

# **Job description: Venue Hire & Event Planning Manager**

**Introduction and context**

Bishopsgate Institute is the delivery arm of the Bishopsgate Foundation, founded in 1894 for “the promotion of the education of the public”. We are a small, independent charity with our own extraordinary premises at the crossroads of the City, Spitalfields and the East End.

The charity is financially independent, relying on generating income from its venue hire activity, alongside rental income from its endowment. In addition to managing the venue hire side of our business, this role manages the planning and delivery of all activity in the building, both commercial hires and charitable programme.

This role reports to the Head of Business Delivery and leads a team of three.

You will require skills in motivating, supporting and leading a team to plan successful events from concept to execution, sell venue spaces and packages, close deals and proactively source and secure new venue hire business.

Venue hire income is vitally important to help us achieve our charitable objectives. The pandemic lockdowns have hit us hard, as they have everyone, and our financial sustainability relies on venue hire income to a greater extent now than previously. However, this is not your typical sales job (there is no commission structure). Venue hire activity also needs to work alongside our artistic programme, and the successful applicant will be able to balance the need to secure new business and achieve targets alongside ensuring the integrity and values of the programme are realised. We have a policy on the kinds of commercial hire we can accept, and those we cannot, and this role is required to uphold it.

The Venue Hire and Events Planning team is focussing on diversifying the venue hire income streams and increasing revenue as traditional clients from such sectors as exams and conferencing have fallen away since the pandemic.

This diversification has so far included location filming, virtual conferences and awards ceremonies, in addition to exploring how to provide memorable bespoke celebrations. We have been able to build our rehearsal offer during the past year, securing new business with West End theatre productions and leading London orchestras.

This successful candidate will join us at an exciting moment for the Institute with opportunities to explore and attract new business and build new client relationships, to manage an exciting range of cultural events and to develop the venue as a unique and vibrant event space. The Board will sign off a new strategic plan and business model in the autumn of 2022, a process to which the Venue Hire & Event Planning Manager will contribute directly.

Date of last review: May 2022

Job Title: Venue Hire & Event Planning Manager

Grade: Manager

Salary: Circa £32k

Hours: 35 hours over 7 days - the role requires you to be available to work any day or evening over the 7 day period, in line with business needs.

Reporting to: Head of Business Delivery

Line manages: Venue Hire & Event Planners (2)

Venue Hire and Event Planning Assistant

Peers: Programme Manager

Special Collections & Archives Manager

Interpretation Manager

Library & Digital Archives Manager

HR & Administration Manager

Operations Manager

Buildings Manager

Campaigns Manager

Budget holder: Yes

Probation: 6 months

**Role purpose and key objectives:**

To develop and manage the venue hire and event planning elements of our business to achieve or exceed agreed income generation targets that are sustainable.

To manage the team that manages both commercial (venue hire) and charitable programme event planning, to deliver excellent events that generate positive feedback and repeat business through excellent customer service.

To source, recommend and secure appropriate new venue hire business respecting the Institute’s core purpose and reputation, whilst ensuring that current and long-standing clients and audiences remain engaged.

Success will include maximising occupancy of hire spaces to generate income outside times required for the Institute’s own programme and developing new business where appropriate. All commercial hires must conform to the Institute’s policy and must not conflict with the charitable aims of the Institute.

The post holder will be accountable for achievement of annual venue hire targets and responsible for proposing, managing and reporting on those specific budget lines.

The post holder will also ensure the excellent planning of the Institute’s own events and programme through cross-Institute working.

**Principal duties, tasks and responsibilities**

**Strategy**

* Directed by the senior team, to contribute to the development of, and to implement, an appropriate and organisation-wide venue hire business development strategy to achieve business plan objectives, increase income and build a sustainable annual surplus without compromising the ethos or independence of the charity
* To support the Head of Business Delivery by contributing to the development of the new strategy and financial model to achieve a sustainable break-even, including through participation in strategy days and meetings with trustees, when required
* To report on progress of implementing the strategy and KPIs, reviewing the success of pilot initiatives to inform further development of the strategy and plan.
* To advise the senior team on options, opportunities and threats as well as market comparisons and sector best practice, where relevant
* Build upon the research and planning around bespoke celebrations, working collaboratively across departments on the roll out of any new offers

**Venue hire management**

* Achieve or exceed the agreed venue hire income for the year (currently circa £400k/ pre-pandemic 600k) through appropriate bookings and well-negotiated supplier contracts (such as catering and agency referrals)
* Monitor occupancy levels to agreed parameters, and maximise hire occupancy of agreed spaces outside times when required for the Institute’s own programme, ensuring bookings are appropriate to our policy, the facilities and to the Institute’s ethos
* Ensure a unique, high-quality venue hire experience for each client in line with Bishopsgate Institute’s brand
* By managing the Venue Hire & Event Planners and the Venue Hire & Event Planning Assistant, and in collaboration with the Duty Managers, ensure venue hire events are planned efficiently on time and to budget by ensuring detailed event briefs and schedules are prepared, contracts issued and signed, staffing needs agreed and scheduled and all relevant staff briefed
* Manage the sales and booking of external events, ensuring proactive follow-up with potential clients, meeting with clients, account handling and relationship management (including ensuring appropriate team member attendance at key events)
* Escalation point for Venue Hire & Event Planners if guidance required on whether a hire enquiry can be accommodated, or discounts offered, outside of predetermined parameters (as agreed with the Senior Team / Head of Business Delivery)
* Relationship management with external suppliers for events, such as caterers, AV technicians, security etc
* Ensure prompt contracting, invoicing, receipt of deposits and payment of invoices, with no booking going ahead if contractual payment has not been received by agreed date
* With the Campaigns team, plan and implement an agreed sales and marketing strategy for the venue hire function, working to clear targets and considering alternative strategies and markets (this includes recommendations for the Hire section of the Institute’s website)
* Ensure all enquiries receive a prompt and professional response, and ensure all enquiries are logged and tracked
* Analyse types and sources of enquiry and produce reports and recommendations to the senior team (including information on those enquiries we could not accommodate)

**Programme delivery**

* Managing the Venue Hire & Event Planners and Assistant and in collaboration with the Duty Managers, ensure the Bishopsgate Institute programme (events including, but not limited to, courses, library events, rehearsals, concerts, partner events and social dances) is planned efficiently on time, to budget and to the highest standard by ensuring detailed event briefs and schedules are prepared and shared, staffing needs agreed and scheduled, and all relevant staff briefed
* Managing the Venue Hire & Event Planners and Assistant, and in collaboration with the Duty Managers, ensuring any and all catering needs for events (whether venue hire or the Institute’s own programme) are planned and booked, and appropriate recharges to external clients are invoiced
* Relationship management, selection of (where applicable) and co-ordination of suppliers for events, such as caterers and technical staff
* In collaboration with the Programme Manager and Campaigns team, ensure the programme is uploaded to the room scheduling system (Rendezvous), box office system (Spektrix) and website to agreed deadlines, the marketing strategy agreed and implemented, sales monitored, and impact of pilot projects evaluated

**Business development**

* Working with Campaigns, to increase take-up of existing venue hire offer online and offline to achieve agreed targets (this will include identifying and recommending new and innovative ways to take our offer to market)
* Proactively identify appropriate new opportunities for appropriate venue hire income generation and make recommendations to the senior team – for example, the launch of weddings, partnerships and celebrations packages.
* Implement, monitor and evaluate agreed new business opportunities to achieve targets
* Make recommendations for competitive, market-appropriate pricing strategies across the venue hire offer, including potential packages (including working with the Interpretation Manager on archive pop-ups and exhibitions)

**Budget management, reporting and analysis**

* Achieve or exceed agreed venue hire income and ensure costs are controlled, within their delegated budget management responsibility, which includes monitoring and reporting on performance against KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)
* Work with the Assistant Accountant to ensure hire payments are correctly recorded in Rendezvous and match Sage accounts, and an end of monthly review of budget is undertaken to ensure all transactions are coded correctly.
* Contribute to the setting of venue hire budgets through analysis, recommendations, and scoped proposals
* Analyse venue hire figures, interpret trends and forecast future hire volumes in order to achieve increased income targets
* Ensure databases are managed, including enquiries log, sales records and pipeline development, and new information processed in an effective manner
* Ensure the annual PRS return is completed and ensure PRS related admin is completed in conjunction with the programming team

**General requirements of the role:**

* Proactively collaborate with all staff to ensure the best possible levels of seamless service and quality to our customers
* Contribute to an improved level of organisational engagement through positive role modelling, communication and behaviour at all times
* Champion and epitomise the Institute’s core competency behaviours
* Attend relevant training in order to fulfill the requirements of the job and undergo supervision and annual reviews
* Comply with and implement all organisational policies and procedures as required
* Work flexibly and responsibly to effectively manage workload and ensure the provision of a 7-day-per-week service to the public as required
* Dress and present yourself appropriately as the professional needs of the Institute require

This job description covers the current range of duties and will be reviewed from time to time. It is the Institute’s aim to reach agreement on changes, but if agreement is not possible, the Institute reserves the right to change this job description.

**Person specification: Venue Hire and Event Planning Manager**

* 1. A strong track record of success increasing sustainable venue hire income and business within a venue-based cultural charity, thereby balancing reputation, ethos and mission with sales and entrepreneurship
  2. A passion for the mission and ethos of the Institute and its work, and the ability to advocate for that within and beyond the Institute.
  3. Demonstrable understanding of the relevant venue hire business landscape within London
  4. A holistic approach to business development, with demonstrable skill in thinking creatively to develop appropriate strategies and plans to achieve agreed targets
  5. Demonstrable skill in closing a deal and negotiation to achieve agreed objectives, and the ability to coach others to do so
  6. An excellent understanding of and commitment to the Institute’s charitable mission, ethos and programme, in order to develop appropriate business development recommendations
  7. Demonstrable skill in matching pitches and proposals for business to the specifics of the physical infrastructure of the venue and its delivery capacity, as well as its policy
  8. Excellent financial management skills, including formulating and monitoring budgets and implementing budgetary control procedures
  9. Excellent people and performance management skills and a demonstrable commitment to professional and personal development
  10. Excellent research, analysis, presentation and reporting skills
  11. First class written and verbal communication skills in English and a proactive approach to internal communication. Please note that correct grammar and spelling are extremely important to us.
  12. Demonstrably collegiate and collaborative approach to working with internal and external partners and clients
  13. Demonstrably strong event planning, production and coordination skills
  14. Demonstrable skill in planning workload efficiently, with a thorough and meticulous approach

**Bishopsgate Institute – Competency Framework**

At Bishopsgate Institute we use a competency-based approach to staff recruitment, performance review and development. The Framework underpins the culture of the organisation and adds to what we do to enable us to reach our potential both as individuals and as an organisation.

The selection process we use is designed to test each applicant’s skills, expertise, knowledge and their ability to demonstrate how they meet the competency framework.

All competencies apply to **all** roles:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance** | **Insight** | **Engagement & Inspiring Others** |
| * Accountability * Delivering Performance * Alignment & Planning * Learning & Change | * Breadth of Perspective * Making Effective Judgements * Applying Specialist Knowledge * Customer & Audience Awareness | * Working Collaboratively * Communicating & Influencing * Empowering Leadership |

There are different levels within each that apply to each grade or level of role in the organisation:

* Assistants, Administrators, Officers – *all non-management level staff.*
* Line Managers/ Specialists – *all staff that line manage one or more members of staff or are defined in their job role as a ‘Specialist’*.
* Senior Managers/Specialists – *the Chief Executive, Heads and Senior Specialists*.

The competencies relate to certain key abilities that we should be able to demonstrate in the way we carry out our jobs. While objectives are concerned with ***what*** we achieve in terms of tangible results or ‘outputs’ and ‘outcomes’, these competencies look more at ***how*** we carry out our work - for example how much initiative we demonstrate; how well we work with others; how good our communication skills are; how well we organise our work.

Most of the core competencies could relate to a person doing any job of a comparable level/grade, regardless of the particular functional or technical expertise and skill that is required.

Although no-one is expected to demonstrate the competencies that do not apply to their job, staff will need to think laterally and creatively about whether they apply. For example, if your role is to support other staff in the organisation, you may not feel that you directly support the public. However, if you think hard enough you will likely be able to see that by supporting your colleagues in other departments you indirectly do support the public and what you do in that regard is very important.