

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

Seeks Volunteer Board member with Conference Facilities Management expertise

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

You will have the opportunity to play a critical guiding and advising role as the company develops a strategy for its conference facilities business, in the short term and longer term as the Charity plans to renovate and reconfigure its building, Mary Sumner House.

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 wholly owned 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 an income (including net revenue from MUE) of £2.3m.

Current situation

Significant increases in competition locally mean that the Gift Shop was closed in 2018. The publications operation has also ceased to be viable commercially, and is being transferred to the Charity as a member-focussed publication. Retail sales through member-representatives and on-line channels currently generate approximately £400,000 gross revenue.

The Conference Facilities business is expected to generate revenue in excess of £450,000 in 2018, which represents an increase of 9% over 2017. There remains scope for further growth, as the occupancy is currently 35%.

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 2 external experts: one with a focus on retail, the other on Conference Facilities Management

Role summary – Conference Facilities Management

The conference facilities business has evolved over time, and is managed by highly committed staff that have grown within the organisation. There is a limited budget for marketing, conference booking system and various requirements to ensure the conference rooms run efficiently. The business now has 2 exciting opportunities:

- Firstly, to optimise the business prior to anticipated renovation, which is likely to occur in the second half of 2020;
- Secondly, to assess the longer term potential for growth, provide input into the renovation plans (aiming to submit for planning permission in Jan 2020), and to prepare for a relaunch of the renovated facilities from early 2021.

The role of the Board member would be to provide guidance and support to management, both in taking short-term steps to enhance revenue, and in developing and executing the longer-term plan.

Key skills and personal characteristics required:

Essential

- A professional background in Conference Facilities Management
- An understanding of the conference and facilities environment in central London
- Empathy with the work of Mothers' Union
- 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. 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 is scheduled 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>