

Job Description



Conference Producer

Salary £22000

Location: This role is suitable for remote working

Reporting Line: This role reports to the Senior Conference Producer

Jan 2020

Optimus Education (OE) is a leading provider of professional development support and school improvement information for schools, academies and other educational institutions. Since 1997, we have been helping primary and secondary school leadership teams to manage staff development efficiently and effectively, stay compliant and drive whole school improvement. Our key digital subscription services include the Knowledge Centre and In-House Training complemented by a portfolio of awards, live conferences and professional development events. We run a series of exhibitions for students and teachers that focus on skills and careers guidance and we also run corporate events for clients. Optimus Education is a for-profit organisation owned by the Shaw Trust, the 12th largest charity in the UK. Shaw Trust focuses on improving the lives of young people in the UK and internationally. All profits from Optimus Education are channelled directly into the Shaw Trust.

This role sits within the Optimus Education Operations team. The team produce around 35 highly successful and reputable national conferences for school leaders and managers, both face to face and digital. Face to face conferences in recent years have been in a number of locations including London, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol and Dubai. Our flagship events include Child Protection in Education, the MATs Summit and our international MENA Inclusion and Wellbeing. This role is suitable for remote working and we also have our main office in Taunton. Producers travel to face to face events and some overnight stays will be required.

The main responsibilities of this role include, but are not limited to, the following:

Research and Development

- Propose conference topics and delivery format for consideration by team at agreed planning meetings
- Thoroughly research agreed topics in line with the Production Standards to produce agenda
- Research through analysis of previous evaluations, telephone contact and surveys with delegates, contact with previous speakers and potential speakers and delegates
- Ensure suitable development of agenda compared to the previous year and based on current market need
- Plan dates to suit the requirements and forecast of the conference team
- Present research and agenda for approval from operational and sales & marketing team
- Support broader team in repurposing conference research into content marketing generation e.g. blogs, infographics, conference summaries, speaker Q&A etc
- Lead your section of all conference review meetings
- Agreed documentation to be updated at all times

The success of any conference starts with research. Effective use of judgement to decide content is essential.

Marketing

- Work with marketing to advise on conference marketing collateral, including brochure, which fits within Optimus Education overall brand specifications
- Fully brief and work with the marketing team to devise a timely and effective marketing campaign
- Meet deadlines set by the marketing team to ensure timely delivery of the marketing campaign
- Meet sign off deadline agreed with overall delivery plan to allow for effective live leadtime
- Update the marketing team on any changes to the agenda
- Write relevant copy for marketing emails and website

Maintaining effective lead times is vital to growing conferences. Meeting deadlines, writing effective and benefit focused copy contribute to growing delegate numbers.

Speakers & Experts

- Invite and secure the participation of leading/suitable speakers, speakers must be of the highest calibre and willing to deliver both face to face and interactive virtual webinars
- Ensure programme has right balance of repeat speakers and new names
- Maintain regular contact with speakers leading up to and after the event
- Fully brief and vet the speakers on what is expected of them during their sessions using the OE speaker briefing and T&Cs document. When delivering digital conferences check tech capabilities and speaker agreement to rehearsal
- Collect speaker presentations and summary slides in advance, feedback where amends needed to ease readability and engagement
- Ensure agenda and speaker completion in agreed timeline for conference to ensure accurate joining can be sent
- Develop relationships with leading speakers and key experts with a view to identifying and developing new conference topics and to inform and help lead outreach
- Leverage conference speakers as advocates of OE

Knowledgeable speakers, be they practitioners or other, who can offer real advice, benefits and guidance to delegates are key to a successful conference.

Finance

- Ensure budgets are maintained and met
- Ensure speaker invoices are kept below the 10% of revenue target
- Take responsibility for delivering strong profit margins across your portfolio of events (target over 40%)
- Ensure budget files are updated with expected then actual costs
- Flag to manager any unexpected costs or concerns of overspend
- Be conscious of costs at all times and strive for savings where possible

Conference Producers take responsibility for delivering strong profits from their portfolio of conferences in order to meet the forecast and deliver growth for the team.

Sponsorship & exhibition

- Meet regularly with SpEx to help develop opportunities to increase yield and drive SpEx revenue
- Provide input into deal meetings where needed and ensure any SpEx speakers are fully briefed and vetted to ensure the highest quality of event

Working with SpEx to grow revenue is a vital. Developing your commercial awareness and provide content input is pivotal to event growth. You are also responsible for ensuring that quality of the event is never compromised.

Operations

- Brief and work with the Operations Executive to ensure venues are suitable
- Brief and work with the Customer Services Executive to ensure delegates receive timely joining instructions
- Oversee event operations, in conjunction with the Operations Executive, to ensure smooth running of events
- Be on site or lead producer if your conference is digital

A strong working relationship with the Operations Executive during the conference will enable you to take control of your own professional development. Attending keynotes and workshops with delegates and listening to speakers is vital in ensuring the development of your portfolio of events.

Wider key business objectives

- Participate and contribute actively within bi-weekly Market Insight meeting
- Seek input to research cycle and share market research across the business
- Optimise the pre/onsite/post event opportunities and work collaboratively with content to plan strategic content creation around events
- Utilise conferences as a "shop front" and key lead generator for upsell to memberships and other OE products
- Work with other team members to embed all year-round touchpoints for our members within pre event, onsite and post event communications/resources/training/support materials

Miscellaneous

You may be required, during busier periods, to undertake any of the following. This list is not exhaustive.

- Attendance and support and other events and conferences within the OE portfolio
- Taking control of and delivering others' events in exceptional circumstances
- Other tasks as deemed necessary for the successful delivery of the events

Skills & Core Competencies

- Proven experience of being able to work under pressure and juggle several projects (E)
- Understanding of our customer group (D)
- High quality research skills and knowledge of the education system (E)
- Demonstrable experience of being well organised, with excellent planning skills (E)
- Have project management and problem-solving skills, with a strong record of meeting deadlines (E)
- Excellent communication skills with good written and spoken English (E)
- Ability to work to agreed speaker budgets, negotiate fees and track invoices (E)
- Good administration and IT skills with demonstrable experience of using MS office software (E)
- Have experience of, or a desire to learn about, events in both a face to face and digital formats (D)
- Evaluate previous events and delegate feedback to improve future conferences and implement new ideas (D)
- Experience of using digital platforms such as Zoom/Teams/GoTo (D)
- Knowledge of Vimeo and video editing (D)
- Good numeracy skills and ability track and monitor processes accurately (E)
- Demonstrable experience in successfully providing excellent customer service (D)
- Writing web and email copy for marketing purposes (D)

Personal Specification

- Hard working, efficient, and flexible (E)
- Good organisational skills, time management and attention to detail (E)
- Ability to build successful relationships with internal and external stakeholders (E)
- Be happy to travel and stay away with a team (E)
- Able and willing to work outside of normal working hours during an event (E)
- Imaginative and creative comfortable to share new ideas(D)
- Comfortable working remotely using a range of digital channels including phone, video conferencing, instant messaging, and email (E)