



Where Innovation Flows

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Status: Full-time

Location: Chicago-based employee with both in-person (office location is 200 W Madison St. in the Loop) and virtual work required.

Compensation: Salary range \$55-70k commensurate with experience

Role Structure: Reports to Current's Strategy Director; works collaboratively across Current's team and with a range of external partners, including members of the six-state coalition for our NSF Engines: Great Lakes Water Innovation Engine (Great Lakes ReNEW) . Will work directly with Current's external communications resources, including consultants and technology vendors. Significant room to grow and evolve the role with increasing responsibilities and leadership as Current and Great Lakes ReNEW grow and mature.

Benefits include: Health/vision/dental plans, unlimited PTO, parental leave, life insurance, retirement match (1:1 employer match up to 5% of salary), flexible work-from-home opportunities, and a dynamic and supportive work environment.

Application Deadline: March 1, 2024

To apply: Please complete our online application [HERE](#). **Do not forget to upload your CV/resume!**

JOB DESCRIPTION

Current seeks a full-time **Communications Manager** to lead Current's communications, marketing, and external engagement efforts. The primary goal for this role is to help us build our brand and audience with a growing network of partners and collaborators, especially given the exciting growth opportunity ahead of us with our NSF Regional Innovation Engine, Great Lakes ReNEW. The ideal candidate will be an excellent writer with experience communicating about mission-driven and innovation-oriented organizations. Strong candidates will be able to work both independently and collaboratively to lead message development and strategic communications, and can effectively manage and balance competing priorities and deadlines. While support for strategic direction will be provided by the team and consultants, we're looking for a candidate who is comfortable with independence and highly motivated to both setting and achieve goals that will contribute to organizational success.

As a collaborative organization, Current has many different audiences that need to be engaged—community-based organizations, research institutions, government agencies, students, corporations and industry partners, entrepreneurs, and investors. We are looking for someone who can translate ideas across sectors, and has a sharp instinct for speaking to different audiences. The strongest candidates will have some familiarity with and passion for the environment, equity and inclusive growth, innovation, and/or technology.

With strategic direction from the full team and consultants, the Communications Manager will be responsible for originating public-facing materials, like social media, press releases, newsletters, impact reports, website content and other. We need a sleeves-rolled-up problem solver who relishes the challenges of working across sectors and issues and loves to distill complex ideas into clear and inspiring calls to action.

All responsibilities below apply to Current as well as Great Lakes ReNEW, our largest initiative. Please note that Great Lakes ReNEW does have separate brand standards and guidelines as a major funded initiative of the National Science Foundation.

Responsibilities:

- Work with staff, consultants, and partners to develop, manage, and implement Current’s communications strategy, including developing an annual communications calendar, contributing to communications budget development, selecting external resources and technology platforms, and identifying communications needs.
- With support from staff and consultants, will originate and circulate communications materials, including:
 - Press releases about major news and announcements
 - Social media posts (currently LinkedIn, X, and YouTube, but planning an expansion to Instagram/Facebook)
 - [Annual impact report](#)
 - Board reports, grant reports, and proposals highlighting Current’s achievements and mission
 - Website content, including narrative and visuals
 - Event collateral, including powerpoint decks
 - Biweekly to monthly newsletter
 - Physical signage, apparel, and other items
 - Other collateral as needed to communicate about Current’s programmatic initiatives and mission
- Own and manage creative assets, including logo and branding, powerpoint templates, images, and other collateral. Support the team in using materials within brand standards.
- Lead all partner communications for Chicago Water Week, Current’s annual community celebration of water leadership in Chicago.
- With the team, lead planning and development of logistics for events and convenings.
- Represent Current at external events to build relationships with partner organizations and the broader community
- Actively contribute to Current’s overall growth and strategic direction as we evolve to meet the changing needs of our community

What we're looking for - skills and experiences:

- Excellent writing and verbal communication skills, with the ability to translate and distill complex concepts to many different audiences
- Track record developing, managing, and communicating about mission oriented organizations and initiatives, independently with clear results
- Experience communicating with diverse audiences, and prioritizing equity and inclusion
- Proven collaborator and team player with a strong learning orientation, willing to dive in and tackle new challenges with enthusiasm and determination
- Meticulous detail-orientation, and ability to manage complex projects and competing deadlines
- Experience creating high-quality communications materials, using Microsoft Office, Canva, or other tools. Experience with design tools like Adobe Suite a plus, but not required.
- Ability to independently assess multiple potential pathways to achieve a strategic objective, consult the team and incorporate feedback, and move to execution.

What we're looking for: values and attributes:

- Passion for Current's mission and values. You have a deep, shared commitment to the things we are passionate about: environmental stewardship; economic opportunity; technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship.
- Positive and collaborative work ethic. You have a drive to succeed for and with our team and partners and to lift up the people, organizations, and businesses that share our goals.
- Network orientation. You value relationships beyond one-off transactions and understand that in this long-term, system change work, effectiveness depends on the breadth and depth of our relationships.
- Creative approaches to problem solving. You know that the first idea isn't usually the best, and you know how to push yourself and your team to come up with new approaches.
- Curious and learning oriented. You want to understand your successes as well as your failures, and you're fueled by curiosity about the unknown. Everyone on our team is constantly asking questions about how the world works and how we can improve it.
- Comfort with ambiguity. You have a flexible and agile approach to big and small challenges and understand that progress is often nonlinear. You're willing to adapt and help Current adapt to be more resilient to our changing landscape.
- Accountability and humility. You're comfortable owning responsibility for a project's execution, but happy to share credit for the final team product. You are motivated by your team's opportunities and successes, and to support the whole team in tasks that contribute to individual and team goals.
- Empathetic leadership. You understand that our diverse partners across government, community, university, and industry face diverse challenges in their own work, and you listen to understand and build bridges.
- Results orientation. You find ways to track and measure what matters in your work, and in Current's work. You're rigorous about sharing those results with the team and when appropriate, our partners.

WHO WE ARE

Current is a Chicago-based nonprofit water innovation hub. Our mission is to grow an inclusive blue economy, accelerate adoption of innovative water technologies, and solve pressing water challenges. The world's persistent water problems — from floods to contaminants like lead and PFAS to decarbonization of water treatment — won't be solved by any one government, scientist, or company. And, unfortunately, people are not rallying fast enough behind new technologies and ideas to protect our health and environment. Founded in Chicago in 2016 in partnership with the City of Chicago, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, World Business Chicago, and the region's research universities, Current builds collaborations among cross-sector leaders to develop solutions that would be too risky or even impossible for any one group to undertake alone. While Chicago is our home, it is not our only market. Current exists to help export our region's home-grown solutions to help solve the world's water challenges and bring the best ideas from around the world to solve ours. In 2024, Current was awarded one of ten inaugural National Science Foundation Regional Innovation Engines for our six-state consortium, Great Lakes ReNEW. This award accelerated our ambition to serve as the hub for Great Lakes water innovation and will provide significant scale-up resources for us to deliver on our broader mission.

What do Current's team members love about working at Current?

- Working on high-impact projects and knowing that our work is contributing solutions to major environmental and economic challenges
- Opportunities to connect with high-level leaders across multiple industries. Valuable network building and learning
- Collaborating with others who share a passion for water, the environment, and creating economic opportunity
- Flexible working hours and environment and respect for life-work balance
- A culture that is welcoming, curious, collaborative, collegial, and committed to continuous improvement
- The start-up energy of our organization, fluid and dynamic and evolving with significant opportunity to advance and grow from within.

Our values:

Our values build the foundation of our organizational culture; our values ground and support us and our efforts to deliver on Current's mission.

- **Collaboration.** Current knows that reaching consensus and building trust are key aspects of maintaining and improving our access to clean water. This requires diplomacy and communication to gain the needed insights from a wide variety of project partners. Our work is powered by partnerships. Collaboration begins with listening and setting tables where diverse views, perspectives, and needs can be shared safely in the spirit of developing common solutions.
- **Creativity and Innovation.** Creativity and innovation require environments where diverse perspectives and ideas can be freely shared and debated. Everyone on our team should feel the freedom to question, to learn, to experiment, and to fail.
- **Inclusion.** To solve persistent water challenges and build a stronger blue economy, we

need diverse perspectives on both problems and solutions. We value diversity in our team and among our partners, at our tables and in our audiences. We strive to ensure that our work benefits our community.

- **Expertise:** Current maintains a sophisticated understanding of the state of the art in water technology. This field of study changes every day, requiring both deep knowledge and a willingness to adjust our understanding based on new discoveries.
- **Independence:** Current is a nonprofit that is not beholden to any stakeholders but rather has established a mission of advocating for sustainable water solutions that help the public at large.
- **Justice.** We acknowledge that justice – racial justice, social justice, economic justice, gender justice – is fundamental to our work of building a healthier economy and environment. We aim to identify the injustices that create barriers to our work, and to make diligent strides to remedy them.
- **Risk-seeking:** Current is not an advocate for the status quo. It's an advocate for the wise use of water to sustain the Earth's population — a mission that requires us to think big and act aggressively to see what works and what doesn't. If we're waiting for guarantees that a new approach will work, we'll never try anything different. Rational risk-taking is part of our ethos.
- **Sustainability.** Through our work and in our daily practices, we strive to conserve and reuse our natural resources, to meet present needs with minimal cost to future generations.

PARTNER PROMISES

- We promise to discover and promote new approaches and technologies that help solve water challenges. A combination of well-defined mission and professional curiosity drive us to find and share the best answers for difficult problems.
- We promise to challenge old thinking. One of Current's primary missions is to build trusted partnerships to help achieve breakthroughs that go beyond the status quo.
- We promise to keep an open mind: Current believes that attitude and outlook are important. Being receptive to new ideas and constantly seeking new sources of information are the only ways to stay at the forefront of our fields.
- We promise to be a strong partner. Current takes a hands-on approach to the projects it chooses and makes long-term investments in them.
- We promise to take care of our environment. Current is in the sustainability business. We never forget the fact that today's decisions can have major impacts in the world that people encounter decades from now.
- We promise to be an unbiased advocate for the best water solutions. While we work with many partners, our greatest duty is to the public at large and their quality of life. We will always be an honest broker.