

A Guide to Social Purpose Job Descriptions

Introduction

Integrating social purpose into business strategy is becoming a key differentiator in today's competitive landscape. As companies align their operations with broader societal goals, they define roles to lead this shift. This guide offers draft job descriptions for three of these pivotal social purpose positions:

- Chief Social Purpose Officer (CSPO)
- Social Purpose Director
- Social Purpose Manager/Specialist/Coordinator

Drawing on best practices and an analysis of existing roles, these profiles outline the skills, expertise, and leadership capabilities needed to drive purpose-led transformation, ensuring organizations can embed social purpose into their operations and lead with impact.

This guide supports businesses in structuring their social purpose leadership, advancing their social purpose, and contributing to the broader purpose economy.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help organizations create and tailor job descriptions for social purpose roles. To make the most of it:

1. **Review the Profiles:** Explore the draft job descriptions for the Chief Social Purpose Officer, Social Purpose Director, and Social Purpose Manager/Specialist/Coordinator to understand their core responsibilities and qualifications.
2. **Adapt for Your Needs:** Customize the profiles to align with your organization's size, industry, and social purpose goals.
3. **Facilitate Discussions:** Use this guide as a resource to engage leadership and HR teams in conversations about structuring social purpose roles.
4. **Incorporate Best Practices:** Draw inspiration from the outlined skills and leadership capabilities to ensure your team is equipped to implement the social purpose effectively.

For guidance on crafting social purpose responsibilities for the executive team, refer to the [Guide on Executive Social Purpose Roles](#).

Title: Chief Social Purpose Officer

Job Summary

The Chief Social Purpose Officer (CSPO) is accountable for championing and operationalizing the company's social purpose across all facets of the organization. Reporting to the CEO, the CSPO is a key member of the Executive Team, working closely with the CEO, Executive, and Board of Directors to embed the company's social purpose into its governance, corporate strategy, and decision-making processes at all levels.

This role positions the company as a leader in social purpose by shaping and executing priorities, driving strategic partnerships and collaborations, and ensuring advancement of the organization's overarching purpose. The CSPO serves as both an internal catalyst for change and an external ambassador, advocating for the advancement of the purpose economy through thought leadership and industry engagement. Additionally, they play a crucial role in purpose performance measurement and disclosures, providing critical data and insights to guide the company's social purpose execution and demonstrate its impact.

Key Responsibilities

- Develop and drive the company's [social purpose strategy](#) integrated in the corporate strategy.
- Lead enterprise-wide initiatives to embed social purpose across the company.
- Drive business model innovation to ensure social purpose is a core driver of value creation and competitive advantage.
- Oversee the social purpose collaboration and partnership strategy, leveraging executive-level connections to initiate relationships with top-tier stakeholders, and representing the company in high-profile discussions and negotiations.
- Establish social purpose key performance metrics and [reporting framework](#).
- Liaises with the company's board of directors on [purpose governance and oversight](#).
- Lead the company's engagement in shaping industry standards and [public policy](#) related to the company's social purpose and the purpose economy.
- Ensure social purpose is incorporated in the company's [risk management](#) and resilience strategies.
- Lead the integration of social purpose into [investor relations strategies](#) and ensure robust [purpose disclosures](#) aligned with market expectations.
- Oversee the development of the company's social purpose narrative and [external communications strategy](#).
- Anticipate and leverage emerging trends, [benchmarks, and best practices](#) in social purpose to keep the company at the forefront of purpose leadership.
- Serve as the company's primary [ambassador for social purpose](#), representing the organization at high-level forums and events.

Qualifications

Education:

- Master's degree in business administration, sustainability, public policy, social sciences or related field.
- Executive education in sustainability and [social purpose](#).

Experience:

- 10+ years of senior leadership experience in complex, public-facing organizations.
- Proven track record in developing and implementing social purpose or sustainability strategies at an executive level.
- Experience in leading large-scale organizational transformation initiatives.
- Demonstrated success in influencing corporate governance and decision-making processes.
- Background in stakeholder engagement, public policy, and external communications.

Knowledge and Skills:

- Extensive and current knowledge of social purpose.
- Demonstrated ability to embed social purpose into core business operations.
- Strong understanding of business strategy, risk management, and value creation.

- Advanced skills in systems and strategic thinking, problem-solving, and social innovation.
- Deep understanding of emerging trends in social purpose and the purpose economy.
- Ability to navigate complex organizational structures and drive cross-functional collaboration.
- Demonstrated leadership and change management skills with the capacity to inspire and influence at all levels of an organization.
- Strong multi-stakeholder collaboration capabilities in driving systems change.

Title: Social Purpose Director

Job Summary

The Social Purpose Director is a key leadership role responsible for driving the company's social purpose strategy and its integration across all aspects of the organization. This position leads the development, execution, and measurement of enterprise-wide social purpose initiatives, collaborating with cross-functional teams and executive leadership to embed social purpose into business strategies and operations. The Director serves as an internal expert and external thought leader, fostering partnerships and collaborations, driving innovation, and contributing to the advancement of the purpose economy.

Key Responsibilities

- Lead the development and execution of the enterprise-wide [social purpose strategy](#) and implementation plan.
- Establish long-term vision, goals, targets, metrics, and short-term business plans, programs, and budgets for social purpose.
- Collaborate with internal teams to embed social purpose principles into business strategies, operations, and [decision-making](#).
- Lead cross-functional teams to design and implement initiatives that achieve social purpose goals.
- Develop and implement the social purpose collaboration and partnership strategy.
- Provide expert counsel to the executive team and business leaders to advance the social purpose strategy.
- Research, prototype, and scale internal and external social purpose innovations and initiatives.
- Advise on emerging purpose trends, risks, and opportunities to shape the company's strategy.
- Establish key performance metrics and [disclosures](#) to track and communicate social purpose progress with accuracy, transparency, and accountability.
- Contribute to the [advancement of the purpose economy](#) by engaging in industry collaborations and initiatives that promote social purpose business models and practices.
- Serve as an internal and external social purpose expert and thought leader.

Qualifications

Education:

- Bachelor's degree in business administration, sustainability, public policy, social sciences, or related field; advanced degree preferred.
- [Social purpose education](#) an asset.

Experience:

- Minimum of 5 – 7 years of experience in social purpose, sustainability or related fields.
- Experience in leadership roles, with at least 3 years in a managerial or supervisory capacity.
- Proven track record of developing and implementing social purpose strategies and initiatives within an organization.
- Demonstrated experience in change management or organizational transformation, especially in embedding social purpose.
- Experience in collaborating with cross-functional teams and engaging with external stakeholders.

Knowledge and Skills:

- Extensive and current knowledge of social purpose.
- Demonstrated ability to embed social purpose into core business operations.
- Proven track record in developing and implementing social purpose strategies.
- Knowledge of performance metrics and reporting frameworks to measure social purpose impact.
- Ability to foster a culture of innovation and collaboration within teams.
- Strong multi-stakeholder collaboration capabilities in driving systems change.
- Familiarity with financial metrics and analysis to link social purpose initiatives to business outcomes.
- Ability to inspire and influence at all levels of the organization, including executives.

Job Title: Social Purpose Manager/Specialist/Coordinator

Job Summary

The Social Purpose Manager/Coordinator/Specialist plays a vital role in advancing the organization's social purpose by supporting the implementation of enterprise-wide social purpose initiatives and fostering collaboration across various teams. This position is responsible for leading the design and execution of purpose-driven strategies, monitoring progress, and providing insights to enhance the effectiveness of social purpose initiatives. The role involves developing communication strategies to champion social purpose efforts, building awareness and support within business units, and conducting research on best practices and emerging trends. Additionally, the Social Purpose Manager/Coordinator/Specialist will facilitate training sessions, coordinate stakeholder engagement activities, and assist in establishing social purpose performance metrics to ensure transparency and accountability.

Key Responsibilities

- Assist in the implementation of the enterprise-wide [social purpose strategy](#) by supporting project management and coordination efforts across various initiatives.
- Lead and collaborate with cross-functional teams to design and implement social purpose initiatives that advance the organization's social purpose.
- Monitor and report on the progress of social purpose initiatives, providing insights and recommendations to enhance effectiveness and alignment with strategic goals.
- Provide strategic recommendations on [impact metrics](#) and KPIs to track progress toward purpose goals and pillars.
- Develop internal and [external communication strategies](#) to champion the organization's social purpose initiatives and highlight progress to stakeholders.
- Build awareness and support across business units for social purpose objectives, providing strategic advice to embed purpose within operations.
- Conduct research on industry best practices and emerging trends in social purpose to inform strategy development and execution.
- Facilitate training sessions and workshops to educate employees about social purpose principles and encourage engagement in related activities.
- Coordinate stakeholder engagement efforts, including organizing meetings, events, and outreach programs to build relationships and foster collaboration.
- Assist in establishing performance metrics and [reporting frameworks](#) to track social purpose outcomes and ensure transparency.
- Provide administrative support for social purpose initiatives, including documentation, data tracking, and maintaining records of activities and outcomes.

Qualifications

Education:

- Bachelor's degree in business administration, sustainability, communications, social sciences, or a related field.

Experience:

- 3 – 5 years of relevant experience in social impact, ESG, communications, or community leadership.
- Demonstrated experience in leading and managing projects of varying complexity, with a focus on social purpose initiatives.
- Experience in collaborating with cross-functional teams and engaging with external stakeholders to achieve social purpose objectives.

Knowledge and Skills:

- Knowledge of social purpose frameworks and reporting standards.
- Strong understanding of performance metrics to measure social purpose impact.
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, including proficiency in creating reports and engagement materials tailored to diverse audiences.

- Strategic partnership and collaboration capabilities.
- Advanced strategic thinking, analytical skills, problem-solving abilities, and project management expertise.
- Proven ability to foster a culture of innovation and collaboration within teams.
- Strong interpersonal skills with the ability to build relationships and collaborate effectively with diverse stakeholders.

Acknowledgement

This guide was prepared by Coro Strandberg, Co-founder and Chair of the Canadian Purpose Economy Project and President, Strandberg Consulting.

About the Canadian Purpose Economy Project

The Canadian Purpose Economy Project exists to accelerate the transition to the purpose economy. It engages national ecosystem actors to create an enabling environment for social purpose businesses to start, transition, thrive and grow. It convenes, connects, curates, and collaborates to drive the social purpose business movement in Canada toward an economy where social purpose business is the norm, attracting capital, talent, and partners. In this economy businesses unlock all their assets, influence, reach and scale in collaboration with others to help Canada address its societal challenges and realize a flourishing future. We are grateful to Coast Capital, our Founding Purpose Champion, for their support.

Register for updates here www.purposeeconomy.ca.