Application Pack

Ref: WA158

Product Buyer and Developer

Salary £19,800 per annum

Part time – Permanent
[24 hours per week]

[Closing Date: 05 September 2022]

Westminster Abbey
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About Westminster Abbey Enterprises Ltd

Westminster Abbey Enterprises Limited (WAEL) is responsible for all retail activities at Westminster Abbey, and currently employs around 24 staff.

The main shop, situated at the exit to the Abbey (the Great West Door), sells a range of books and merchandise inspired by the life, history and architecture of the Abbey, and reflecting its location as a visitor attraction in central London. There is a further shop in the Cloisters (at the restaurant entrance/exit) selling a selective range of gifts, guides and souvenirs. We also sell online, at shop.westminster-abbey.org.

The net profits from retail sales revenue are usually gift-aided to the Abbey, and WAEL’s trading activities provide a valuable contribution to the income of the Abbey.
About Westminster Abbey

Westminster Abbey is a major centre for Christian worship, a leading venue for tourism and a treasured part of Britain’s heritage. The Abbey has occupied a central place in the celebration of great events for the nation and remains one of the most beautiful architectural masterpieces in Britain.

A living Church, Westminster Abbey is the House of Kings, where the coronation of Kings and Queens has taken place since 1066, and where many of the Kings and Queens of England and the United Kingdom are buried. The shrine of St Edward the Confessor, King of England from 1042 to 1066, is at the heart of the Abbey Church. Also buried or commemorated here are many of the great men and women from almost every century of British history: statesmen and politicians, lawyers, warriors, clerics, writers, artists, musicians. Westminster Abbey is a Royal Peculiar, and the Dean and Chapter of Westminster are directly responsible to the Sovereign.

The Dean and Chapter of Westminster defines its Mission in these terms:

- To serve Almighty God by offering divine Worship daily and publicly;
- To serve the Sovereign by daily prayer and by a ready response to requests made by or on behalf of Her Majesty;
- To serve the nation by celebrating the distinctive witness of the Christian faith; by upholding the place of religious faith within national life; and by active engagement with Parliament, Whitehall and others in positions of public service;
- To serve all pilgrims and visitors to the Abbey, and to maintain a tradition of hospitality.

Our values

As one we serve each other, our visitors and the wider world in all we do with:

- Truthfulness
- Integrity
- Empathy
- Excellence

The Abbey attracts over one million paying visitors each year, from all around the world. A large number of people also attend services which take place seven days a week. Daily services are only part of the Abbey’s work, for there are also many ‘special’ services and events throughout the year. Westminster Abbey currently employs around 300 staff in a variety of roles and an even larger number of volunteers.

The Abbey receives no regular income from the State, the Church of England or the Royal Family, and relies on monies raised from visitors to ensure that the building can be properly maintained and remain open as an amenity for all.
Job Description

JOB TITLE:  Product Developer and Buyer

ACCOUNTABLE TO:  Head of Retail

KEY RELATIONSHIPS:  Retail Administrator, eCommerce Manager, the retail team, Library and Collections staff, Canon Theologian. External: Suppliers, Visual Merchandising Consultant.

JOB SUMMARY:

• Undertake and complete the full product development cycle: from identifying potential ranges and products, launching new products in-store and online, through to post-launch sales review.
• Source and develop profitable bespoke product ranges for the retail outlets at Westminster Abbey
• Assist in sourcing and buying ‘off-the-shelf’ product for the retail outlets in line with buying guidelines and budgeted sales
• Develop (and review) cohesive range plans
• Support the Head of Retail in developing the shop outlets (including online) and maximising sales across the sites

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES:

Product Development

• Source and develop products reflecting the ethos and brand values of Westminster Abbey and the international customer profile
• Develop ranges that are influenced by, inspired by, or unique to Westminster Abbey’s architecture, artistic heritage or collection of artefacts
• Ensure ranges and products meet target margins and sales forecasts
• Source and develop products for special anniversaries, celebrations or exhibitions where appropriate
• Ensure quality standards are met for all proposed products
• Ensure all new products are packaged and/ or labelled appropriately and consistently
• Ensure accurate colour reproduction of images from the Abbey’s collections, or commissioned artwork, and ensure accurate copy in all cases

Buying

• Assist with sourcing and buying generic product, in line with company buying strategy
• Source generic products that will enhance ranges of exclusive product
• Plan and build the range of books, identifying new titles and titles to be replaced
• Lead analysis and review of ranges of generic merchandise, suggesting and sourcing new product ideas as appropriate
• To ensure current ethical and environmental trading policy is followed in sourcing of product and selection of new suppliers
• To assist in sourcing and buying appropriate generic seasonal merchandise
• Manage supplier performance, in terms of lead times, quality control, costs and delivery, for all new ranges
Planning

- Structure product development so that ranges contain products targeted by customer and price point, and to ensure that margin requirements can be delivered
- Ensure that initial order quantities are consistent with forecast sales and seasonality and ensure a co-ordinated launch across a range within the shops and online
- Conduct quarterly reviews of all new ranges to ensure sales targets and margin targets are met, stockholding levels are appropriate, and that poor performing lines are phased out with minimum impact on profit
- Monitor performance of new product lines, using learning to inform future product development
- Participate in ongoing supplier review programme
- Liaise with the Head of Retail and the Visual Merchandising Consultant to ensure new products and ranges are effectively displayed and promoted within the retail outlets

Communication

- Provide provenance information to the retail team and eCommerce Manager, to encourage effective selling of new products and for production of web copy
- Present new ranges and products to the retail team, and solicit feedback on customer demand and comment
- Ensure the Retail Administrator is kept informed of all changes to delivery schedules and any other supply issues with new product
- Present proposed new ranges and products for consideration by the WAEL board as required
- Foster good relationships with key personnel within the Abbey, particularly in the Library, Collections and Conservation, in order to develop a detailed knowledge of the Abbey’s collections and artefacts

Ethical & Environmental Trading Policy

- Ensure all new suppliers are audited: review supplied documentation, grade suppliers on their levels of assurance and certification, maintain the EET database, and follow up with suppliers unable to provide the required assurances or certification, or manufacturing in high risk countries
- Keep abreast of relevant developments in legislation or industry practice relevant to our policy, and conduct research on EET initiatives to inform policy and documentation; identify and implement initiatives that could help to meet our environmental aspirations

Other

- Regular competitor review
- Keep abreast of retail trends
- Undertake any other tasks that may reasonably be requested by the Head of Retail.

Safeguarding

Westminster Abbey is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. To prevent them from harm, we undertake appropriate checks (including the relevant level of criminal record check) on staff and volunteers and require them to complete relevant safeguarding training. This post requires a basic level criminal record check.

This job profile will be kept under review, and may be amended by Westminster Abbey Enterprises Limited from time to time. Any proposed changes will be discussed with the post holder.
Person Specification

This section outlines the knowledge, skills and abilities the job holder needs in order to fulfil the requirements of the post. ‘Essential’ criteria are those that the job holder must have in order to do the job. ‘Desirable’ criteria are those qualities that would be either useful, or an advantage or those which the job holder can be trained to do.

Essential

1. Educated to at least ‘A’ Level standard
2. Proven in-depth experience of product development gained in the gift, heritage or museum sectors
3. Experience developing products and ranges in differing formats and materials
4. Creative flair and a good eye for detail
5. Excellent communication skills, with the ability to communicate effectively at all levels
6. Strong negotiating skills
7. Good presentation skills
8. Knowledge of retail systems and able to analyse sales performance data
9. Financial skills required to manage prices, costs and margins
10. IT skills: proficiency in Microsoft Outlook, Word and Excel
11. Good organising and planning skills
12. An understanding of the unique setting at Westminster Abbey – a major visitor attraction and working church

Desirable

13. An interest in British history, art history and/or architecture
14. Confidence in using Adobe Photoshop
15. An understanding of, and sympathy with, the mission and values of Westminster Abbey

Circumstances

16. Occasional overnight domestic travel to trade fairs, conventions, etc. will be required.

July 2022
Working for us

Employment Status
This post is part time and permanent.

Salary
The salary is £19,800 per annum, which is based on a full time equivalent annual salary of £33,000 and is paid on the last Friday of each month. Salary is reviewed annually in January.

Working Hours
These are 24 hours per week. The postholder will need to work a fixed working pattern of three days a week between Monday and Friday, but the working days can be negotiated with the successful postholder.

Annual Holidays
The full-time holiday entitlement is 31 days per annum including recognised public holidays, rising to 33 days per annum in the fifth year of service.

Training
On-site training will be provided in all aspects of the job. Any further training needs will be assessed through the probation period and in annual appraisals.

Pension Scheme and Life Assurance
All employees can join a Group Personal Pension plan, where the minimum employee contribution is 3% and the maximum employer contribution is 9% (as determined by the level of the employee contribution). You will be auto-enrolled into our qualifying workplace pension scheme after 3 months, if you meet the eligibility criteria.

All employees are covered by death-in-service life assurance, whether or not they choose to join the pension scheme.

Staff Discount
All employees receive a 20% discount on purchases from the Westminster Abbey shop and a 30% discount on purchases from the Benugo outlets, which serve refreshments.

Season Ticket Loan
A season ticket loan is offered after satisfactory completion of a probationary period, repayable over 10 months.

Medical Insurance
The Abbey will pay 50% of premiums to join a nominated medical insurance scheme after one year’s employment.

Uniform
If a uniform and/or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is provided, this must be worn at all times.
Equality Statement and How to apply

Equality Statement
The Dean and Chapter aim at all times to recruit the person who is most suited to the job. Recruitment will be solely on the basis of the applicant’s abilities and individual merit as measured against the criteria for the job. Qualifications, skills and experience will be assessed at the level that is relevant to the job.

We will ensure that our shortlisting, interviewing and selection procedures avoid discrimination in any way, including on grounds of age, disability, gender, marital status or civil partnership, race, nationality or ethnic origins, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Please return the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form with your application. This will help us monitor our recruitment practice. The form will not be seen by the people making the selection decision.

Safeguarding
Westminster Abbey is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. To prevent them from harm, we undertake appropriate checks on staff and volunteers and require them to complete relevant safeguarding training. Offers are subject to a relevant level of criminal record check, receipt of references satisfactory to Westminster Abbey, right to work in the UK, proof of professional qualifications and medical clearance, which may include a medical assessment from the Abbey doctor.

How to Apply
Please complete our application form as CVs will not be accepted.

You are also advised to read the Job Description and Person Specification carefully and think about how your experience, skills and abilities help you to meet the requirements listed in the Person Specification. Use the ‘Supporting Statement’ section of the form to tell us how you meet each of the requirements.

As well as your previous work experience, tell us about other relevant experience such as community and voluntary experience. Clear information on how you meet all the requirements of the job, with relevant examples, will help us with shortlisting, and we may not be able to shortlist you for interview if you do not provide this.

Please email your completed application to: applications@westminster-abbey.org.

Applications should arrive no later than 12 noon on 05 September 2022. Interviews are scheduled to take place on 22 September 2022.

We regret that, due to the large number of applications we normally receive, we may only be able to contact or provide feedback if you have attended an interview. We appreciate your interest in our work at Westminster Abbey.