



## **Job Description**

**JOB TITLE:** External Relations Director

### **PURPOSE OF THIS ROLE:**

The external relations director's purpose is to enhance the Foundation's reach and impact by building stakeholder relationships and communicating effectively. The director is accountable for driving two key aspects of our vision: firstly, building a thriving community of Mandela Rhodes Alumni who espouse our values throughout their lives, whose collaborations increase our impact, and who remain invested in the MRF. Secondly, a Foundation that communicates strategically and compellingly, accurately conveying its brand essence and appealing to target audiences, and that has a relevant voice and place in society. This role reports directly to the CEO. The External Relations Director is therefore accountable for:

Developing and implementing the departmental strategy, ensuring alignment with the strategic goals as set by the CEO, and the team's capacity each year.

Identifying, establishing and maintaining advantageous relationships and partnerships with stakeholders who can advance the Foundation's strategic pillars.

Actively building the alumni community and increasing the impact of its members by: facilitating Alumni connections and development via events, regional networks, opportunities for career development, and the communications strategy. Overseeing and providing leadership and mentorship to the junior alumni relations manager as they implement and execute the strategy.

Ensuring the MRF brand remains relevant and that our communications relate to our community effectively, enhance the reputation and the impact of the MRF in broader society, and attract top quality candidates. Overseeing and providing leadership and mentorship to the Communications Officer who is responsible for much of the work.

### **ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT:**

The Mandela Rhodes Foundation is one of Nelson Mandela's three official legacy organisations, founded in 2003 in partnership with the Rhodes Trust. Our purpose is to build exceptional leadership capacity in Africa. We find, fund, and empower young Africans who aspire to use their talents to serve their societies and our continent. We do this by providing a postgraduate scholarship for young leaders to study in South Africa and participate in a residential Leadership Development Programme. Our programmes are built on Nelson Mandela's belief that leadership begins with inner transformation, and our founding principles of reconciliation, education, entrepreneurship, and leadership. Over the past 20 years the MRF has awarded 622 Mandela Rhodes Scholarships to young leaders from 33 African countries.

### **KEY STAKEHOLDERS:**

- Stakeholders of the Pan African Outreach
- Members of the media
- MRF staff at all levels
- External suppliers

- Mandela Rhodes Alumni
- Donors and prospective donors (as and when requested by CEO)

## **OUTPUTS:**

### **A: PAN AFRICAN OUTREACH (PAO)**

The Pan African Outreach incorporates all our efforts to market the scholarship and attract the top candidates. Our goal is to reach all 55 African countries, and this is a core part of our 5-10 year strategy.

1. Review and refresh strategy for the Pan African Outreach
2. Manage the implementation and reporting of annual PAO initiatives, co-ordinating internal and external stakeholders. Supervise the Communications Officer as they produce the social media content across platforms and channels.
3. Build advantageous relationships for the PAO with universities across the continent, likeminded organisations, and key stakeholders, to strengthen our recruitment pipeline and increase our reach
4. Develop internal consensus to make necessary improvements to selections process to ensure success of PAO

### **B: ALUMNI RELATIONS**

5. Review and refresh strategy for alumni relations, drawing on data from last 5 years and best practice
6. Oversee the solidification of new alumni relations structure (current Working Group) and associated regional structures. Support and guide the junior alumni manager as they liaise with the Working Group, providing input and where necessary leadership and ensuring an open channel of communication.
7. Oversee junior alumni manager to ensure delivery of alumni involvement initiatives including mentoring, volunteers for selections process, alumni giving
8. Strategic lead accountable for annual alumni gathering. Provide leadership, develop programme with input from team, and oversee implementation through junior manager with support from operations team
9. Oversight of alumni opportunities: ensure delivery of the marketing and selection processes for the Shaun Johnson Memorial Scholarship (for PhD study in the UK) and the \$80k Äänit Prize for social impact, with support from the junior manager. This includes managing relationships with the donor and experts who participate in both selection processes as reviewers/interviewers/judges.

### **C: THOUGHT LEADERSHIP & BRAND CUSTODIANSHIP**

10. Review and refresh thought leadership strategy and communications strategy
11. Lead and manage delivery of thought leadership initiatives, primarily executed by the Communications Officer. Initiatives may include events, webinars, or the introduction of a different mix of channels and publications
12. Oversee production of regular communications requirements of the MRF: project manage delivery of the yearbook and quarterly stakeholder updates, regularly review and update the website, and produce or commission press statements, presentations as required
13. Oversee the management of MRF's crisis communications responses, liaising between the Communications Officer, senior leadership, external PR contractor, and creating / commissioning draft press releases and talking points
14. Build media relationships and represent the MRF on public platforms such as panel discussions or TV/radio to advance thought leadership and raise MRF profile

## **D: FUNDRAISING AND DONOR LIAISON**

15. Produce presentations and materials for use in fundraising / donor relations
16. Drive planning and execution of fundraising / donor events
17. Assist CEO's office by identifying potential donor leads from desk research, external events, or own networks

## **E: LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT**

18. Senior leadership duties: support, develop and mentor two direct reports, serve on the management committee and support CEO's office with governance matters and responsibilities

## **COMPETENCIES:**

### **Knowledge and experience:**

- The candidate must have at minimum an undergraduate degree, ideally in communications, marketing or PR
- The candidate requires 5-7 years of work experience in a relevant role, such as marketing and communications or PR, alumni relations, or development & fundraising
- The MRF's offices are based in Cape Town. The candidate must be willing to relocate to Cape Town, and willing to travel periodically

## **Skills**

### Communications skills

- Outstanding verbal and written communication – can produce or manage the production of a variety of types of communication ranging from press releases and crisis statements, to internal communications, drafts of speeches and letters, etc
- Editorial: can interpret high-level vision of the Foundation to develop editorial direction for MRF publications and platforms
- Copy-editing: can edit copy to a high standard of clarity and correctness
- Public speaking and presentation skills

### Digital skills

The director requires relevant experience and understanding of the below in order to oversee direct report

- Must have skill and experience with digital marketing & SEO, as well as website management. Not necessarily technical, but must be able to liaise with supplier to maintain and periodically update website
- Must have skill and experience with social media
  - community management,
  - content strategy and planning
  - understanding of different media channels (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn)
- Must be familiar with Mailchimp or similar

## Community building

- Skill and experience in designing programming, communications, and structures to create and sustain a living community will be an advantage: e.g.
  - Having worked in an alumni relations role, or similar relevant experience
  - Having designed and facilitated any event designed to build community
- Experience of using relevant digital platforms and tools an advantage, but not a requirement

## **Behavioural and functional competencies:**

### Strategy skills

- Understand the vision and plan to achieve the vision; identify the critical high pay-off strategies and prioritize the team efforts accordingly; flexibility of the strategic planning process to accommodate business environment changes; sensitivity to wider organizational priorities while exploring the trends, opportunities and risks; build alternative business models to map the strategy execution requirements; understand the implications of the relevant strategic choice and take accountability for making strategic choices

### Networking & relationship building

- Establish and build a large pool of contacts within and outside of the organisation with people that directly or indirectly impact business success and growth; ensure regular interactions with critical people from broader industry groups and community networks; create opportunities for synergistic partnerships and associations to benefit the Foundation

### Inspirational leadership

- Has the ability to channel energies towards a common goal and vision; Influence the various teams and stakeholders to work cohesively by creating and promoting an environment of trust and collaboration; create a sense of urgency in achieving the vision; generate ideas and hope in difficult situations; recognize and reward teams for their contributions

### Planning and organising

- Must have skills and experience juggling multiple projects of varying complexity and urgency
- Project management skills:
  - Scoping time and expenses
  - Developing briefs for suppliers
  - Liaising with multiple stakeholders
  - Managing project timelines

**Problem solving:** Identify with and understand the problem at hand; develop a clear action plan to address the problem by involving people; identify the right resources/ action points

to mitigate the problem; compare alternative approaches to select the most suitable course of action. Use lateral thinking & creativity to resolve problems.

**Teamwork and interpersonal.** Work with team members to achieve collective goals; seek collaboration and understand the viewpoints and perceptions of others in the group; be sensitive to team dynamics and build trust and confidence in others; help team members when required; use appropriate language and tactics in social situations and ensuring team success