

Director of Commercial Enterprises

Job description

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Background

For over a century the Whitechapel Gallery has premiered world-class artists from modern masters such as Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Frida Kahlo to contemporaries such as Sophie Calle, Lucian Freud, Gilbert & George and Mark Wallinger.

With beautiful galleries, exhibitions, artist commissions, collection displays, historic archives, education resources, inspiring art courses, dining room and bookshop, the Gallery is open all year round, so there is always something free to see.

The Gallery is a touchstone for contemporary art internationally, plays a central role in London's cultural landscape and is pivotal to the continued growth of the world's most vibrant contemporary art quarter.

Role

The Director of Commercial Enterprises has responsibility to strategically maximize commercial income generation opportunities arising from the Whitechapel Gallery's physical assets, as well as its intellectual property and brand.

These currently include (but are not limited to) production and distribution of the Gallery's commercial products, including artists' editions, publications and merchandise. The Director of Commercial Enterprises also manages the onsite catering and retail contracts, and has oversight of venue hires and the programme of professional development courses.

The Director of Commercial Enterprises line manages the Head of Editions and the Head of Publications, and will potentially organize and manage other freelance and ad hoc staff as necessary.

The activities managed by the Director of Commercial Enterprises fall within the remit of Whitechapel Ventures Ltd, the Gallery's commercial trading subsidiary, and all profits are donated as unrestricted funding in support of the Whitechapel Gallery's charitable mission and objectives.

Accountability

The Director of Commercial Enterprises is accountable to the Managing Director, and to the Board of Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited.

Duties and Responsibilities

Overview

In collaboration with the Managing Director and Director, and under the guidance of the Board of Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, the Director of Commercial Enterprises will develop strategy and policy to grow commercial income streams and maximize the commercial return of the Gallery's assets. Through this they will make a significant contribution to the Gallery's overall long-term financial sustainability.

Working with the Managing Director and Director they will ensure that all commercial activity is in line with and supports the mission and vision of the Whitechapel Gallery.

As part of the senior management team, they will contribute to policy development and the wider strategic management of the organization, including adherence to policy initiatives and standards set by the Gallery's principle funder, Arts Council England.

Commercial income generation and development

Manage and strategically develop existing commercial activities:

- Take a strategic financial lead on developing the Gallery's e-commerce business
- Take a strategic financial lead on the artists' editions business to ensure that an appropriate and commercially viable programme is delivered in line with the Gallery's objectives
- Take a strategic financial lead on in-house publishing, ensuring that an appropriate and commercially viable publishing programme is delivered in line with the Gallery's objectives
- Manage the franchise contract for the on-site catering provision, working with the contractor to maintain high standards of service, develop promotional initiatives, maximize profit share and ensure adherence to contract terms; managing a re-tendering process when applicable
- Manage the book shop franchise contract, oversee Gallery publication supplies, bought-in merchandise ranges and ensure adherence to contract terms; managing a re-tendering process when applicable

- Lead on the development and production of a commercially viable merchandise range for sale in the book shop and online
- Strategically develop the programme of annual sales activities and events in the Gallery, at external events and online
- Maintain strategic oversight of the venue hire business and create opportunities as public health regulations permit, organizing resources to ensure high-quality delivery and event profitability
- Assess options for optimum delivery of professional development courses using internal and cross-departmental resources

Pursue, develop and strategically manage new commercial activities:

- Identify opportunities to maximize on the Gallery's assets and brand, in line with the organizational mission and objectives
- Pitch new income generating activities to the Director and Managing Director with detailed research and assessments of commercial viability, including cost analyses and income forecasts, and implement as agreed

Strategic implementation and monitoring

- Work with the Marketing team to effectively and appropriately promote and sell commercial products and services through a range of communications channels to established customers and target markets and consumers
- Work with the Director of Communications to oversee the commercial aspects of brand management, development and marketing
- Strategize to convert Gallery visitor attendance to maximum spend
- Work with the Managing Director to agree business plans and set targets, in the context of the Gallery's annual budgets and financial strategy
- Liaise monthly with the Managing Director to review and monitor trading performance against targets
- Report quarterly to the Ventures Board on performance and targets
- Produce evaluation and feasibility reports as required

- Proactively identify improvements to processes and systems to increase efficiency and profitability
- Maintain an up-to-date awareness of industry developments and the wider commercial landscape, including external opportunities to cross-sell and promote the Gallery's services and products, and attend relevant events such as industry conferences and conventions

Line management

Oversee the work of the Head of Editions, which includes but is not limited to:

- Development, production and delivery of the Gallery's programme of artists' editions
- Managing and developing on-line and in-house sales opportunities, mail order and stock management
- Strategic development and delivery of the Gallery's presence at UK and international Art Fairs
- Supporting the Head of Editions in their management of a departmental team of two

Oversee the work of the Head of Publications, which includes but is not limited to:

- Development, production and delivery of the Documents of Contemporary Art publication series, exhibition catalogues (in collaboration with the exhibitions department) and ad hoc publications
- Contract negotiation with co-publishers
- Managing national and international distribution contracts
- Stock management, movements & reprints; including exhibition catalogues
- Identifying and managing additional external sales opportunities

To manage venue hires activity as public health regulations permit, through utilizing internal staff resources or potentially the future appointment of an Events Manager, whose work will include but not be limited to:

- Managing venue hire clients, developing new and existing business
- Negotiating the commercial hire of spaces alongside the Gallery's public programming and in line with the venue hires policy
- Assist in the delivery of events in collaboration with Operations and Visitor Services teams

General staff management:

- Mentoring and pastoral care of Ventures staff; supporting continuous personal and professional development
- Schedule and oversee departmental and one-to-one meetings

- Interview for new personnel and conduct performance reviews in line with organisational guidelines, and with HR deal with any other personnel matters arising
- Actively foster and contribute to a positive working environment

Personal Specification

Essential

- A broad understanding of the unique challenges inherent in the delivery of a successful commercial operation within a not-for-profit organisation, where the aims of the organisation must be sensitively upheld and strengthened through all offerings and revenue streams
- A familiarity with, and enthusiasm for, the arts sector and in particular the visual arts
- A proven track record in sales and marketing or other commercial activity with specific profit and loss responsibility
- Proven budget management skills
- Knowledge of e-commerce
- Strong supplier management and negotiation skills
- A strong entrepreneurial spirit and appetite
- Demonstrable experience of managing and developing a team
- Strong communication skills to inspire and inform
- The integrity, diplomacy and professional skills to work effectively on cross-team initiatives

Desirable

- Commercial experience within the Museums, galleries, heritage or culture sector
- Understanding of the contemporary art market
- An understanding of publishing
- Knowledge of retail merchandise production
- Contract management experience

Conditions of Work

- Permanent contract
- Hours of work: 9.30am – 5.45pm, plus some occasional weekend and evening work, which will be compensated by time off in lieu. Part-time, flexible, and job share working arrangements will be considered around a minimum total of 4 days per week.
- Starting salary: £45,000 full time equivalent
- Probation period: 6 months
- The period of notice is 3 months in writing on either side, 3 weeks during the probation period

In addition, the benefits you are eligible to receive are, subject to availability:

- 25 days annual holiday (pro rata for part-time staff)
- You will be eligible to participate in the group personal pension scheme, with an employer contribution of 5% of your gross salary
- £200 annual travel grant (pro rata equivalent for part time staff)
- Discount from Whitechapel Gallery bookshop
- Discount from the Whitechapel Gallery Townsend Restaurant
- Discounts on editions (one per edition) and publications
- Training opportunities
- Access to Employee Assistance Programme