



POWERED BY

Buncombe County Tourism  
Development Authority

**Job Title:** Director of Public Relations  
**Reports to:** Vice President of Marketing  
**Department:** Marketing  
**FLSA Status:** Exempt

### **Position Summary:**

Explore Asheville is seeking an experienced and passionate leader to oversee public relations (PR) efforts and the content it delivers, ensuring storytelling messages are consistent, timely, relevant and brand aligned. This role is responsible for the development of long-term strategies in alignment with organizational goals and day-to-day management in alignment with organizational values to inspire the internal PR team, collaborate with in-market partners and cultivate productive relationships with regional, national and key international media.

### **Essential Duties & Responsibilities:**

#### Public Relations Leadership

- Successfully leads and develops internal staff including two PR Managers and PR Coordinator as well as manage supporting systems, contractors, reporting and partner agencies.
- Serves as the PR strategist guiding proactive, big-picture outreach to local, regional, national and key international media, including influencers, creating audience-focused content with a refined sense of trends and editing skills.
- Collaborates with business development, advertising, content, and partnership and destination management colleagues to leverage and optimize plans and cross-team initiatives.
- Initiates and fosters strong and positive media relations on behalf of the Asheville area and Buncombe County through media tours, FAMs, site visits, interviews, frequent follow up with previous contacts and proactive pitching of story ideas and angles.
- Provides guidance and support in:
  - Development of materials for regional, national and international press including news releases, story idea sheets, background papers, fact sheets, media advisories, video news release scripts, and articles.
  - Management of media inquiries, setting up interviews, providing background information and statistics, photos and b-roll, escorting journalists, and pitching ideas.
  - Planning and hosting site visits, FAMs and market-based media activations, including collaboration on international media FAMs sent to the Asheville area through its relationship with Visit NC and other agencies.
  - Influencer strategies and activations that align with marketing and business goals, including vetting, contract negotiations, experience curation and collaboration across marketing team to optimize content deliverables and amplification aligned with brand channels.
- Serves as media relations liaison with Visit NC (the North Carolina Division of Travel, Film and Sports Development) on specific PR promotions, domestic FAMs, and other publicity opportunities.

- Plans and coordinates news conferences when necessary.
- Responsible for issue management and crisis communication plan as it relates to external media contacts.
- Advocates on behalf of the organization's brand with external stakeholders and the media across all communications channels and vehicles.
- Understands the organization's mission, vision, values, strategic imperatives and brand storytelling foundation and ensures those are built into objectives and executions, and clearly communicated to the PR team.
- Represents Explore Asheville as a spokesperson on destination travel in media interviews as directed by VP of Marketing and CEO.
- Represents Explore Asheville professionally at company and client sponsored events.
- Establishes and maintains productive working relationships with Asheville and Buncombe County community partners and stakeholders.
- Performs other related duties, special projects and assignments as required
- Stays abreast of organizations, happenings, events and relevant information that are critical to serving as the information source for journalists.
- Attends and/or participates in community activities and meetings as appropriate.
- Maintains an ongoing awareness of the important issues and personalities within the local and national media, as well as local issues impacting Explore Asheville and tourism.
- Oversees and guides the efforts to effectively monitor, analyze and manage media relations initiatives and key results that can be quantified and measured over time.

#### Team Leadership

- Effectively leads and inspires a team of three direct reports: two Public Relations Managers and the Public Relations Coordinator.
- Manages staff and builds a cohesive, effective and accountable team in alignment and consistent with Explore Asheville values. Responsibilities include hiring and training employees; planning, assigning, and directing work; managing/coaching and appraising performance and related pay changes; addressing complaints and resolving problems. Actively participate in team meetings and initiatives.
- Prepares budgets, develops methods for tracking, and prepares/analyzes reports. Monitors/approves contractor performance.
- Accountable for the day-to-day workload, contributing to a cohesive, effective, and accountable team in consistent alignment with Explore Asheville's values. Actively participate in team meetings and initiatives.
- Leads and/or participates in meetings/planning initiatives to support strong workplace culture and successful performance/execution of organizational strategy. Elevate and solve issues, support change, and ensure the maintenance of productive processes.
- Represents Explore Asheville/BCTDA at meetings and industry functions and before the public. This may include making presentations to a wide range of groups.

#### **Other Responsibilities:**

This job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee for this job. Duties, responsibilities, and activities may change at any time with or without notice. There may be times where this position is asked to help other team members with their work, completing tasks outside of this description.

**Qualifications:**

- Requires a bachelor's degree in English, journalism and/or communications plus at least 8-10 years of experience in the field of public relations. Background in media relations or work within the media is essential. Strong writing and editing skills and a pro-active marketing-oriented approach to public relations are critical. Additional experience in a variety of aspects of marketing is also helpful.
- Strong interpersonal skills, maturity, good judgment and capability to consistently communicate in a professional manner with a diverse range of individuals.
- Media relations and varied experience with all types of writing assignments are the two most important elements of experience needed.
- Comfort and experience in all manner of interview and on the record media experiences, including broadcast, radio and live remotes.
- A demonstrated ability for creative thinking and communicating a message in a memorable, quick and effective way is critical.
- Ease in both written and oral communications and a thorough understanding of the role of public relations and how it can enhance and complement other marketing elements within the company are key.
- The ability to work with teams to accomplish desired outcomes and common goals is also important. A high degree of organizational skills are necessary to juggle the multiple projects and deadlines that are required of the person in this position.

**Physical Environment & Working Conditions:**

The work environment and 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.

- Work involves working alone on the computer, collaborating as part of a team, or working closely with others by computer or over the phone.
- Most work tasks are performed indoors.
- Must be able to sit or stand at a desk for up to 7.5 hours per day.
- Requires grasping, writing, being mobile, repetitive motions, listening and hearing ability and visual acuity.
- Attendance of outside work functions after hours are required.
- Position is expected to spend time in the community on a regular basis.

**Travel:**

Some local travel, generally within Buncombe County, is required, but not extensive. Must have a valid driver's license, current automobile insurance and own or have access to an automobile when needed.

**EEO Statement:**

Explore Asheville provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws.

This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation, and training.

Explore Asheville strives to be an inclusive and equitable organization. We are actively seeking a diverse pool of candidates from a variety of abilities, backgrounds, and cultures.

**About Explore Asheville:**

The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA) oversees the work of Explore Asheville, which develops and carries out advertising, marketing, public relations, and group sales plans to inspire leisure and business travelers to visit Asheville and Buncombe County. In 2021, the BCTDA adopted strategic imperatives that are informing and guiding the direction of Explore Asheville's program of work and community investments going forward. These strategic imperatives include:

- Delivering balanced & sustainable growth
- Encouraging safe & responsible travel
- Engaging & inviting more diverse audiences
- Promoting & supporting Asheville's creative spirit

In addition, the Explore Asheville staff has adopted and embraced the following core values:

- Innovate & Evolve – We seek out new ideas and are open to change.
- Leadership & Collaboration – We focus on the truly important priorities to make the most positive impact.
- Equity & Empathy – We respect and embrace differences recognizing real progress requires inclusion.

**What We Offer:**

Explore Asheville offers a competitive benefits package that includes a Paid Time Off program with 19 days to start, 11 annual paid office holidays, employer-provided medical, dental, vision, life, short-term disability and long-term disability insurance, plus 401k with a company match, and employee wellness benefits.

**Starting Salary Range: \$90,000 – \$100,000**