

Mystic Aquarium Vice President of Marketing

The CEO seeks an experienced audience engagement and PR professional to:

- *Drive connection with Connecticut residents and visitors through conventional media, and through interactive outreach via iPhone and Android devices;*
- *Maximize attendance and tickets sold to audiences of different ages, ethnicities, backgrounds and income levels;*
- *Oversee branding and messaging that results in public embrace of the Aquarium's conservation research and edu-tainment mission; and*
- *Position Mystic Aquarium as a must-visit marine biology research institution.*

Founded in 1973 to serve as a living laboratory, Connecticut's [Mystic Aquarium](#) is today home to thousands of marine mammals, fish, invertebrates and reptiles central to its marine conservation, research and education mission. The 18+ acre campus provides a broad array of environments for different animals; research and care facilities; educational exhibits; and playful learning areas for children and families. Visitors are transported to shorelines of the Arctic; North America's Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific coastal waters; and to tropical and other marine ecosystems in ways that bring into focus global concerns about how we treat our planet and its marine inhabitants. Highlights include a penguin pavilion, a ray and shark touch pool, a jellyfish gallery, an animal rescue clinic, and the largest outdoor Beluga whale exhibit in the United States. The Aquarium also serves as home to a Veterinary and Animal Health Center, a recently completed 18,000 sq foot Ocean Science and Conservation Center, state-of-the-art classrooms, conference facilities, and a \$1.5m aquaculture lab and animal holding area.

Mystic Aquarium is a member of the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA), and an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). With an annual budget of \$25m, 250 full-time staff and 600 volunteers, Mystic Aquarium enjoys outstanding local, national and international partnerships with premier educational and academic research institutions. A key driver of the regional economy, the Aquarium annually hosted 800,000 visitors prior to the COVID lockdown of 2020. With America re-opening for business, attendance is being rebuilt and the Vice President of Marketing is key to this process.

This is a role with strong accountability, and the Vice President's success will be measured in terms of attendance and ticket sales by diverse audience cohorts. The Marketing Vice President must be a driven professional at ease in high visibility environments, with a track record of successfully driving on-site attendance.

BASIC FUNCTION

The Vice President of Marketing will lead, plan, direct and implement strategies for all marketing and public relations on behalf of Mystic Aquarium, and will be specifically accountable to:

- Maximize outreach to and engagement of diverse audiences through online, social media and mobile engagement and interactions;
- Maximize general admissions and ticket sales revenue from each audience cohort;
- Maximize visitor and patron engagement in education, public programs and events;
- Continually improve awareness of Mystic Aquarium, its brand, research, facilities, programs and thought-leadership in marine biology, conservation and education, particularly among field influencers, donors and the general public who buy tickets.

Attendance and revenue are viewed as sole indicators of the joint success of the marketing programming team.

The Vice President of Marketing will ensure that data collected in the course of marketing outreach is accurate, comprehensive and useful to Mystic Aquarium's CEO, COO, the Director of Development and the leadership team. Such data is particularly useful to efforts that maximize revenue across earned and contributed sources as Mystic Aquarium seeks to generate revenue needed to maintain and evolve the organization and its facilities.

The Vice President will monitor and specifically seek to engage a diverse array of visitors of all ages, backgrounds, ethnic origins, economic means, linguistic and cultural traditions, and a balanced mix of residents and visitors to the region. Mystic Aquarium is very important to local businesses across the region. The Marketing Department as a whole will function as an ambassador to business, civil society, political, tourism and other interests across Connecticut. Similarly, the Vice President of Marketing will function as an ambassador of the CEO and is viewed as part of efforts to encourage contributions and sponsorships in support of Mystic Aquarium.

Marketing will position Mystic Aquarium, its brand, facilities, programs, events, scientists, educators and leadership with the public and the media. Perception can be difficult to measure but is nonetheless critical to the vitality of the organization because positive perception translates into visitors, members and contributors. Attendance metrics, regardless of whether free, sponsored, ticketed or by members; in-person or on-line; whether by individuals or groups, for general admission or to special events and education programs... all are important to the success of Mystic Aquarium.

Working in close partnership with Mystic Aquarium's CEO and programming leadership, the Vice President of Marketing will be a catalyst for innovation, participating in plans for exhibits and programs. Marketing must "see around corners" and anticipate visitor interests and behaviors by carefully analyzing data to shape practical, real-world, highly visible initiatives aligned to the CEO's strategies.

The Vice President of Marketing will also manage, recruit and retain a small marketing department of top-notch staff and contractors capable of supporting Mystic Aquarium's conventional (video/audio/print), and new (online/mobile/social) media marketing and communications needs in the future. It is critical that all marketing strategies are sustainable, offer a positive return on any financial investment and are consistent with the organization's overall conservation, operating and business objectives.

EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS and CHARACTERISTICS

The ideal candidate will have the following:

- Significant experience with marketing that increases public engagement and visitor attendance is a pre-requisite for success in this position; demonstrated hands-on experience in direct sales organizations offering experiences to customers through memberships and ticketing distributed at the point-of-sale, via the web or through alliance partners, would be beneficial;
- A track record working in collaboration with programming and education professionals to shape offerings that engage the public; an ability to deliver evidence of interest (or disinterest) of the public in particular exhibits, programs or education offerings; experience working with marine biologists, conservation scientists and other technical professionals to develop and market experiences that attract visitors;

- Sophisticated marketing, branding and public relations experience, with a track record of conceiving and implementing successful strategies, plans and programs that drive sustained attendance and ticket sales; broad-based knowledge of the full range of marketing techniques and tools, including branding, advertising, direct marketing, market research and interactive technologies;
- Proven ability to manage and work with a diverse group of personalities, particularly in shaping a positive perception and experience for constituents in order to involve them more closely in the work of Mystic Aquarium;
- Demonstrated ability to plan, organize and manage key communications and public relations functions, including cultivating and maintaining media contacts, and developing and implementing public relations and marketing strategies with the goal of increasing the public's embrace and loyalty to an institution;
- Excellent written and verbal communication and persuasion skills, with an ability to present effectively internally and externally from Board level to peers and subordinates as well as patrons, donors and community business and government leaders;
- Familiarity with how different technologies can be used to improve awareness and brand loyalty, drive ticket sales, improve the customer service experience, track performance indicators and provide for a lean and effective department infrastructure;
- Outgoing and straightforward; one who shares information easily, listens as well as gives advice and respects the abilities of others; critical thinker who can analyze data, capitalize on information, and develop and implement strategic marketing initiatives and plans; a confident, intelligent and articulate self-starter and finisher who is creative, energetic, accountable and entrepreneurial, yet collaborative and team-oriented;
- Well-organized and deadline-oriented, with exceptional attention to detail and follow-through; able to work both in structured and planned environments, and in situations where rapid response and instant decision-making is required;
- Emotionally mature and self-possessed; patient and tactful, with a sense of humor.

For more information please contact:

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