

STORYHOUSE

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incredible.

Operations
Director
Recruitment
Pack

Antigone, 2021, Mark
McNulty



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Introduction from the CEO

Thank you for considering applying to join Storyhouse as our new Operations Director.

This is your chance as an experienced operational lead to shape our strategy and take responsibility for our commercial and visitor experience. We are looking for someone who can design and deliver an effective and efficient operation that meets the needs of our many different customers. Key areas of responsibility will include our food and beverage operation and building and facilities management, so you will need a track record in managing income and expenditure budgets to maximise profitability, and experience in managing large numbers of frontline staff.

I am very excited by the opportunity to bring in new, specialist operational expertise to the senior team here. Storyhouse is still a young organisation, less than eight years old, and there is still so much potential to realise. As Operations Director you will be central in determining how we use our facilities and resources, streamlining event delivery to drive growth, maximise capacity and improve visitor experience. A vital part of the role will involve driving income generation across our food and beverage operation, retail and events which underpins our ability to make an impact as a major charity for people throughout Chester, the wider borough and further afield.

We already enjoy more than 800,000 visits per year, and we are ambitious to grow this number. We are committed to diversifying our audiences to reach wider cohorts, ensuring they are aware and can engage with events and activities relevant to them and their lives, and enjoy access to the best in cultural experiences.

In this role, you will play a major part in the future of this highly-regarded organisation at a pivotal time for arts and cultural charities across the UK. As a member of the senior leadership team, you will have exposure and influence on all aspects of our operation, strategic planning, finances and governance.

I look forward to receiving your application.





Chester Disability Pride Parade, 2023, Mark McNulty

Our Story

You can find a bit about who we are on our [website](#), discover more about our innovative home and how it came to be in [this case study](#) by Arts Council England, or read about our renowned library in this [blog](#) by the DCMS's library team.

Above all, Storyhouse is a creative community. As a diverse cultural organisation, our home is one of the country's most successful cultural buildings housing a cinema, theatres and a library. Last year we welcomed 800,000+ people through our doors. We are both a community hub and combined arts producer.

Our library attracts international recognition, known for its seamless integration, and boasts the longest opening hours of any UK public library.

In 2023-24, we supported 5,768 young people to connect and create, ran 180 free rhyme-time sessions, created 423 magical performances indoors and outdoors, sold 108,298 theatre tickets and hosted a total of 1,618 cinema screenings.

Visits are roughly split into thirds between event attendances, library users, and wider participation. We enjoyed the support of over 14k volunteer hours and 1,328 different individuals were involved in making and supporting our work.

Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre, which we founded in 2010, is the UK's largest regional open-air theatre, welcoming over 25,000 people every summer.



This House is Your House

We've become a vital part of the region's cultural landscape and a place of safety and support for our communities - especially for young people, giving them a space where they can reimagine their place in the world.

Over 40 community groups use us as a base for creative activity each month, including LGBTQIA+ and disability groups, refugee integration activities, mental health support sessions, and groups combatting social exclusion by age.

We work extensively with young people and provide a range of different programmes, from youth theatre and our young company, to young leaders, young programmers, and our many schools and education programmes. Throughout our work we collaborate with local partners throughout to ensure we are reaching the people that would usually have the least opportunity to participate.

Across everything we do, we work to give people the power to build their own creative communities through inspiring stories and shared creative experiences: [this house is your house](#).

As we blend theatre, library, restaurant and cinema services, we share inspiring stories and stage creative events which empower people to nurture their creativity and bring together communities. Through our work, we hope to build a more connected, inclusive and creative community network.

The more open we are to the true and rich diversity of our communities, the more vividly we fulfil our purpose. More engagement from more of our communities will make more of Storyhouse.

We are committed to creating a team which is representative of our communities and to bringing together those with a variety of skills and experiences to help shape what we do and how we work.



A Midsummer Night's Dream, 2023, Mark McNulty

Our Strategy...

Storyhouse is about to enter an exciting new phase in our evolution as we look to develop our programmes, based on a new strategic plan, to deliver world class arts and meet community needs.

Our Vision:

Here at Storyhouse, culture is owned by everyone.

Our Mission:

We work every day to be a creative home for our communities.

Our Values:

LISTEN CLOSELY.

True empathy takes effort. So we work hard to understand different points of view.

LOOK AROUND.

Opportunities can be spotted by anyone, anywhere, at anytime. So we always have our eyes, ears and minds wide open.

SPEAK UP.

Not everyone's stories have been told. So we use our voices to amplify those that haven't been heard.

STAND UP.

Debate and discussion make things better for us all. So we don't shy away from a challenge.

REACH OUT.

Diverse perspectives solve the hardest problems and make the best decisions. So we seek them out, and invite them in.



A Midsummer Night's Dream, 2023,
Mark McNulty

A woman with her hair in a ponytail, wearing a dark long-sleeved top and a white utility vest, is seated on a chair on a stage. She is looking down and to her left, with her right arm raised and hand open, palm facing forward. The background is dark, suggesting a stage setting.

Our Resources

Storyhouse is a medium-sized charity with approximately 140 staff and a gross revenue of over £7 million per year. The charity is financially stable, with a number of steady revenue streams, including a 30-year lease and contract for services with the local authority (Cheshire West and Chester) and NPO funding from Arts Council England for 2023 to 2026. Revenue from commercial activities is also essential to the charity's financial stability, and over 57% of its revenue is earned.

Storyhouse runs two wholly owned commercial trading subsidiaries: Storyhouse Production Company Limited - creating and staging Storyhouse Originals theatre productions - and Storyhouse Catering Company Limited - providing a range of catering, retail, cinema, receiving theatre and commercial services.

Despite our financial stability, like all other charities our resources are being eroded by rising costs caused by inflation and higher energy prices, and as a result of the continued cost of living crisis, demand for free-to-access services (such as warm spaces) is increasing.

Our Building

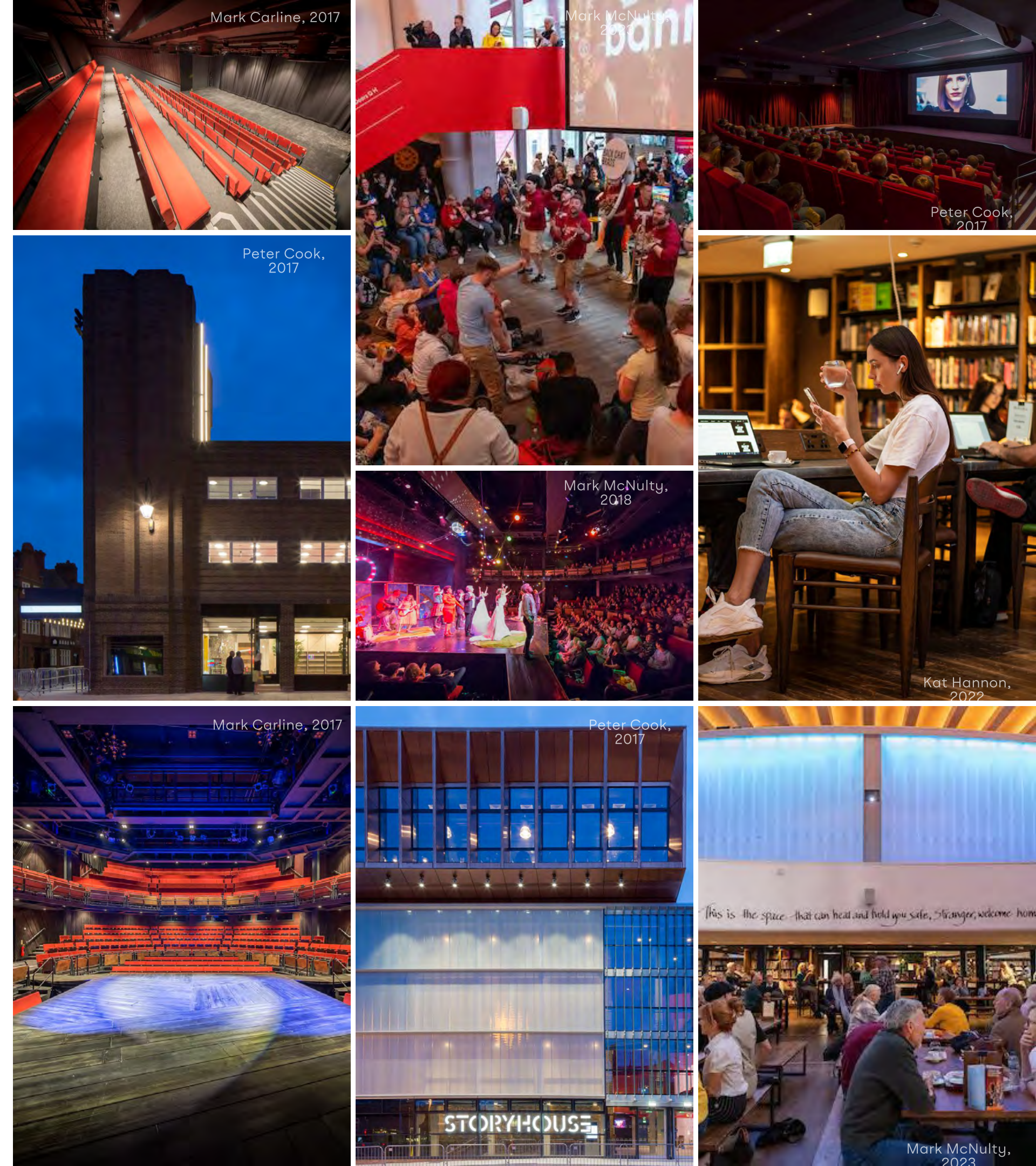
The original parts of Storyhouse were constructed as an art deco Odeon cinema in 1936, and have been restored, extended and renovated into a library, two state of the art theatres, a cinema, restaurant, and two bars.

The larger theatre is an 800-seat proscenium arch stage. With state-of-the-art facilities, its auditorium spreads across three tiers: stalls, circle and gallery. This same theatre converts into a 500-seat thrust stage (with the audience wrapping around three sides of the stage). In this format, the auditorium spreads across two tiers, with intimate seating putting the audience right in amongst the action.

On top of the building sits the Garret Theatre and Bar. This 150-seat black-box theatre is a flexible, fully-equipped performance, rehearsal, or workshop space. It is designed to be full of work made by local creative companies, individuals, and community groups, as well as a space we hire to companies and individuals.

The 100-seat boutique cinema is designed to honour the original Odeon's history as a cinema in 1936. With red velvet, soft, sunken seating, it is a beautiful event space.

The library spreads right through the building, with a dedicated family-friendly area (with wet play, storytelling room, and arts and crafts) in The Den and extensive book-stocks covering the walls throughout Storyhouse offering opportunities for studying, learning, and research.



The Role

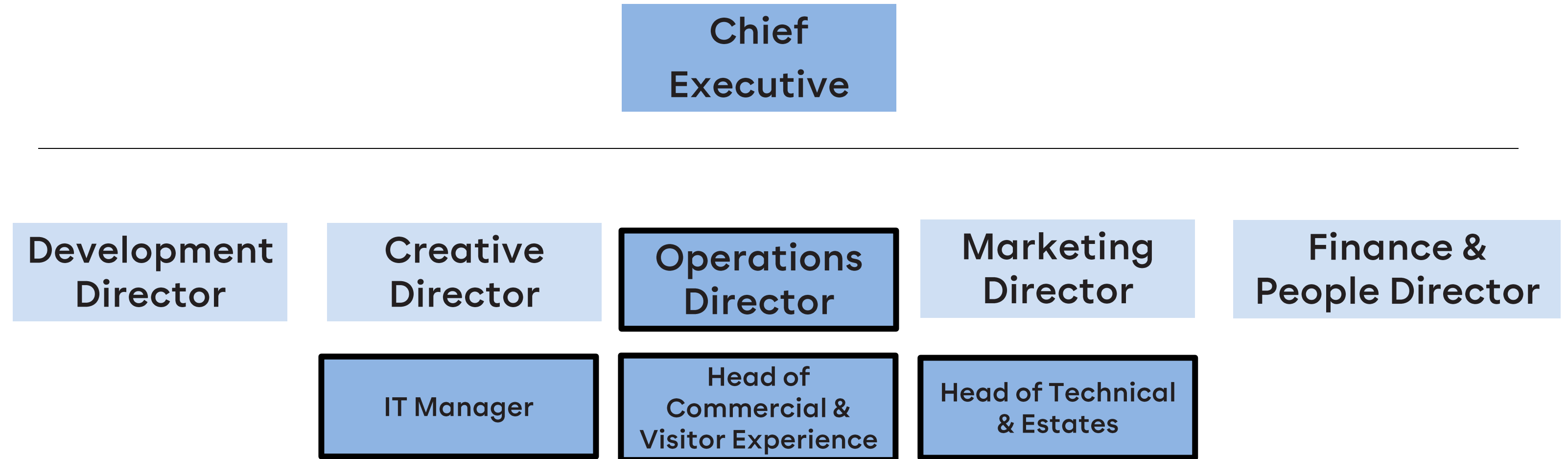
The Operations Director is responsible for the strategic oversight, management and development of all operational functions including commercial and visitor experience, technical and estates and information technology. They lead on trading areas of activity including food and beverage, facility hire and retail.

They will ensure Storyhouse is able to operate effectively as a business and offer all visitors a positive experience. To achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness, they will drive operational business change and grow a successful profitable operation.

You can read more about our year-round programme of live events, comprehensive range of participatory events for people of all ages, and more at www.storyhouse.com



Senior Leadership structure



Role and Responsibilities

Oversee operational activity for the organisation, covering general management of buildings and IT, technical and event management, customer service and outdoor event programmes.

Manage the operations teams including food & beverage, cinema, events, ticketing, security, technical, IT and facilities management.

Line manage relevant staff to ensure they fulfil their roles and responsibilities, including identifying skills and gaps within teams; coaching and mentoring; promoting development opportunities; and succession planning.

Translate strategic business plans into defined operational plans, implementing short- and long-term strategies to support the areas of activity within the scope of this role.

Establish a culture of continuous business improvement; setting high standards and driving the operations teams to hit and exceed set sales targets.

Oversee customer support processes to maintain consistent standards and enhance customer satisfaction.

Role and Responsibilities (continued)

Agree and manage budgets with the Director of Finance & People and the Chief Executive, ensuring effectiveness, efficiency and value for money.

Act as a project leader, managing project plans, budgets, implementation and evaluation activity as required, including for Storyhouse's summer season in Grosvenor Park.

Be our sustainability and H&S champion, working with Board sub-committees as required.

Act as project lead on any future capital projects.

Represent the Operations portfolio at Board, executive management and other meetings, providing reports and updates as required.

Represent and promote the organisation externally, participating in a range of local, regional and national events and networks.

Person Specification

Experience

A proven track record in operations and event management at a senior level, ideally within the arts, culture, entertainment, tourism or related sector

Experience in management of F&B, facilities and IT functions within a public-facing setting

Leadership and management experience, with the ability to develop and motivate a team

Experience of developing and delivering plans to grow sales and profit margins

Experience of managing budgets, achieving desired outcomes within limited resources

Experience of working on capital projects

Skills

Ability to develop and implement high standards of customer service across a complex set of events, activities and stakeholders

Familiar with H&S including food safety regulations, with experience of successful implementation of systems and procedures

Able to develop and implement longer term strategies and plans whilst delivering a consistent operation

Excellent planning and project management skills, with the ability to prioritise and meet deadlines

Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with experience of stakeholder management

Able to negotiate and manage third party contracts to achieve best value

Opportunity and Staff Benefits

Title: Operations Director

Reports to: Chief Executive

Salary: £60,000 per annum

Contract: Permanent, Full time, 40 hours per week

33 days annual leave per year, including bank holidays, increasing annually up to a maximum of 5 extra days (pro rata)

Birthday leave

A defined contribution pension scheme

Employee Assistance Programme

Cycle to Work and Travel to Work schemes

Flexible working requests available from day one, hybrid working available after completion of probationary period.

Discounted gym membership schemes and cash health plan

Complimentary tickets and discounts on food and drink

Company sick pay after qualifying service

Application Process

Applicants are asked to submit a cover letter expressing interest in the role and a CV demonstrating relevant experience to peopleteam@storyhouse.com

Applications must be submitted by **10am on 10 February 2025**. All applications will be reviewed by a panel and shortlisted candidates invited to a short online interview.

First stage interviews: 26 February 2025

A number of candidates will then be invited through to a second stage, involving a tour, informal meetings, a presentation and interview at Storyhouse:

Second stage interviews: 11 March 2025

If you have any questions or would like an informal chat about the opportunities this critical role presents, please contact: annabel.turpin@storyhouse.com



Faustus That Damned Woman, 2023,
Mark McNulty



GDPR

Personal Data Notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent.

The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

STORYHOUSE