



Job Description: Operations & Commercial Lead

Job Title:

Operations & Commercial Lead

Grade

Grade 1

Reporting to:

Chief Executive Officer

Location:

Dudley Canal & Caverns

Contract Type:

Full-time, Permanent

Brief Job Description

The Operations & Commercial Lead is a senior management role responsible for the strategic and day-to-day oversight of all operational and commercial functions at the Trust. This newly amalgamated role ensures joined-up thinking across operations, safety, maintenance, and commercial delivery, embedding a “Safety First” culture while driving sustainable revenue generation and profitability.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership & Strategic Oversight

- Provide senior leadership across all operational and commercial areas of the Trust.
- Work collaboratively with the Creative & Programming Lead to ensure programmes are deliverable, safe, and commercially viable.
- Lead the development and implementation of long-term operational plans, including maintenance and infrastructure strategies.

- Develop the long term strategic plans to grow our catering and retail offer

Safety & Compliance

- Act as the Trust's Lead Safety Officer, ensuring full compliance across boats, mines, tunnels, buildings, and catering (Food Safety)
- Maintain strong strategic relationships with regulatory bodies including MCA, HSE, and FCA, that foster long term improvements that not only satisfy immediate requirements but future protections
- Identify and mitigate key risks, providing strategic safety insight to the CEO and Board.
- Obtain and maintain a Boat Master Licence to support operational resilience and safety leadership.
- Implement and maintain the Maintenance & Safety System, providing full auditability & dashboard capability.

Operations Management

- Oversee site maintenance, boat operations and catering infrastructure to maximise visitor capacity and experience.
- Line manage the Maintenance Coordinator and Boat Operations Coordinator, ensuring effective delivery and compliance, against the Operational strategy and delivery plan
- Coordinate all operational requirements to support programme delivery and site functionality.
- Ensure all operational activities meet legal, safety, and quality standards.

Commercial Leadership

- Set and lead the Trust's commercial proposition, ensuring all activities — including catering, retail, events, and visitor experiences — are designed to be profitable and sustainable.
- Develop and implement commercial strategies that align with the Trust's mission while generating revenue through food, drink, retail, and other propositions.
- Use data to provide scrutiny and commercial insight into programme planning to ensure financial sustainability and return on investment.
- Monitor performance across commercial areas, using data and insight to drive continuous improvement and profitability – with focus on gross profit, margins and control of overheads

Team & Culture

- Lead and inspire cross-functional teams, fostering a culture of collaboration, accountability, and continuous improvement.
- Champion a "Safety First" culture across all departments.
- Support staff development and performance management within operational and commercial teams.

Person Specification

Essential Skills & Experience

- Proven & demonstrable senior leadership experience in Operations and Commercial management.
- Strong understanding of safety and compliance in complex environments (e.g. heritage, maritime, catering).
- Significant and demonstrable experience in setting and delivering profitable commercial strategies.
- Excellent stakeholder management, including regulatory bodies.
- Ability to lead cross-functional teams and drive organisational change.
- Proven experience in developing commercial strategies and project management.

Desirable

- Experience in heritage, visitor attractions, or cultural organisations.
- Knowledge of MCA, HSE, and FCA regulations.
- Familiarity with programme delivery in creative or cultural settings.

Key Attributes

- Strategic thinker with a hands-on approach.
- Natural leader who champions a strong positive working culture
- Committed to safety, sustainability, and excellence.
- Collaborative, transparent, and commercially astute.
- Passionate about the Trust's mission and public impact.
- Commercially minded but not at the cost of customer experience, safety or operational requirements

Key Stakeholders

- Act as the primary contact for operational and safety-related matters with external stakeholders including:
 - Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)
 - Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
 - Food Standards Agency (FSA)
 - Local Authorities and Council Departments
 - Suppliers and Contractors
 - Creative and Programming Partners
- Represent the Trust in strategic forums and regulatory inspections.

Direct Reports

- Maintenance Coordinator
- Boat Operations Coordinator
- Catering Team

- Retail Team
- Cleaning Team

Budget Responsibility

Responsible for all operational & commercial budgets, including staffing, materials, and project delivery. Contributes to funding bids and reporting. Directly responsible for all revenue streams at the Trust with key focus on revenue, gross profit and margins.