



Special Olympics
Southern California



Executive Search
Vice President, Marketing & Communications

Hybrid Office/Home - Long Beach, CA

Sterling Search Inc. has been exclusively retained to recruit for the new **Vice President, Marketing & Communications (VPMC)** for **Special Olympics Southern California (SOSC)**.

Special Olympics transforms lives through the joy of sport, every day, everywhere. It is the world's largest sports organization for people with intellectual disabilities: with 4.4 million athletes in 170 countries - and millions more volunteers and supporters. Special Olympics is also a global and social movement focused on inclusion.

Special Olympics Southern California enriches the lives of thousands and thousands of athletes and their communities in Southern California through sports, education, and athlete health.

SPORTS



Having fun, developing skills and building self-esteem is the life of a Special Olympics athlete. We offer seasonal sports training and competitions for people of all ages and skill levels.

LEADERSHIP



Special Olympics empowers athletes to spread acceptance and inclusion and live more independent lives through leadership training. This training prepares them to be leaders on their sports team and in the game of life.

ATHLETE HEALTH



Keeping the athletes healthy so they can compete is a key goal of the movement. Children and adults with intellectual disabilities who participate in Special Olympics develop improved physical fitness and motor skills.

Special Olympics Southern California (SOSC) was founded in 1969 as its own 501c3 nonprofit organization. It is one of 52 Chapters within the United States and has presence from Kern/San Luis Obispo Counties to San Diego County. SOSC has become one of the best performing and well-respected chapters in the country boasting \$11 million in revenue, \$7 ½ million in assets, and a four-star rating for the third year in a row from Charity Navigator.

SOSC offers 13 sports across 4 seasons, serving thousands of athletes in community and school-based programs in 11 counties. It also offers opportunities for athletes to improve their overall health and wellness, gain leadership skills and much more. These programs are supported by a passionate community including more than 50 employees, thousands of volunteers, SOSC's valued partners and donors, and the community at large.

SOSC's vision is to promote acceptance, inclusion, and well-being for people with intellectual disabilities through sports and so much more.

SOSC Core Values are:

- Be ATHLETE centric
- Be a TEAM player
- Be a CHANGE agent
- Be a LEADER

Special Olympics Southern California (SOSC) is seeking a dynamic Vice President, Marketing & Communications who will report to the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The VPMC's primary responsibility is to champion a powerful mission of inclusion through a world-class sports organization. This requires strategic leadership, innovative messaging, and the engagement of many constituents, all designed to present the best opportunities for the athletes.

In early 2019 its long-term President and CEO announced his plans for retirement. SOSC conducted an extensive executive search process, and in September of 2020, SOSC's Board of Directors enthusiastically appointed Calvin Lyons as its new President and CEO. Lyons joined SOSC from the Boys & Girls Clubs, where he had served as the President and CEO of the Metro Los Angeles Clubs for the prior four years and previously, in the same position for the Clubs in King County, Washington.

Even though Lyons started in the height of the pandemic, his infectious and optimistic energy combined with his passion for the mission, helped many of the athletes navigate this challenging time and inspired the whole SOSC team to explore new ways of doing things. Some of the ways they pivoted include:

- The continued development of an over 50-member-strong and diverse Board of Directors by building active, effective, and robust committees charged with raising money and/or in-kind donations (over \$1.3 million in some years).
- The engagement of Board Members who partnered with staff to develop business plans for new innovative solutions as they all stepped into the "new normal."

- The transition away from events-based fundraising to a culture of philanthropy with a focus on long-term financial sustainability for the organization.

The Special Olympics movement is growing rapidly. Recently, Special Olympics released research showing how their **Unified Schools Model** removes one of the greatest barriers—negative attitudes and behaviors—for students with intellectual disabilities and improves the education of all students.

Also, through a recently signed MOU with the Boys & Girls Clubs, Special Olympics has significantly expanded its reach into the afterschool space. This represents an extraordinary opportunity to engage more athletes and continue SOSC’s vision for inclusiveness within new communities.

Special Olympics recently announced a formalized partnership with Allison+Partners, a global communications and marketing agency, to offer localized public relations support across 34 of its markets and media relations support for the upcoming Unified Cup as well as the upcoming World Games. Allison+Partners began a search a year ago to identify a global nonprofit partner that could support the agency’s employee volunteer and giving goals—a key aspect of the company’s culture—while supporting the organization with the agency’s nonprofit and purpose-driven service arms. Special Olympics was selected as the global nonprofit and is thrilled to officially announce and kick off this partnership!

SOSC is a very special place and as a result has a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders. Its mantra is **“Athletes First”** yet it serves a wide range of constituencies which include athletes, families, coaches, volunteers, sponsors, donors, partners, schools, government agencies, media, staff, Board of Directors and the international office of Special Olympics.

This is an exciting time to join SOSC, partnering with a relatively new and innovative President and CEO who is shaping and scaling the next phase of their growth and impact. The new VPMC will also be joining at a unique time when they will have the rare opportunity to board the “PR train” leveraging the strong Special Olympics Southern California brand for the myriad of opportunities unique to our area.

THE POSITION

The Vice President, Marketing & Communications is part of the senior management team and, not only sets the tone of all marcomm for SOSC in alignment with the strategic plan, but also plays an integral role in the continued shaping of SOSC’s organizational vision, strategy, and mission impact.

The new VPMC will report to the President and CEO and play a visible leadership role for the next stage of SOSC’s growth. Although many of the fundamentals of the Marketing & Communications Department are in place, there is a strong desire for the new VPMC to bring their own vision and

standards of excellence to the department. One of the first initiatives will be to create a much more robust internal communications function and work closely with the President and CEO and the Board Chair to understand their vision and how to represent it.

The VPMC provides leadership for all internal and external marketing and communications, advancing SOSC's strategic goals and mission. This includes overseeing marketing and communication planning, public and media relations efforts, branding, messaging, digital media, merchandising, marketing materials, documentation, advertising, and ceremonies at Southern California competitions. This position is responsible for management of the marketing and communications team (a staff of four plus remote interns and volunteers), overseeing the day-to-day operations and implementation of campaigns and promotions. This position shares responsibility for setting the strategic direction of the organization and for providing general leadership to ensure the successful achievement of SOSC's mission and goals.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Internal Communications:

- Ensures productivity and impact through consistent and effective internal communications, with direct support to the President and CEO and other executive team members as needed.
- Ensures all staff are knowledgeable on SOSC's priorities and goals, understand their role in achieving those goals, and know where the organization stands in achieving those goals.
- Collaborates and supports all SOSC departments to send informative and clear messaging to staff by establishing a robust internal communications structure.

Marketing & Communications:

- Oversees and supports the following functional areas: Advertising, Analytics, Ceremonies, Documentation, Email Marketing, Graphic Design, Info Booth, Internal Communications, Intranet, Media Operations, Merchandising, Messaging, Public Relations, Social Media, Website, and Writing.
- Provides leadership, expertise, and guidance to the marketing and communications team to develop strategies, materials, and content.
- Builds a strong internal and external brand and culture that emphasizes Safety, Excellence and Philanthropy.
- Works closely with the philanthropy team, which is advancing a "philanthropy culture" internally and externally and leveraging their efforts with value-add athlete testimonials and other support materials to strengthen case statements.
- Sets and maintains SOSC's branding so there is consistency throughout all SOSC materials and messaging and is in line with the organization's strategic goals. Stays on top of Special Olympics International (SOI) brand standards and ensures SOCS aligns with them. Works

directly with staff to ensure that materials and messaging comply with the standards.

- SOSC's Dream Big Raffle (DBR) is one of the largest annual fundraisers and gives away over 3,000 prizes, of which the grand prize is a SoCal dream home or \$1 million annuity.
 - Provides leadership to the SOSC DBR team and external marketing company.
 - Provides oversight and input in the creation of marketing materials and a commercial with the external production company.
- Creates and maintains efficient systems to manage all Marketing & Communications projects and ensures they are completed by deadlines.
- Acts as staff liaison for the Board of Directors' Public Relations & Communications Committee. Coordinates meetings, agendas, and member participation with the Board of Directors Committee Chair.
- Oversees the marketing and communications budget.
- Recruits, manages, and supports the staff's recruitment of celebrity ambassadors for SOSC (celebrity engagement).

Supervision:

- Maintains and develops staff by recruiting, hiring, on-boarding, coaching, training, and providing feedback to employees. Supports professional development of employees. Explains, guides, and enforces systems, policies and procedures. Counsels staff as needed.
- Maintains a safe and healthy work environment through observation, coaching and training. Develops schedules, provides resources, and assigns/monitors work.
- Controls expenses by gathering and submitting budget information, monitoring financial variances, and implementing corrective actions.
- Maintains professional and technical knowledge for themselves and that of team members. Contributes to team morale and motivation. Schedules regular team meetings for each team member to share information, challenges, and successes. Keeps team informed of organization's happenings. Responsible for the team meeting their goals and the overall achievements of department.
- Recruits and hires volunteers/interns for the department who complement the culture and needed skillsets. Once on the team, mentors, and trains volunteers/interns.

Strategic Planning:

- Creates and implements SOSC's marketing and communications strategy and annual plan that rolls into the organization's Strategic Plan.
- Sets marketing goals and builds and/or supports plans for individual campaigns, including the Year-End Campaign, annual Giving Day, and more.
- Collaborates with all SOSC departments and workgroups to develop and support their marketing and communications goals, programs, events, and needs.

Merchandising:

- Oversees the merchandise program to raise awareness and funds. This includes recruiting a vendor to order and distribute merchandise, selecting inventory, managing the online

store and inventory, collaborating with regional staff to meet their merchandise needs, overseeing the budget, and building a committee to assist with strategy and day-to-day tasks.

- Manages Rafer's Boutique at championship competitions and key events along with providing resources and support to staff to implement a boutique at all events.
- Works directly with staff to develop in-house marketing materials, including design, inventory selection, and care of the materials.

JOB LEVEL RESPONSIBILITIES: Has high-level of decision-making authority within department. Collaborates with Executive Team members on matters impacting multiple departments. Advises supervisor (President and CEO) on organization-wide decisions. Has access to executive level confidential information. Has authority to speak publicly on behalf of the organization.

QUALIFICATIONS: To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill and/or ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Education and/or Experience:

- Bachelor's degree in Communications, Marketing, or related field required.
- 15 years of professional experience working in the marketing and communications industry.
- 5 years of professional experience in strategic planning, including a demonstrated ability to develop and implement marketing and communications plans and crisis communications.
- 5 years of professional experience in managing paid employees and volunteers.
- 5 years of professional experience in external and internal written communications.
- 2 years at the executive level & leadership experience of salaried employees, top tier volunteers & partners.
- Proficient in developing and implementing an organization-wide brand.
- Strong marketing and internal customer service experience.
- Exceptional ability as a writer and copy editor.
- Exceptional project management skills and ability to manage multiple projects and timelines simultaneously.
- Proven success at developing and implementing digital and print marketing and social media strategies to enhance visibility, engagement, and loyalty.
- Experienced media relations professional who has a history of developing and maintaining key relationships with traditional media.
- Extensive experience developing, implementing, and analyzing both traditional and social media metrics.
- Experience building, leading, and mentoring a team of marketing and communications specialists.

- Experienced in leading and participating on committees and in work groups.
- Knowledgeable about budget preparation and maintenance.
- Proficient in the Microsoft Office Suite and the Adobe Creative Suite. Demonstrated comfort with technology and the ability to quickly learn new software and programs.

WORK ENVIRONMENT: Employee and SOSC will establish a hybrid work location schedule, with a set number of days in the SOSC office and at a remote work site. Remote work site must be distraction free, contain a proper work surface (table or desk) and have adequate Wi-Fi capability.

SOSC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. Benefits include paid holidays, vacation and sick leave as defined by Special Olympics Southern California personnel policies; medical, dental, vision life and ADD insurance; and a 403(b) retirement plan with an employer match.

Please send resumes to:
Sterling Search, Inc.



To apply - www.sterlingsearchinc.com/soscvpmc

For a confidential conversation contact: Sarah Agee - (949) 903 2891 or
Sarah@sterlingsearchinc.com

Direct all correspondence emails and telephone calls to Sterling Search, Inc.
Any resumes sent or telephone calls made to SOSC will be redirected to Sterling Search, Inc.

Special Olympics Southern California is an equal opportunity employer and is dedicated to the goal of building a culturally diverse staff committed to working in a multicultural environment.

We encourage all qualified individuals to apply for open positions regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, qualified disability, marital, veteran or any other legally protected status. Employment with Special Olympics is "at-will."