

**Head of Visitor and Friends Experience**  
**Public Engagement Department**  
**Up to £50,000 plus attractive benefits**

The Royal Academy of Arts is one of the UK's foremost arts institutions, famous for our world-class exhibitions including *The Real Van Gogh*, *David Hockney: A Bigger Picture* and *Sensing Spaces: Architecture Reimagined*. It is a particularly exciting time in our history. As we approach our 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018, we are embarking upon a series of major investments that will transform our physical and digital infrastructure and our public offer. An ambitious 'Masterplan' by David Chipperfield RA will redevelop our 2.5 acre campus in Mayfair, uniting our two buildings and providing refurbished galleries, a state-of-the-art auditorium, a new learning centre and a dedicated Collections gallery in Burlington Gardens, and enabling greater public visibility of the art school at the heart of the Academy.

As an independent institution, our success relies heavily upon attracting and welcoming large numbers of visitors, in particular the 95,000 Friends of the Royal Academy, and ensuring that they experience the highest standards of customer service at every step. We now have a unique and brand new opportunity for a Head of Visitor and Friends Experience to lead the transformation of our visitor experience and the evolution of our key customer-facing teams.

You will have extensive previous experience of achieving and maintaining excellence in customer service, ideally at a leading visitor attraction. You will be adept at devising and delivering appropriate training and feedback to front-of-house teams, ensuring a customer-oriented ethos at all times, and maximising opportunities to convert visitors to members and to cross-sell retail and catering offers. You will be commercially minded, with strong sales and budget management experience and an ability to spot new opportunities to fuel our success. An excellent communicator and leader – you will be articulate and friendly, a quick thinker, able to inspire, influence and build a rapport with a diverse range of people. You must be able to demonstrate a genuine interest and knowledge of the visual arts and enthusiasm for the work and objectives of the Royal Academy of Arts.

Candidates must complete an application form to be considered for this position. You will find our application form and further details about this position in the **How to Apply** section of the Careers page on our website <http://www.royalacademy.org.uk/careers>.

**Closing date for applications: 31 July 2014**  
**Interviews to be held: 7 & 8 August 2014**

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Job title:** Head of Visitor and Friends Experience

**Department:** Public Engagement

**Reporting to:** Director of Public Engagement

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### **MAIN OBJECTIVE**

The Head of Visitor and Friends Experience will lead and motivate key customer-facing teams to achieve the following key objectives:

- Ensure all visitors to the RA experience excellence in customer service at all times
- Deliver against a range of key business targets including membership conversion and retention, retail conversion, data capture, visitor and Friends satisfaction metrics including net promoter score

### **MAIN DUTIES**

#### **Strategy**

- Develop and implement best in class visitor experience strategy and team structure, ensure the best possible experience for visitors and Friends of the Royal Academy and delivering enhanced focus on continuous improvement
- Work closely with a range of departments (marketing, communications, development, retail, catering etc.) to deliver excellence at each stage of the customer journey pre-, during and post-visit
- Collaborate with the Insight team on ongoing visitor and Friends research and effective implementation of initiatives arising from the research

#### **Operations**

- Demonstrate excellence in customer care, leading by example, with high visibility front of house
- Oversee effective running of the box office, ticketing, visitor services and customer-facing Friends membership functions
- Oversee delivery of rotas and absence management reporting
- Champion active engagement with visitors increasing their knowledge of the Royal Academy's mission, activities and offer
- Manage programme of weekly host talks and tours for visitors
- Identify and develop commercial opportunities, bringing an enterprising flair to suggestions for income generating ideas and collaborations
- Lead morning team meetings and ensure team are clearly briefed daily on current activities
- Lead end of day briefing to staff, detailing performance against targets
- Manage departmental budget
- Take prompt and appropriate action to resolve any issues that have been escalated

- Support the 'Red Collar' security officers to deal with any emergencies, security incidents or accidents that may arise, and report as necessary.
- Diffuse complaints in person and respond appropriately in writing to written complaints
- Oversee the handing and reporting of all visitor feedback, ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place and feedback is analysed and acted upon to improve the visitor experience

### **Team management**

- Introduce selection process appropriate to identify hosts with exceptional customer service skills, strong communicators who build rapport and possess strong sales skills
- With assistance from HR colleagues, design comprehensive training strategy and programmes for staff, including detailed induction, regular sales and customer service training, RA specific knowledge and information training.
- Coach individuals and ensure their ongoing professional development
- Lead on annual appraisals for the team, and ongoing informal performance feedback

### **General duties**

- Ensure knowledge of Royal Academy and its activities is completely up to date at all times, including current and future exhibitions, events, educational activities and history
- Be an ambassador for the Royal Academy at all times, sharing enthusiasm with visitors
- Ensure safety of visitors and other staff in accordance with policies and procedures
- Report/ensure cleanliness of immediate working area to improve visitor experience and decrease health and safety risk
- Adopt a flexible attitude to undertaking any other duty that may reasonably be allocated by the Director of Public Engagement or other senior manager.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

- Previous and substantial experience of providing a high standard of customer service and hospitality, ideally gained in a visitor attraction venue or similar
- Commercially minded, with strong sales skills, able to up and cross sell and drive revenues
- Evidence of strong leadership skills: able to manage and inspire a large team of permanent front of house staff and draw upon a pool of casual staff during busy exhibitions
- Traffic management of agile work force across all areas of front of house; introduce tight rota management to ensure optimum use of work force
- Previous experience of designing and delivering high quality customer service and sales training, preferably including experience of growing membership loyalty
- Highly developed communication skills: friendly and welcoming, patient, tactful, confident manner, good listener, quick thinker, able to relate to many different/diverse people, when English may not be their first language
- Enthusiasm for working with the public and providing an excellent visitor experience
- Excellent command of English, written and oral communications skills: ability to answer visitor enquiries to a high standard in person and on the telephone
- Able to persuade and influence across all departments
- Ability and willingness to take a fresh, imaginative approach to frontline work –introducing new ways of working
- Experience of successfully managing a team of people through a period of change
- Experienced in handling complaints with empathy, ease and authority
- Strong organisational and time management abilities
- Target driven: evidence of managing a team to achieve or exceed targets
- Methodical with an 'eye for detail' for information storage and retrieval, record keeping, etc.
- Experience of effective budget management
- Computer literate with excellent knowledge of Microsoft Office. Strong database knowledge and experience of using a ticketing system is preferred.
- Good team-player: willingness to cover duties at short notice to ensure optimal customer service
- Excellent knowledge of Health and Safety regulations and their application
- An interest in and knowledge of visual arts and how it influences the world, and enthusiasm for work and objectives of the Royal Academy
- Second language would be an advantage