if your responsibilities change.

About you

Knowledge and experience

- Extensive experience in media, communications or external relations at a senior level
- Proven experience managing media relations and issues/crisis communications
- Strong understanding of digital channels, content and integrated communications
- Experience leading teams and delivering through others
- Experience operating in a complex, high-profile environment

Ways of working / Work-related qualities

- Strong strategic thinking and judgement
- Excellent stakeholder engagement and influencing skills
- Calm and decisive under pressure
- Collaborative, adaptable and solutions-focused
- High standards of professionalism and integrity

Other Requirements

- You comply with all KiwiRail health and safety requirements
- You can pass regular drug and alcohol screenings
- You have a current and valid NZ Driver's Licence

Qualifications

You need either:

- tertiary qualification in communications, public relations, journalism or a related discipline
- **or**
- Equivalent practical experience

**CREATING
STRONGER
CONNECTIONS**

The KiwiRail logo, featuring the word "KiwiRail" in a bold, sans-serif font, followed by a stylized graphic of a kiwi bird's tail feathers.