

## THE WARD GROUP

### **The Hotchkiss School Chief Communications Officer**

#### **Organization:**

The Hotchkiss School is an independent boarding school located in Lakeville, Connecticut. Founded in 1891, the school provides an education of academic distinction to 600 students in grades 9 through 12, and to a small number of postgraduates. Students at Hotchkiss come from across the United States and around the world. Graduates attend many of the most selective universities and colleges.

The Hotchkiss School seeks to inspire a diverse range of students who are committed to the betterment of self and society, and to cultivate in them at the highest standards of excellence, imagination and intellect, openness and personal integrity, empathy and responsible citizenship that they may discover and fulfill their potential as individuals fully engaged in our world.

The aim of The Hotchkiss School, since its foundation, has been to provide a dynamic environment for teaching and learning, as well as exceptional preparation for future study and fulfilling adult lives. Our residential community—the network of relationships created by the School’s people, place, and opportunities—is our most effective means of providing a transformative educational experience, where students may grow and gain greater understanding of themselves and their responsibilities to others. We believe that a healthy and inclusive learning community nourishes students physically, emotionally, and intellectually; fosters joy in learning and living with others; and ensures that all feel safe, seen, and supported. All members of the Hotchkiss community have a role in sustaining this environment.

#### **Position:**

Chief Communications Officer

#### **Reports to:**

Craig Bradley  
Head of School

#### **Opportunity Proposition:**

As a key member of the senior leadership team, you will have the opportunity to provide vision and direction for an innovative and comprehensive communications platform that will deepen engagement with all constituents, and raise The Hotchkiss School’s profile as one of the nation’s leading independent boarding schools.

#### **Principal Responsibility:**

Through your leadership, the Communications team will develop and execute a deliberately designed, modern marketing and communications strategy that will ensure that current and prospective students and their families, faculty and staff, alumni, trustees, the media and the local community receive targeted and relevant messaging regarding Hotchkiss and its contributions, locally and globally. You will support the Communications needs from key groups within the School including the Head of School’s Office, Development, Admissions, Alumni and Athletics.

### **Specific Duties:**

- Conduct a thorough review of current communications efforts, publications, and social media in order to create a deliberately designed, state-of-the-art, and unified communications platform for the School. Develop a deep appreciation for the history, achievements, aspirations, and contributions of The Hotchkiss School, and the ability to effectively and eloquently articulate the Head of School's vision to diverse audiences.
- Solicit feedback and input from trustees, faculty, parents, and alumni to ensure the School's communications and messaging are effective and reflect the values and aspirations of Hotchkiss.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for the School's communications strategy that supports the School's strategic priorities. The plan will include all messaging and a clear and consistent brand identity that extends across all media and vehicles in ways that appropriately support and reflect the values, identity, and aspirations of the School.
- Guide and support the Head of School in his role as chief spokesperson for Hotchkiss, serving as a co-strategist on messaging. Ensure that he is well-briefed and that his communications activities are productive and efficient.
- Set clear direction and priorities for a staff of four professionals. Support the continual growth and success of each member of the team. Ensure that excellence characterizes the work of the office in terms of client collaboration, customer service, responsiveness, and problem-solving.
- Establish a formal communications planning process that reflects the needs of the School, the Office of Admission, the Alumni and Development Office, and other principal partners, in order to create a strong yet flexible communications program with key themes and messages that can be adapted to suit various constituencies.
- Recognize the importance of addressing internal audiences as part of these efforts through the development of an internal communications strategy that is considered as part of all communications initiatives.
- Ensure that communications is seen as a collaborative, responsive partner able to address opportunities and concerns. Establish the Chief Communications Officer as a trusted thought leader whose opinion on all communications is sought after and respected.
- Create outstanding communications vehicles that are on par with or ahead of best-in-class programs in independent schools and liberal arts colleges. This includes the content and design of the website, all marketing materials, press releases, social media, the Hotchkiss Magazine, the annual report, parent newsletters and communication, and the Almanac as well as internal communications.
- On an ongoing basis, assess the website and oversee the re-creation and implementation of an innovative, user-friendly, and effective web platform that updates in near-real time and links to social media.

### **Professional and Personal Profile:**

- Proven experience envisioning, developing, and implementing a comprehensive brand communications program across an enterprise with multiple constituencies and a variety of audiences (independent school or higher education experience a plus).
- Excellent writing skills and the demonstrated ability to craft substantive and cohesive messages based on strategic priorities, communicate successfully to key audiences, and adapt and adjust as appropriate over time.
- Superior strategic thinking skills with a strong grasp of industry best practices and a holistic understanding of all aspects of communications, positioning, and messaging (exposure to admissions, fundraising, and alumni relations, also a plus). Substantial experience evaluating the strengths of existing communications and identifying opportunities for improvement.
- Broad experience in strategic integrated communications planning for consequential brands, and at least some exposure to media relations and crisis management.
- Excellent management skills, including the ability to delegate appropriately to ensure excellent interdepartmental communication and collaboration; and ability to guide colleagues' individual professional growth.
- Keen creative and design sensibilities, with a strong understanding of the communications process from creative concept through production and fulfillment. Ability to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the communications process without sacrificing quality and impact.
- Deep understanding and mastery of traditional and emerging media, from print to social media, in conveying information and content in ways that engage and motivate constituents.
- Experience working in a complex, matrixed environment serving many internal clients and external constituents. Ability to build relationships and collaborate across the institution, serving as a resource to others and obtaining their input; persuasive, persistent, and determined.
- Collaborative and collegial orientation, eager and able to engage a diverse client base, and able to build strong professional relationships. A convener who is able to synthesize many ideas and produce excellent work about a wide range of diverse topics.
- Superlative interpersonal skills with a demonstrated ability to work well with people at all levels of an organization. Strong personal integrity and work ethic, as well as a sense of humor and perspective.
- A working knowledge of software for business (G Suite), design (Adobe Creative Cloud, including Photoshop and InDesign), web technology (HTML, Google Analytics, Constant Contact, social media, and Finalsite CMS (preferred)). Photography and/or videography experience a plus.
- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree preferred.
- Sense of humor

- The School is eager to consider applications from candidates who identify with groups traditionally underrepresented in independent school communities.

*The Hotchkiss School does not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, religion, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, disability, or national or ancestral origin in the administration of its educational policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other School-administered programs, or in the administration of its hiring and employment practices.*

*The Hotchkiss School is a tobacco-free environment.*

For more information please contact:

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