



Managing Director - Denver
Recruitment Profile
backbonemedia.net

The Forest Group
6181 Clark Mountain Road
Lotus, CA 95651
530.344.0100
www.theforestgroup.com

“People do not buy goods and services, they buy relations, stories and magic.” —Seth Godin

It takes an adventurous soul to recognize what an entire industry is missing and then take on the challenge of starting a business to fill the void. Penn Newhard did just that when he quit his job on Wall Street, climbed the world’s peaks for six months, landed at *Climbing Magazine* in Carbondale, Colorado, and ultimately founded Backbone Media in 1997. Backbone provided the missing link in the outdoor industry: a strong PR advocate for outdoor brands to talk to active lifestyle media. Over the ensuing years, Backbone’s stature in the industry has been amplified by the addition of five equally adventurous partners, all like-minded souls, working toward a common goal of achieving the mythic work life balance while running a successful business. Backbone Media is now continuously highlighted in *Outside Magazine’s* list of "Best Places To Work", a testament to the enduring success of the agency’s founding principles.

The Backbone Story

Since 1997, Backbone Media’s HQ has been in Carbondale, Colorado, situated in the middle of the Roaring Fork Valley. Through a family friend, Penn was introduced to Nate Simmons, who joined Backbone as a Managing Partner in 1998, just as Backbone landed its first major client, Black Diamond. Nate simultaneously built the team at Backbone while serving as interim Global Marketing Director at Polartec, an early Backbone client. Over the years, Backbone has had continuous relationships with many leading brands in the outdoor industry while also expanding into other similarly aligned active-lifestyle industries. Like Penn, Nate was bold enough to believe that one's passion and profession should not be mutually exclusive. That shared belief has attracted extraordinary talent to the firm, including three additional partners: Greg Williams, Ian Anderson and Charlie Lozner.

In 2006, Williams launched media planning and buying services at Backbone, now the fastest-growing part of Backbone, representing half of the agency’s services and billing. The combination of paid and earned media services under one roof is unique to Backbone and has presented opportunities for their clients that wouldn’t otherwise have been possible. Having experienced its most significant growth in the last eight years, Backbone opened a second office in Denver in 2010 and has grown from 17 to over 60 employees.

As Backbone’s team and services have expanded, so have the depth and scope of work that Backbone produces. The frothy intersection of paid and earned media has resulted in projects ranging from an adventure-of-a-lifetime media trip to Alaskan glaciers with Chaco, a content-creation collaboration with NFL stars, Bleacher Report and YETI, to New Belgium Brewing’s founder telling her story on NPR’s *How I Built This* and a continent-spanning campaign to tell the stories of Canada’s ski destinations to American skiers. While Backbone’s roots were in traditional PR and core outdoor brands, the leadership team has evolved with the changing times and led the agency to embrace the gray area between earned media, paid media and content creation, as well as to represent the diverse brands relevant to today’s active lifestyle consumer, ranging from skis, jackets, and packrafts to coolers, beer, and destinations.

Someone wise once said "The best business development you can do is to do a great job with the work that's on your desk." To that end, Backbone believes their future lies in deepening their relationships



with their existing clients and innovating their suite of services for those loyal partners. The potential for this next level of innovation exists in the team that works at Backbone today, and the search for the Managing Director of Denver is designed to unlock Backbone's potential: to cultivate, grow and direct a talented team toward the creation of the next level of client engagement.

Mission

Backbone Media's mission is to amplify active lifestyle brands in order to expand their communities and cultivate lasting connections.

Values

Authenticity

Backbone partners with brands and people they respect and trust. They are the user group and they speak the language.

Advocacy

Backbone is founded in the outdoors. They advocate for the protection of our environment for future generations.

Growth

Through creativity and innovation, Backbone will evolve and elevate the level of services and value they deliver. They believe growth fuels opportunities for their employees and their partners.

Wellbeing

Backbone believes in a healthy, active workplace and puts a premium on the mythic work-life balance.

Strategic Integration

Backbone does its best work at the potent, dynamic intersection of paid and earned media, where the team amplifies earned media efforts through paid media tactics: Backbone's integrated approach across earned and paid media allows it to create extra PR leverage with paid media placements.

Earned Media

Backbone effectively helps brands communicate key messages that resonate, engage and compel action. The team works with hundreds of journalists and influencers every week, spanning a wide array of industries. The buzz Backbone generates for brands is proven to drive sales.

Paid Media

Backbone buys more than \$45 million in media annually for clients. Backbone's team members are experts at scaling a brand's message to engage targeted markets across all media (digital, social, print, OOH, video and TV), ensuring maximum efficacy and efficiency.



Public Relation Services

By leveraging relationships with a vast network of editors, publishers, writers, and producers, Backbone generates frequent and significant media coverage for its clients. The buzz generated for brands is proven to drive sales.

Backbone uses a qualitative measurement system based on the Barcelona Principles to measure PR performance over time. Backbone provides an analysis on target audiences reached, key messages that resonate, overall article tone, prominence of the brand and additional assets, such as images and videos.

Reports are delivered monthly and highlight notable placements, recap media relations, and provide data insights.

Key services provided:

- Brand Storytelling
- Branded Content
- Crisis Management
- Event Marketing
- Influencer Marketing
- Press Releases
- Product Placement
- Strategy
- Talent Management
- Tradeshaw Support
- Blogger Outreach

Paid Media Services

The team at Backbone Media has high-level expertise in building high-performance digital campaigns. They have worked with all types of media to build brand affinity and relevance, increase visitation and ensure ongoing consumer engagement. Having a well-balanced media mix allows Backbone to deliver clients' messages to consumers where they feel most comfortable. Backbone buys more than \$45 million in media annually for clients and are experts at scaling a brand's message to engage targeted markets across all media.

Backbone has 20-year relationships with hundreds of media outlets, from endemic outdoor, hunt and fish titles to expansion outlets, such as Condé Nast, Vice and the New York Times.

Backbone is a certified Google Partner and a Facebook Partner.

Key services provided:

- Budgeting and Competitive Analysis
- Digital Display
- Endemic Print and Digital



Facebook and Instagram Paid Social
Google, Bing, Yahoo PPC
Google Shopping
Linear and Advanced Television
Market Research
Media Mix Optimization
Negotiation and Media Buying
Out of Home
Remarketing
Reporting and Analytics
Strategy and Planning
Terrestrial, Satellite and Digital Radio
YouTube Video Campaigns

The Clients; Building industry-leading brands for 20 years

For two decades, Backbone Media has worked with leading outdoor gear, apparel, technology, food and beverage brands, as well as tourism destinations around the world. The collective expertise of the public relations team is deep, wide and proven. Backbone can help a brand build and leverage relationships, stimulate conversations, boost sales and advance a cause.

Just a handful of Backbone's clients include:

- Black Diamond
- YETI
- New Belgium Brewing
- Big Agnes
- Chaco
- Eddie Bauer
- Canadian Ski Council
- Klean Kanteen
- Outdoor Research
- Visit Telluride
- Smartwool
- Thule
- Sierra Club
- The Nature Conservancy
- Big City Mountaineers
- Wilderness Society

The Culture

Backbone Media's company culture is founded in fun and puts a premium on creativity and entrepreneurship. An agency of hard-charging, active and passionate marketers, they represent the



world's best active lifestyle brands, destinations and personalities. Each employee connects deeply with the brands Backbone represents and that authenticity drives results. As an action-oriented company the partners are all committed to growing the organization while maintaining their own client responsibilities. Backbone is, and will always be, entrepreneurially nimble and driven. If the idea of rolling up your sleeves and leaving them there is the only way you want to live professionally...then we want to speak to you.

The passion is infectious and goes beyond for-profit organizations. The Backbone team has partnered with non-profits as well, representing organizations such as POW (Protect Our Winters), The Wilderness Society and Big City Mountaineers. A passion and sense of responsibility to amplify conversations about climate change, wilderness and outdoor education keeps the Backbone team connected to the places they love and the consumers they speak to. If living and breathing in authenticity is something you yearn for, then we want to speak to you.

And while they take their jobs and client relationships seriously, this in an organization that knows the brands they represent and have fun in their DNA! Backbone understands the value of having fun and how that passion creates opportunities for effective consumer insights and connection. Backbone's culture is thriving and the agency is searching for a unique individual who can increase the tone and volume of their tribe throughout the Rocky Mountain region. If combining your passions with your profession is a no-brainer, then we want to speak to you.

The Denver office has its own distinctive culture. The team embodies all of the above values, while also embracing a sense of family that extends beyond typical companies. The culture is exemplary in that they support, encourage and genuinely like each other. It is a young group of professionals who dare you to try to put limits on their abilities. It's a level of talent and possibility that will make the true servant-leader smile with anticipation. The vibe is refreshing, authentic and inspiring. If you love to mentor, teach and lead, then we want to speak to you.

The Home; Denver, CO

Colorado has always been thought of as an outdoor enthusiast's haven for fun and adventure. Well-known outdoor, sustainable, adventure/destination, non-profit and food and beverage industry brands are based throughout the state in areas like Boulder, Fort Collins, Vail and Denver. Now more than ever before, Denver is becoming a hub for outdoor and active lifestyle brands to call home. Many well-known brands are already based in Denver and more are making the move to the unofficial "Outdoor Capital".

The Mile High City offers adventure in any direction you choose to travel. There is great nightlife, no shortage of options for dining to satisfy anyone's inner foodie, museums, public parks and opportunities for easy day trips out of the city. Denver has over 200 traditional and historic parks within city limits, not to mention Rocky Mountain National Park just an hour and a half from the city. There's also the ultimate experience of live music shows at the gorgeous Red Rocks Amphitheater. Most of all, you'll be able to take in the spectacle of the sun setting from the foot of the Rockies daily.



The Opportunity; Managing Director- Denver

The Managing Director for Backbone Media Denver is a role that has not existed previously. We are searching for a leader who can guide, teach and amplify the efforts of a dedicated group of professionals who hunger for mentorship. You will have established yourself as an expert in paid and earned media and will have embraced integrated marketing long ago. You'll understand how to attract, develop and retain extraordinary talent while embracing and then amplifying a bold vision for the office and region. As the Denver office and region becomes more important to the overall growth strategy of Backbone Media, the Managing Director will play the key role in communication with the partners and team in Carbondale. Much like Backbone is the connective tissue for their clients, you will be the connective tissue for the offices and partners alike.

In return you'll have the opportunity to mold and shape the future of the Denver office, and in many ways provide the blueprint for the future growth of Backbone Media.

Principle Duties and Responsibilities:

- Serve as the leading internal and external “face” of the Denver office in the region and to the Carbondale HQ
- Visibly and actively support an entrepreneurial, service-driven culture focused on creating tools and processes that support and engage the existing team
- Contribute thought leadership, content and product development to drive incremental growth and new business opportunities
- In collaboration with the partners, provide visionary leadership and drive the strategy for the Denver location, including new sector development
- Provide senior client counsel for current and prospective clients as needed
- Generate visibility for Backbone Media in the marketplace to reach key prospects, influencers and talent
- Actively teach, mentor and guide a strong team of highly dedicated professionals
- Stay current on new developments in the disciplines of PR, media and integrated services to create innovations within our selected industries
- Grow and retain talent through traditional talent management tools such as performance management, coaching and succession planning
- Contribute to and create training and career development programs designed to deepen the expertise of team members, particularly helping to develop the next generation of leaders at Backbone Media
- Lead the administrative function for the Denver office and create effective simple reporting tools to connect to the operations team at the Carbondale HQ



- Support and create a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture

Qualifications:

- Proven senior leader and innovator with at least 10 years of integrated marketing/communications expertise
- Proven manager of managers with a grounded, thoughtful approach
- A collaborative, charismatic and inspiring leadership style
- Proven thought leader and innovator within an integrated pr/media discipline
- Client-side experience a plus
- Action-oriented and a proven track-record of translating innovative ideas into actionable programs
- Strong awareness of PR, marketing and business, economic, political and social trends
- Digital capability and success operating successfully in a disrupted retail environment

For additional information, please contact Adam Forest or Deb Mason at:

THE FOREST GROUP
6181 Clark Mountain Road
Lotus, CA 95651
(530) 344-0100

adam@theforestgroup.com | deb@theforestgroup.com

All inquiries will be held in strict confidence.

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