GDST
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Commercial Director
Reporting to:	Chief Financial Officer
Line Management:	Shared Commercial Managers (shared)
Location:	Trust Office, Asticus Building, 21 Palmer Street, SW1H 0AD
Grade:	Grade 1, full-time

Role Purpose and Summary

The Commercial Director will lead the development and delivery of the GDST's commercial growth strategy, with a particular focus on generating significant and sustainable new income. The postholder will be expected to actively originate new commercial opportunities, identifying new markets, partnerships, products and services through which the GDST can leverage its scale, brand, educational expertise and assets.

The role will also work alongside members of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to develop commercial opportunities arising from their respective areas of responsibility. The postholder will bring the commercial expertise and leadership required to test and develop ideas into robust propositions, including leading market assessment, business case development, partner identification and commercial negotiation. The postholder will work in collaboration with schools and colleagues on developing commercial propositions and will bring clear recommendations to the ELT for decision. Once agreed, they will drive implementation and maintain momentum through to delivery.

Alongside new growth, the Commercial Director will drive stronger performance from the Trust's existing commercial portfolio, establishing clear standards, targets and performance expectations and working with Heads, DFOs and commercial colleagues to improve income and profitability. The role will also maintain a pipeline of longer-term growth opportunities, including the potential for international partnerships and other models through which the GDST could extend its reach and diversify income over time.

Key Responsibilities

Commercial Strategy

- Develop and implement the Trust-wide commercial strategy, supporting the delivery of the Trust's strategic objectives.
- Translate the commercial strategy into a clear programme of activity, with defined priorities, targets and accountabilities for delivery.
- Proactively originate significant new commercial opportunities, using market insight, external networks and an understanding of the GDST's capabilities and assets to identify new sources of sustainable income.
- Identify and maximise commercial opportunities arising from the Trust's estate and facilities, including property lettings, sports provision and partnerships, to generate additional income and improve returns across the GDST estate.

- Monitor and review market trends, competitor activity and emerging opportunities across the education sector, including the potential to develop new educational programmes, products and services, to ensure the Trust remains commercially competitive and responsive to market changes.
- Build a balanced commercial portfolio that delivers short-term income alongside sustainable long-term value.
- Provide commercial insight and challenge to ELT, helping to identify where the Trust's scale, brand, educational expertise and assets could be used to generate additional value.

Business Development

- Lead the development of significant new commercial opportunities from initial concept through market assessment, proposition development, business case production, ROI analysis, due diligence and commercial negotiation.
- Work alongside ELT Directors to develop commercial opportunities arising from their respective areas of responsibility, bringing the commercial expertise required to test, shape and progress ideas into viable propositions.
- Identify opportunities for Trust-wide commercial initiatives that deliver economies of scale or enhanced value across multiple schools.
- Establish and maintain a Trust-wide commercial pipeline, prioritising opportunities based on financial return, strategic fit, deliverability, risk, reputational impact and school capacity.
- Develop robust business cases and investment proposals for significant commercial initiatives, bringing clear recommendations to ELT for decision,and provide oversight through to contractual negotiation and procurement.
- Once opportunities are approved, drive mobilisation and implementation, coordinating activity across relevant functions and ensuring agreed actions and dependencies are delivered.
- Build and maintain relationships with commercial partners and operators, supporting the implementation and ongoing delivery of Trust-wide commercial initiatives.
- Work collaboratively with Finance, Legal, Procurement, Estates, Marketing and other Trust Office colleagues to ensure commercial opportunities are financially viable, operationally deliverable, appropriately contracted and compliant.

Commercial Capability & Performance

- Provide professional leadership, expertise, support and challenge to school-based commercial colleagues.
- Build commercial capability across the Trust, ensuring colleagues have the skills, tools and frameworks required to identify and deliver commercial opportunities effectively.
- Motivate and support the development of high-performing commercial functions in the schools, ensuring consistent delivery across the Trust and the sharing of successful approaches between schools.
- Act as the Trust's senior commercial adviser, building strong relationships with ELT, Heads, DFOs and senior leadership teams.
- Present significant commercial proposals and performance updates to Executive and Senior Leadership Teams, and relevant committees.

Financial Performance

- Develop annual commercial income, profitability and performance targets, for the Trust and, where appropriate, individual schools and commercial activities.
- Drive delivery against agreed commercial targets, identifying underperformance early and working with Heads, DFOs and commercial colleagues to agree and implement corrective action.
- Monitor and review commercial performance across the Trust, analysing income, utilisation, profitability and return on investment.
- Review the approach used by the Trust to incentivise schools to grow commercial activities and make recommendations on any proposals to change the strategy.
- Produce regular reports for Executive Leadership and Trustees on commercial performance, pipeline activity and future opportunities.
- Ensure commercial decisions are supported by robust financial analysis, scenario modelling and appropriate business planning.

Governance & Compliance

- Establish and maintain Trust-wide commercial policies, procedures and operating standards.
- Ensure significant commercial opportunities are subject to proportionate due diligence, financial modelling, procurement, contractual review and risk assessment.
- Establish clear governance, decision-making and accountability arrangements for significant new commercial initiatives, including appropriate routes for ELT and Trustee approval.
- Maintain oversight of the commercial risk portfolio, identifying and escalating material financial, operational, contractual or reputational risks.
- Ensure commercial activity appropriately balances financial return with educational priorities, safeguarding and reputational considerations.
- Work with relevant professional leads to ensure the safe, compliant and effective delivery of commercial activity.

International Development & Partnerships

- Maintain an informed view of developments and commercial opportunities within the international education market, building the relationships required to support the Trust's longer-term ambitions for expansion.
- Identify and assess potential international opportunities for growth, including partnerships, licensing, consultancy and other models through which the GDST could extend its educational reach and generate sustainable income.
- As the Trust's international growth ambitions develop, work alongside ELT in evaluating and developing opportunities, applying the same commercial rigour to market assessment, business case development, partner selection, due diligence and negotiation as for other significant commercial ventures.

All GDST Staff are expected to:

- Put the safety and wellbeing of pupils at the heart of everything they do.
- Contribute to the Trust's vision and strategic priorities.

- Follow our policies on health, safety and diversity, creating a safe, fair and inclusive environment.
- Demonstrate professionalism in conduct, attendance and relationships with colleagues and external contacts.
- Take responsibility for their own development, engaging in training and performance review.
- Work collaboratively across the Trust, sharing good practice and supporting others.

This job description is intended to provide an overview of the main responsibilities of the role. It is not exhaustive, and the postholder may be required to undertake other reasonable duties commensurate with the level and nature of the post, as directed by their line manager.

This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.

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PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications and Experience

- Substantial senior commercial leadership experience within a complex, multi-site organisation, with responsibility for delivering significant commercial growth and sustainable new income.
- Proven track record of originating, developing and delivering significant new commercial opportunities, taking them from initial concept and market assessment through business case development, negotiation and implementation to measurable financial outcomes.
- Experience of working with Directors or equivalent senior leaders to develop commercial opportunities, providing the commercial expertise, challenge and analysis required to turn strategic ideas into viable propositions.
- Experience of leading complex commercial programmes involving multiple functions and stakeholders, with the ability to drive delivery through others and maintain momentum where direct line-management authority does not exist.
- Experience of managing and improving the performance of an established commercial portfolio, including setting targets, analysing profitability and taking action to improve financial performance.
- Experience of building relationships and negotiating with external commercial partners, operators or other third parties.
- Experience of international business development, partnerships, licensing or market expansion would be desirable.

Skills

- Exceptional commercial judgement, with the ability to identify where the greatest opportunities for growth and value lie and focus effort accordingly.
- Strong strategic and analytical capability, with the ability to assess complex opportunities, interpret financial and market information and develop clear, evidence-based recommendations.
- Highly effective influencing and stakeholder management skills, with the credibility to advise, challenge and work constructively with ELT Directors, Heads, DFOs and other senior leaders.
- Excellent negotiation skills, with the ability to develop and secure commercially advantageous partnerships and agreements.
- Strong programme and delivery skills, with the ability to bring structure to complex initiatives, coordinate activity across multiple functions and maintain pace through to delivery.
- Strong communication and presentation skills, able to articulate complex commercial propositions clearly and persuasively to the Executive Leadership Team and Trustee audiences.

Personal Attributes

- A genuine passion for girls' education and a commitment to putting our girls first in all aspects of our work.

- Entrepreneurial and opportunity-focused, with the curiosity and commercial instinct to identify new possibilities and turn ideas into action.
- A forward-thinking collaborator who builds effective relationships and supports our 'family of schools' ethos.
- Delivery-focused and accountable, taking ownership for outcomes, maintaining momentum and following through to delivery.
- Commercially ambitious and pragmatic, pursuing growth with sound judgement and balancing commercial opportunity with the GDST's educational purpose and values.

Other Requirements

- Right to work in the UK.
- Willingness to travel to GDST schools and other locations as required.
- Willingness to stay overnight occasionally where required by the role.
- Ability to work flexibly in support of the duties of the role.
- Willingness to complete an enhanced DBS check.