Job profile

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER
ABOUT US

We are an international development organisation putting ingenious ideas to work so people in poverty can change their world.

We help people find solutions to some of the world’s toughest problems. Challenges made worse by catastrophic climate change and persistent gender inequality. We work with communities to develop ingenious, lasting and locally owned solutions for agriculture, water and waste management, climate resilience and clean energy. And we share what works with others, so answers that start small can grow big.

We’re a global change-making group. The group consists of a UK registered charity with community projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America, an independent development publishing company and a technical consulting service. We combine these specialisms to multiply our impact and help shape a world that works better for everyone.

OUR AIMS

We help people find solutions to some of the world’s toughest problems, made worse by catastrophic climate change and persistent gender inequality. Our aims are to:

• Make agriculture work better for smallholder farmers, many of them women, so they can adapt to climate change and achieve a good standard of living
• Help more people harness the transformational effects of clean affordable energy and reduce avoidable deaths caused by smoke from indoor stoves and fires.
• Make cities in poorer countries cleaner, healthier places to live and work.
• Build disaster resilience into the lives of people threatened by hazards – reducing the risk of hazards and minimising their impact on lives and livelihoods.

HOW WE WORK

We work on holistic solutions that change systems and have a framework to help us achieve our aims:

• Analyse the root causes of a poverty and vulnerability
• Define the change at scale we need to make
• Develop activities along three complementary paths: Demonstrate, Learn and Inspire.
  - Demonstrate that our solutions are sustainable in the real world
  - Learn by capturing evidence and adapting our approach

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- Inspire wider support to multiply our impact.

**OUR ORGANISATION**

Practical Action is an unconventional, multi-disciplinary changemaking organisation

- A highly innovative community development charity operating in Africa, Asia and Latin America. **Practical Action** community projects use ingenious ideas to design, test, refine and prove new ways to overcome poverty and disadvantage and then ‘open-source’ knowledge of what works so that it can be implemented at a greater scale by others.

- A world-class consulting operation that helps socially responsible business, government policy makers and other development organisations. This draws on learnings from our own development work as well as the combined brainpower of a roster of over 2,000 expert consultants. **Practical Action Consulting** helps to extend the reach of our influence by providing the best advice to others, whose work can make a bigger difference.

- A well respected specialist development publisher. **Practical Action Publishing** brings together development practitioners, researchers and thought leaders to create publications that stimulate discussion, strengthen peoples’ capabilities and inspire sustainable change.
ABOUT THE ROLE

SCOPE

The Communications Manager will be a member of the Practical Action International Operations team.

For the past five years, Practical Action has been incubating an exciting initiative called the Global Distributors Collective (GDC): a collective of over 200 last mile distribution companies that cumulatively reach millions of the poorest consumers in the world with beneficial products like solar lanterns, water filters and improved cookstoves. The GDC provides a collective voice for distributors to ensure their voice is heard; drives research and innovation across the sector; facilitates the exchange of information, insight and expertise; and provides critical services that leverage economies of scale. The GDC is currently hosted by Practical Action alongside strategic and implementing partner Bopinc.

This is a highly strategic role in the GDC team focused on designing, managing, and implementing all communications and member engagement activities for the GDC.

Title | Communications Manager – GDC
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Reporting to | Head of the GDC
Days | Full Time – 35 hours per week
Direct reports | Communications and Membership Officer – GDC and Events Coordinator GDC
Financial scope | N/A
Location | Rugby, Warwickshire
Duration | This is a fixed term contract to provide maternity cover for up to 12 months
Travel | Expected approximately 2-3 weeks per annum

RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic communications and member engagement (60%)

- Oversight and quality control of all externally facing GDC communications activities; responsible for brand oversight and brand risk, as the GDC’s visibility and profile grows. This includes:
  - Leading on developing, managing, and implementing the overarching communications strategy for the Global Distributors Collective, to increase brand awareness and recognition for the GDC and to disseminate key information about workstreams, innovations and knowledge products to our members, partners and the wider sector.

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Leading the GDC’s digital strategy, including website management and development (annual traffic of 65k page views, with 9k visitors); bi-monthly e-newsletters (to mailing list of 1700+ contacts); and growing the GDC’s social media presence on LinkedIn.

Leading on media relationships and campaign opportunities, to reach new audiences

Leading the design and execution of 5-10 virtual webinars per year, featuring senior executive speakers from across the private and public sectors, and often delivered in partnership with other sector players

Leading the design and delivery of a series of in-person GDC member learning and collaboration events around the world

Leading production and dissemination of a range of comms content and knowledge products, for both members and the wider development community, ensuring effective management of inputs from across the team, and amplified via e.g., podcasts, blogs, articles, how-to-guides, etc.

Responsible for member engagement and management activities, to ensure members are aware of and engaged with the work that we do, that we are operating inclusively of our members’ needs and priorities, that our membership criteria is fit-for-purpose, and that our membership continues to grow. This includes:

- Oversight of membership management processes and all digital communications systems (GDC member database, GDC inbox, Dotdigital, website, SurveyMonkey, Eventbrite, etc)
- Overseeing the development and execution of the bi-annual GDC Member Survey
- Developing a GDC member recruitment strategy and driving member recruitment (working closely with the Head of the GDC), via external partnerships, incubators and accelerators, with an aim to achieve 500 members by 2025
- Designing and overseeing the ‘member experience’ with the GDC, starting at the onboarding process
- Leading membership and audience segmentation, to enable effective tailoring and targeting of advocacy messages, knowledge products, resources and opportunities
- Liaising with the central Communications and Marketing team to increase the impact of GDC communications activities, and to ensure consistent and timely contribution on last mile distribution to the organisation-wide communications plan.
- Identifying key opportunities to promote the last mile distribution sector and provide strategic support with convening workshops/forums on key GDC issues
- Providing support, advice, and guidance about GDC communications and brand strategy to the wider team and the implementing partners’ communications teams

Impact (10%)  

- Review and analyse performance of communications channels and activities, utilising evaluation for improvement in reaching strategy objectives.
- Provide strategic input into M&E processes
- Lead on data collection (quantitative and qualitative) and analysis from members to gather feedback on and refine our interventions, including designing and managing the annual GDC member survey

Project management (10%)  

- Commission, oversee and manage relationships with external agencies, freelancers and consultants as required, e.g., web developers, graphic designers, etc.
- Project manage communications activities

Planning and Strategy (5%)
• Lead the GDC membership strategy, including managing decisions around changes to GDC membership criteria and recruiting new members
• Provide strategic input into partnership management
• Represent the GDC and present on behalf of the GDC at international meetings and events as needed

Line management (15%)

• Manage the GDC Communications and Membership Officer, and the GDC Events Coordinator.

EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Required:
• Minimum 5 years’ experience in strategic communications,
• Proven expertise in producing and disseminating innovative content and knowledge products to international development / 3rd Sector audiences
• Experience in community building / network management
• Leadership skills and track record of line management, and managing external suppliers
• Track record of project management: delivering projects on time, to expectations and within budgets
• Partnership management skills
• Strategic thinking skills and ability to conceptualise and deliver strategy
• Exceptional communicator, written and verbal
• A team player that enjoys working collaboratively and iteratively
• Proven ability to work independently with little supervision required
• Ability to clearly undertake tasks and deliver to time-pressured deadlines
• Commitment to a markets-based approach to supporting people to improve their lives

Desirable:
• Technical understanding of last mile distribution, and experience working with last mile distribution companies
• Demonstrable experience of engaging media outlets, pitching to media, etc
• Demonstrated knowledge and experience of monitoring and evaluation
• Demonstrable knowledge of gender inclusion approaches
• French language skills