

WORKING WITH YOUR IN-HOUSE CREATIVE AGENCY

Marketing Guide

The OEDC's Marketing team is your one-stop shop for all of your communications and marketing needs. We are fortunate to have a talented team of professionals with decades of experience working with some of the world's largest, most well-known brands.

Their job is to make your life easier. No one wants to be on a deadline and have to come up with scintillating prose about our magnificent state and how it runs circles around the other states in this fair land. And certainly, no one wants to try to be a designer in this day and age, where audiences will tune your message out in moments if it can't capture the eye *and* the imagination.

This guide will walk you through the process of bringing your communication or marketing projects to life.

Team Responsibilities

Each OEDC Unit has a primary Account Executive assigned to them to guide projects to completion. They serve as your marketing/communication experts and point of contact.

OEDC Admin, Budget, Contracts and Sector Leads

Account Executive: [Robb Zerr](#), Senior Managing Director

Robb also serves as the primary communications and marketing consultant for the OEDC and the Choose Washington brand that promotes the state as a place to do business, invest and visit. He serves as the OEDC's chief writer and manages the ChooseWashington.com, Retirement Marketplace and PNWH2.com websites.



Marketing Contacts

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We strengthen communities

Small Business Finance and Small Business Training & Education

Account Executive: Open, Marketing Communications Manager

This role also manages social media, marketing plans, campaign strategy, videos and special projects and directs the MyStartup365.com website, the agency's Small Business Training & Education Center.

Business Development & International Trade

Account Executives: [Alex Harper](#), Creative & Brand Manager

[Kara Haggard](#), Design & Production Manager

Alex directs the visual storytelling side of marketing materials for the division. He is charged with determining the look and feel of our vast array of marketing pieces, from ads, collateral and trade shows to the websites.

Kara works alongside Alex to produce our many print, online, exhibit and marketing materials and manages the graphics library the team draws from to execute and support our branding and design direction.

How we fit into the Commerce Communications Realm

If you have any communications needs (press releases, feature article, social media, video, long-form story in Medium, etc.), start with our team. We work closely with the folks in Commerce Communications, creating the first drafts for these materials and making sure they are on the Communications Calendar.

Requests for a media interview or a quote from the Director or Governor are routed to Penny Thomas directly.

Project Workflow

1. Every project begins with a [Project Start Form](#). This is where you get to describe the project you are working on, what types of communications and marketing materials it may require, the intended audience and other project parameters.
2. Download the form, fill it out and place it along with all your project files in your respective project folder on the Q Drive.
3. Send an email to your Account Executive (AE) listed above for your unit with the Q: drive address of the project folder so they can retrieve the Project Start form and review the files for completeness.
4. The job will be logged into the Marketing's Project Tracker and assigned a Job Number.
5. The AE will be your contact for the project from that point forward. If you have a question, they are the person to start with.
 - a. If the material is to be printed, let the AE know the quantity and how it will be paid for early in the process so that bids can be solicited.

- i. Please note: Small runs of 50 or less can be prohibitively expensive and can run as much as \$10 per copy if we send it to a contracted printer. Often, these low runs can be done in-house and provide good results if they are just a simple project, such as a two-pager.
 - ii. If the project is to be printed outside the U.S., let your Account Exec know. Different countries use different size formats and this affects the design. It can be very time consuming to have to redesign a piece to fit a new standard.
6. Please allow at least 10 working days for an existing piece to be updated and 15 to 20 working days for a new piece that requires a from-scratch design.
7. Every project has two rounds of reviews. During these reviews, you will be asked to:
 - a. Review the written information, including the headlines, subheads and any other content. You don't need to worry about getting the wording right, as that's the Marketing team's responsibility. You need to ensure that any contact information, phone numbers, email addresses or data points are correct.
 - b. Where possible, the Marketing team will consider your suggestions in each round. But please realize that established guidelines regarding voice, tone and messaging are being followed, as they are part of the story arc we use to advance our economic development objectives.
 - c. In the second round, you need to make sure everything is correct, and nothing has been left out. This is the final round, so proof carefully. We can't make changes once you approve this draft.
 - d. Your original Project Start form will be routed back with each review cycle. There are corresponding boxes to approve each draft with initials and dates. The initiator must initial this before moving it to the next stage.

For Tradeshows Only

1. If your project is a trade show with multiple companies, please create subfolders for each company and place their content (doc, images, logo) in the corresponding folder.
2. You will need to send each co-exhibitor [this form](#) so they can fill out their information. The fields are limited in character count so that they will fit in the directory page format. Please make sure that the client does not exceed these counts when filling out the form as there is no limiter.
3. For trade shows where exhibit design is needed, please include the contact information for the exhibit company so that the design team can clarify production questions with them directly.
4. As you acquire assets (logos, directory form, etc.) from stakeholders, be sure that the client you're working with can provide them in the formats required. We have developed a [detailed guide](#) to help

you with this since the format types can be confusing. However, getting the correct file type is essential as we cannot rebuild logos on behalf of your stakeholders, and the wrong file will not scale properly for printing, especially on large-scale tradeshow walls. In short, graphic files must be submitted in .ai, .eps or .png formats.

5. For large shows where a co-exhibitor has their own stand in the booth, they must design their own panels. Commerce is not responsible for designing them so the company will need to find their own designer if they don't have one in-house.
6. We can easily accommodate adding new content for web pages (such as new businesses attending a trade show last minute), but we cannot accommodate them in printed materials beyond the initial draft round. By then, the number of pages and the page assignments for all content have been locked.

For Website Updates

- For ChooseWashington.com, MyStartup365.com and Commerce.wa.gov, send updates to Robb.
- If you have a tradeshow directory page on ChooseWashington.com, send update requests to Kara.

Design & Production Tips

- You don't need to be a world-class writer. We'll take the bones you provide us and make it amazing. Whenever possible, we will send you the first draft of the copy. Just know that the final copy may need to be changed as design typically guides the number of words we can use, much to the chagrin of our writers. Things may end up being shortened, lengthened or reworded.
 - The Choose Washington website serves as the source of most of our data, themes and voice. It is updated continually so if you see something that's wrong there, let us know so we can ensure that any collateral reflects the most up-to-date information.
- The Marketing team is charged with the overall look and design of collateral. Much thought goes into this as we evolve our story over time. As such, the choice of imagery is the design team's purview, partly because images and art support the written word, just as a movie director's choice of lighting, set design and composition support the script. While we welcome suggestions at the start of a project, the final decisions lie with the design team.
- The reasons go beyond aesthetics, too. The selected imagery must not only match the storytelling but must also pass legal use standards. Images from any source other than our approved subscription libraries must have signed releases to use. Images from the web can never be used as their rights are managed and while some images may have U.S. rights, they may not have international rights of use.

- Colors used are selected from specific palettes. We can't change them based on personal or team preferences. They are chosen for their particular properties that consider design trends, Commerce and OEDC brand guidelines and family traits.
- The current design is focused on the future, not the past. As such, design elements are more impressionistic rather than concrete. It's hard to be future-forward when we're showing 50-year-old airplanes. The focus is on what's possible, which is often more conceptual than concrete.
- Speaking of legalities, please do not use ChatGPT or other AI to prepare any materials for the team. Commerce has not adopted a policy on the use of these tools.

Going Digital

We're trying hard to back up the claim that we're a sustainable state. With this in mind, we are working on a two to three-year plan to move away from print and go fully digital. It is only a plan at this point, but we hope that we can convince decision-makers that our respective OEDC teams should have the technology and tools necessary to show everyone in the world that we not only lead in sustainability, but technology. Our basic mantra: The State Lottery has iPads, so why don't we? 😊

We started to move toward this at the Leadership Team level in the summer of 2023, and the marketing team is forging the actual plan to help us accomplish this, identifying the technologies, storytelling tools, training, and challenges to doing this.

The advantages are many, including the ability to update information and data on the fly, add video and interactive features to our storytelling, utilize artificial intelligence where it makes sense and add more flexibility in terms of access and audience to improve our ability to interact with others at major trade shows, trade missions and for recruitment and retention. Imagine working with a prospect overseas and being able to push a button on the screen, instantly converting your materials into one of 53 different languages.

We've already been working on some tests and will have more to share in the future, along with feedback loops.

In the interim, know that in this day and age, printed pieces are out of date almost as soon as we print them.

The world is changing that quickly these days. So, when possible, bring new ideas to us about how we can do things differently, such as using QR codes more effectively and improving our ability to acquire contact information for leads. People are doing some incredible things these days and while we try, we can't find it all on our own.

Our Current Story Arc

In competing with other states, think of our game plan in football terms. We aren't trying to wear the other team's jerseys to be more like them. We aren't even their opponent, trying to guess what they will do next and reacting to the play. We're more like a rugby team that is playing football. We look a lot like the competition, but we play our own game by our own rules. We dominate the field while the others are still trying to figure out what the game is.

- Thanks to a wide range of factors since European settlers first settled the state, Washington has become a hotbed of innovation.
- The state is known for breathtaking ideas that have changed the course of industries, markets and cultures around the world.
- This culture of creativity and innovation has spawned many legendary businesses, many started in garages or as side gigs. Collaboration and cross-pollination occur organically in brewpubs, outdoor activities and even mountain trails.
- The future of our economy (40 years from now) is guided by support for small businesses, particularly those that are owned by those historically marginalized, and by global innovation through international trade and investments in new clusters and technologies.
- This future is focused on sustainable technologies and practices that reduce our impact on the environment while creating new economic opportunities.
- The intersection of small businesses and global innovation creates new opportunities for economic growth across the state.
- Our Choose Washington branding, from the art choices to the tone and voice of content, is forward-facing. While celebrating the past, the vision is of the future and what potential it holds for the state, its residents, communities and economic prosperity.
- As such, Washington is known as the place “where the next big thing begins.”

Questions

We know you have a lot on your plate. We are happy to answer your questions, brainstorm with you, find new ways to do routine things, and otherwise make our meager marketing budget stand out from the crowd. The four of us have been doing that all our lives and are out there every day on the cutting edge of the latest and greatest.