

Mothers' Union Enterprises (Mue) LTD, (wholly owned trading subsidiary of the Charity, Mothers' Union)

Seeks a Volunteer Board member with experience in the E-commerce environment

Mothers' Union Enterprises LTD (MUE) is seeking to appoint a non-Executive Board member, with particular expertise in digital retail.

You will have the opportunity to play a critical guiding and advising role as the company develops a strategy for the development of its digital retail business.

This is a voluntary position, but reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed. The role entails no operational responsibilities.

About MUE and Mothers' Union

MUE was established as the trading subsidiary of Mothers' Union in 1993, to generate funds for the Charity. It has historically run commercial operations for Conferences, Publications, a Gift Shop, sales of products through a network of local member-representatives, and more recently on-line sales. Its turnover in 2017 was just over £1m.

Mothers' Union is a Membership Society with over 4 million members in 83 countries worldwide, who put their faith into action by working as volunteers in their communities, promoting healthy communities through healthy relationships, the empowerment of women and supporting families in need. In 2017, they made a difference to over 750,000 people worldwide.

The central charity which co-ordinates the work of members across the world, is based in central London, and had a turnover (including net revenue from MUE) of £2.3m in 2017.

Current situation

Significant increases in competition locally resulted in the Gift Shop closing in 2018. The publications operation has also ceased to be viable commercially, and is being transferred to the Charity as a member-focussed publication. The Conference business continues to do well, and has space for growth (room occupancy currently at 35%).

Sales through member-representatives and on-line channels currently generate approximately £400,000 revenue a year. These sales are overwhelmingly made to our current membership.

The Board

The Board has historically been made up of nominees from the Mothers' Union Regions in the UK. From 2019, however, the main Board has approved a shift in emphasis, to look for skills and experience which will enable the MUE Board to guide MUE to maximise the commercial potential of the subsidiary, and hence the net funds which can be gifted back to the Charity. Under the Chairmanship of the CEO of the Charity, the Board will include a representative of the main Board, 2 continuing nominees from the outgoing Board to represent the membership; one further member, to be appointed from the member-reps and is known to be confident with new technology; and 2 external experts: one with a focus on retail, the other on Conference Facilities Management

The opportunity

The Board believes that there may be an opportunity to significantly develop retail sales beyond the existing membership, within the Christian community and potentially beyond. This may be with the current product range, or through revisiting the offering in a way which fits with the core values of the Charity.

The Board recognises that there is a need to upgrade the web and social media presence of MUE and this will start to be addressed in 2019.

The Member-representatives on the Board understand member needs well and in order to develop the retail division want to strengthen the Board and have members with significant experience in digital and online retail.

Role scope

This is a really exciting opportunity to help a Charity to make a step-change in its approach. The role-holder would take a leading role in working with management and Board colleagues to develop and subsequently implement a credible digital retail strategy. In particular:

- Rationale for a revised approach, including product offering and customer segments;
- Links (or otherwise) with use of representatives;
- Platform(s);
- Investment and skills requirements;
- Financial case.

Key skills and personal characteristics required:

Essential

- Retail expertise, with a particular focus on digital retail
- Empathy with the work of Mothers' Union
- Ability to connect with member-volunteers.
- Ability to identify creative solutions with limited resource availability
- Excellent interpersonal skills – ability to communicate efficiently and connect with to a wide range of people, internally and externally both verbally & written.

Desirable

- Connections to access for advice, partnering or specialist skills
- Practising Christian
- Prior experience as a Charity Trustee

Time requirement

The Board meets for 4 hours, 3 times a year during working hours in London. In addition, the Board Member would be asked to be available to work in a small number of strategy development sessions. There may also be few occasions when the Board Member may be asked to be available as a sounding board for management.

Duration of the role

Board terms are 3 years, with a potential for a second three year term

Key dates

Deadline for applications: 21st February, 2019. Initial meetings with the Chief Executive will be held in the first weeks of March.

The first Board meeting in 2019 is planned for 27th March 2019.

For more information on our work, please visit www.mothersunion.org

For information on our Board: <https://www.mothersunion.org/our-story/our-governance/our-leadership>

For information on our trading company, MUE: <https://www.mothersunion.org/our-story/our-governance/mu-enterprises>