

Ahead Partnership

Programme Manager Job Description

About us

Since 2004, Ahead Partnership has partnered with leading employers across the UK to help them maximise their social impact and be a force for good in their communities. We do this by co-creating flagship careers and skills programmes with employers that help young people to find a successful future in key sectors of the economy.

We are passionate about the role that employers can play in enabling young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of background. Our work focuses on improving social mobility, removing barriers and supporting greater diversity and inclusivity within the future workplace.

We lead the way in developing professional, tailored programmes of careers and skills engagement with employers that open up opportunities to young people across key sectors. Our programmes not only support young people by developing their understanding of careers and building confidence and skills, they also help employers to tackle skills shortages by strengthening the talent pipeline - a win/win outcome for everyone involved.

We take a design-led approach to all our work and develop tailored programmes and solutions that really work both for our employer partners and the young people that take part. We are a values-led consultancy without shareholders or investors and reinvest all our surpluses in furthering our social impact.

About our team

We are a team in every sense and because we all pull together, our working environment is very supportive. Our culture is non-hierarchical and each member of our committed team is individually empowered to be an agent of positive change.

The nature of our work is always changing, and we all thrive on this. There's never a dull day at Ahead Partnership and every member of our team is responsive and flexible, eager to develop new skills, experience and ideas.

Ahead Partnership values and culture

We have built a team of committed and passionate individuals who live our values and culture:

- **Change:** We inspire change and embrace challenges in the way we develop and deliver our ideas. We learn from experience and foster an environment where new ideas are celebrated and encouraged
- **Passion:** We are passionate and positive about all our work. We take pride in what we do, responsibility for what we achieve and are always proactive in our approach
- **Individuality:** We recognise individual strengths and support everyone we work with. We celebrate differences and show kindness in all situations.
- **Partnership:** We succeed as one team. We are collaborative and respectful to create a culture of trust, where sharing and learning is easy and people can thrive.

About the job role

As a Programme Manager you will lead the conception, sales, development and delivery of client programmes nationally. Programmes vary in size, complexity and volume of stakeholders involved. Our clients, who are mostly corporate partners, look to us for expertise and the ability to tailor solutions that will work for them. All our programmes take a consultative approach with corporate and education partners and may involve managing delivery of advisory services, creation, design and event delivery through agile processes. Programmes may be multi-year across multiple geographies (nationally and internationally) and require a long-term strategic approach to their development and delivery.

Our tailored programmes are delivered to the highest standards, prioritising client service and impact, whilst ensuring that the programmes are optimally structured, and successfully delivered on time and to budget.

The role will also play a key role in driving and contributing to the continuous improvement of our business through key responsibilities as outlined below.

The key responsibilities of the role will include:

Programme design, management and delivery

- Accountable for the discovery and design phases of programmes, using consultancy skills to identify needs, confirm requirements and outcomes and translate the brief into a carefully considered scope of work that can deliver the desired impact and results.
- Accountable for the successful planning and delivery of different programmes of work including; creating delivery plans, creating, managing and leading delivery teams, and delivering great outcomes for all those that are involved
- Accountable for reporting on programme KPIs both internally and externally
- Support all members of the programme team as required –through coaching or mentoring
- Accountable for the effective and timely recruitment and management of external volunteers, education or other external partners that are required to deliver successful programme outcomes
- Responsible for leading, facilitating and running events that are part of programmes to large audiences where appropriate
- Responsible for managing internal strategic programmes as may be required

Client service excellence

- Accountable for managing our client relationships and building long-term trusted relationships with our clients and stakeholders by exceeding client expectations
- Ensure that exemplary client service is delivered by all members of the programme teams, ensuring that there are clear lines of communication across all members of the team as well as clearly understood areas of responsibility and accountability.
- Being client-centred at all times - putting the client's objectives at the heart of our programme design and delivery
- Respond to the needs of clients and prospects with an innovative and considered approach
- Accountable for resolving delivery-related challenges with clients
- Communicate with other members of the team on client-related issues to optimise results

Business Development – growing programmes

- Grow work from clients and spot opportunities to bring in new income through strategic, active and effective management of client relationships, networks and stakeholders, meeting new income targets
- Support the wider growth plans of the business by supporting the Growth team in spotting, developing and winning new work, including scoping, pitching and leading the conversion of opportunities where appropriate

Creative / Design led thinking

- Play a lead role in the creative development and design of programmes that will meet our clients' needs and provide opportunities to innovate
- Ensure programmes are supported by robust and effective evaluation frameworks that are fully aligned both to the clients' objectives and to our own social mission
- Proactively seek out, identify and embrace new technologies and approaches that will improve our programmes

People

- Play a lead role in developing and embedding a culture which champions and demonstrates our values across our internal and external team
- Develop and share learning across the team – via induction, training, identifying best practice and developing training resources, best practice templates and case studies Performance management of team members as may be required
- Manage performance and promptly address any issues which compromise the successful delivery of programmes, escalating as appropriate

Finance

- Responsible for financial performance of programmes, ensuring they are delivered to budget and reviewing, managing and reporting on financial performance on an ongoing basis
- Accountable for contracting and invoicing on the programme portfolio
- Responsible for ensuring that timely payment is made of invoices for all programmes under your management.

Profile / Reputation

- Responsible for building a best-in-class reputation through excellent client service and supporting the marketing team on relevant campaigns
- Provide impactful, data-evidenced content and case studies
- Liaise with clients to secure and manage their involvement in marketing and BD efforts

Impact and Evaluation

- Accountable for implementing robust evaluation frameworks
- Accountable for gathering data from internal and external partners to enable data-driven reporting that evidences the impact of programmes on everyone involved
- Accountable for creating approaches that identify and deliver long-term outcomes

Other

- Undertaking other duties as requested to support the business
- Ensuring programmes have a strong social value and best support our communities to achieve change and stronger futures together
- Embed our culture by living our values and challenging behaviour which does not align to our values.

Housekeeping

- Working hours – Full time and/or part time (30 hours minimum). A standard full-time week is 37.5 hours, with flexible start and finish times
- The role is based in **Leeds**, however, there will be travel and client delivery across the UK. This could include overnight stays as required (with reasonable notice provided).
- There is a requirement to be in the office a minimum of 2-3 days per week. Beyond this, flexible working and other arrangements happily considered.
- Flexibility on your part will be expected and unsociable hours may be required.
- It is necessary to have access to a car and a full clean driving licence as delivery on programme may be in locations that are hard to access through public transport
- All staff are required to undertake a Criminal Record Bureau/DBS check upon joining.

About you

You will be passionate about our mission, getting involved in new and exciting opportunities and using creative thinking to best meet client needs. The following experience and skills are required:

Experience and skills

The successful candidates will have demonstrable experience, capability, skills and knowledge in all the areas outlined in the key responsibilities for the role, including –

Ability to think strategically

- Have the ability to think strategically and see the big picture and play a lead role in the implementation of strategy

Consultancy and advisory

- Experience of delivering B2B services successfully in a client-centred, holistic way
- Experience in helping clients to define their requirements and desired outcomes
- Ability to work in agile and flexible way to meet evolving needs and circumstances
- Experience in designing and delivering customised solutions for clients' needs

Growth

- An aptitude for and interest in business development and demonstrable experience of growing clients and converting prospects
- A commercial approach and the ability to deliver programmes profitably

Flexibility and responsiveness

- Ability to be flexible and responsive to business needs, which often can be urgent
- Can-do attitude and solutions focused Willingness to take on additional duties, travel and work unsociable hours
- Set high personal standards - always striving to improve and exceed expectations

Highly Organised

- Have an organised, consistent and methodical approach to developing and managing large scale, complex programmes of activity and multiple stakeholders, teams and individuals, commanding authority, without line management responsibility.
- Have strong time management skills, effectively prioritise your workload and the workload of team members, whether in-house or freelance
- Ability to effectively multi-task and manage multiple programmes simultaneously

Creative Problem Solver

- Curiosity around new ideas, new programmes and approaches
- Enjoy continuous improvement
- Positive attitude to flexibility, change and ambiguity

Team Player

- Be a positive role model who builds team spirit and maintains morale, particularly when the teams are under pressure
- Coach and mentor colleagues and help instil a coaching culture, so that we all learn from each other
- Responsible for the professional development of more junior or less experienced members of the team

Self-driven and resilient

- Be a self-driven starter-finisher, able to deliver excellent results when working independently
- Work calmly under pressure
- Take responsibility for your own professional development

Confident and effective Communicator

- Be a strong communicator and able to adapt communications to work with a variety of audiences including stakeholders, corporate clients, education partners , volunteers, and young people.
- Be a confident facilitator of events and meetings
- Have a careful and professional approach to all kinds of written or verbal communication