

**CITY OF SAN MATEO
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER**

**Practical Exercise Assessment of Skill and Ability
(Screening for Best Qualified)**

Practical Exercise Assessment – Instructions

In the role of Communications Manager, one of your key responsibilities is to plan and execute successful communications strategies. The following Practical Exercise (Tasks #1 and Task #2) is designed to demonstrate and assess your skills in this area. Your responses will be evaluated to determine your advancement in the selection process and identify the Best Qualified candidates for this recruitment.

Please complete and submit responses to the following two (2) tasks as part of the selection process. Your responses will be evaluated for content, clarity, organization, grammar, spelling, and ability to follow instructions. **Presentation and professionalism matter.**

Important: Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software (e.g., ChatGPT or similar tools) to complete any portion of this exercise is **not permitted** and may result in **disqualification** from the recruitment process.

Submission Requirements

You must submit both of the following:

1. **Written Document (Task #1)**
2. **Video Link (Task #2)**

Failure to submit both tasks will result in an incomplete application, and your submission will not be considered.

Please submit your response to Task 1 by attaching your document for Task 1 to your application in the designated upload under attachments. Additionally, please submit your response for Task 2 by including the link to your video submission under the Supplemental Questionnaire Section.

Below is the link to instructions on how to upload your video submission on YouTube.

Instructions on Posting to YouTube:

<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/57407?hl=en&co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop>

Please name your video submission "Communications Manager Task 2 - First Name Last Name" It is your responsibility to ensure that your link for Task 2 works. Any links that do not work will be considered incomplete.

If you have any questions on how to submit Task 1 and 2, please contact jquock@cityofsanmateo.org

If you need assistance with recording your video – whether due to technology issues or not having access to a recording device – please contact HR by September 26, 2025. Space to record and a recording device may be provided. Please note you will still be responsible for uploading your video to YouTube and submitting your response appropriately.

Task #1: Prepare Planning and Execution Document

Objective:

Develop a document that outlines how you would plan and execute the annual State of the City event.

Scenario:

The City Manager's Office is responsible for planning and facilitating the City's annual State of the City event. The State of the City address, delivered by the Mayor, typically highlights the City's recent accomplishments, current challenges, plans for the next year, and reflects any themes or tone desired by the Mayor. It provides an opportunity for the community to engage with City leadership and one another and learn about the critical up to the moment issues happening in the City. (Click here to watch: [2025 San Mateo Mayor's State of the City Address](#))

Imagine the event is scheduled for six (6) weeks from today. As the Communications Manager, you are responsible for planning, organizing, successfully executing the event, and supporting the Mayor in preparing their address to the community. Additional details are provided below.

Format: In-person event

Program:

- 90-minutes from open doors to all-must-exit
- 30-minute Mayor's speech with supporting presentation (slide deck)
- 20- minute Question and Answer session

Audience: Local leaders, community members, media, city staff

Refreshments: Light refreshments provided

Team:

- The Mayor (Keynote Speaker)
- Assistant City Manager (your supervisor)
- Communications Manager (your role/lead)
- Communications Support Staff -1 FTE and 1 PT Consultant (communications assistance)
- Administrative Support Staff – 1 FTE (event logistics/set-up)
- *Venue support staff*
- *MCTV Staff*
- *Department Heads are peripheral team members*

For this Exercise, please prepare a 1-2 page planning document for the State of the City event. At the start of the document, please include a brief (2-3 sentences max) explanation of your thought process and rationale behind the event planning and execution. The document should outline all necessary actions, internal and external meetings, materials/procurements, and information required to ensure a successful event.

Task #2: Real-Time Video Response Simulation

Objective:

Record a video that demonstrates your ability to present professionally and communicate effectively in a high-level setting.

Scenario:

The City has an upcoming initiative that is of interest to the community.

One of the issues facing many communities is the inability for many of their community members to meaningfully participate in community conversations. This can be attributed to many factors including language barriers, lack of trust in government, ineffective promotion of civic activities, lack of opportunity or time in the day to participate, or community members simply not feeling that their opinions matter or that they will be heard.

For this Exercise, record a 3–4-minute video of yourself making a pitch to the Assistant City Manager on how you are going to engage the community in an upcoming Public Works initiative about roadway safety, a topic you know is of community-wide interest. There will be three community workshops, one Sustainability & Infrastructure Commission meeting, and one City Council study session. What will be your communications tools and strategies, how will you develop messaging, what resources will you use to inform your planning efforts, how will you ensure all community members are able to comprehend the information being conveyed, and will the strategy be the same citywide?