

Commercial Manager

A Guide to Role & Responsibilities

Summary

The post holder will hold an important management position in the Company.

He/she will require excellent commercial acumen, the ability to 'think outside the box' and a 'can do' attitude. Great organisational and people/task management skills, the ability to deal with a wide range of issues and also the willingness to deal hands-on with apparently more mundane issues are essential.

About Safeguard Coaches & The Challenge

Safeguard Coaches (also trading as Farnham Coaches) is a long established and award-winning family-owned coach and bus company heading towards its centenary (2024). It has a strong brand and good reputation locally as well as in the wider bus and coach industry. Budgeted turnover for 2022 is around £3.5 million generated by 32 PSVs (17 coaches, 14 buses and a heritage bus) operated from two depot sites by 60 staff. While espousing traditional values, the Company is future looking.

This is a rewarding role offering lots of variety and opportunity to see the fruits of your work thanks to our flat management structure and no corporate HQ or bureaucracy!

This is an exciting time for someone to rise to the significant challenges of this role.

Reporting Arrangements

Reports To

General Manager

Direct Reports

None

Works Alongside

Sales Manager, Operations Manager, Accounts & Payroll Manager, Engineering Manager.

The willingness and ability of the post holder to work closely with other managers as part of a team is crucial.

Key Responsibilities:

Under the guidance of the General Manager:

- to manage all aspects of the Company's commercial, and IT functions;
- to provide financial analysis to support commercial policy decisions;
- to actively promote the Company's services and maintain excellent relationships with existing and potential clients;
- to improve Company profitability, image and reputation through generation and implementation of fresh and innovative ideas;

As the Company has a relatively small management and administrative team the tasks involved are numerous and varied and will require attention to detail as well as the ability to step back and take a wider view on decisions. Some of the tasks may appear mundane but are essential. Successfully getting to grips with all aspects of the role will provide deep insight and understanding of the business.

As noted above, this is a rewarding role offering lots of variety and opportunity to see the fruits of your work thanks to our flat management structure and no corporate HQ or bureaucracy!

More details of the Commercial Manager's areas of responsibility are shown at Appendix A.

Qualifications

Essential

- At least 2 years' experience in a challenging commercial and/or financial role within the coach and/or bus industry or local transport responsibilities within a local authority [NB: candidates with equivalent experience in the rail or airline sectors may also be considered];
- Car licence, and car available.

Highly Desirable

- Experience of interpreting financial accounts and using accounts and other financial data sources;
- Highly proficient user of Microsoft Excel;
- Experience of IT solutions and social media;
- Experience of the commercial aspects of the coach hire business;
- Experience of the commercial aspects of the bus industry.
- Knowledge of bus and coach markets/customers and the way the PSV industry operates;

Helpful (but not essential)

- Experience of Distinctive Systems' Coach Manager software;
- Experience of Ticketer software;
- Experience of SAGE Accounts;
- Degree (or equivalent) qualification and/or other qualifications in finance, marketing or transport disciplines;
- PCV licence.

Requirements

- Due to the nature of the role the post holder will need to be flexible and prepared to work the required hours to meet the needs of the business, which may occasionally include unsocial hours. However, it is expected that typically a 37.5 hour week, normally within 'office hours', should generally suffice;
- Based at a well-appointed office at the Company's HQ, just outside Guildford, Surrey (postcode: GU4 7NZ)

Remuneration

A salary of circa £38,000-£42,000 per annum is offered, depending on experience, for a 37.5/40 hour week

28 days' paid holiday per annum, inclusive of Public Holidays

Workplace pension

Staff pass valid on Safeguard bus services and services of some other local bus operators

Assistance with relocation expenses in the form of a one-off payment and/or interest-free loan will be considered if appropriate.

Personal Attributes

- Commercial acumen, astute decision making, analytical approach to issues;
- prepared to challenge conventional ways of thinking;
- 'Can do' attitude, energetic approach to tasks;
- Passion for the bus and coach industry and ability to act as an effective ambassador to enable Safeguard Coaches to be the 'best in class';
- Able to work without supervision but clearly understanding when it is right and proper to seek help from a senior colleague;
- Team player who can work alongside a large number and variety of colleagues;
- Problem-solving skills;
- Ability to plan and prioritise and capable of multi-tasking and willing to demonstrate a flexible approach to the job;
- Able to meet deadlines;

- Accurate/attention to detail;
- Able to learn new tasks/systems quickly;
- Interest in technology/new media and their potential application to the bus and coach industry;
- Ability to communicate effectively (verbally and in writing) at all levels;
- Ability to think outside the box and question why things are done in a certain way;
- Ability to see the bigger picture and manage consequences accordingly;
- Desire to develop their career.

Appendix A: More Detail of Commercial Manager's Areas of Responsibility

The following provides some guidance on the expected responsibilities and duties of the Commercial Manager but should **not** in any way be regarded as a prescriptive list.

Commercial

- Commercial strategy and implementation
- Focus on value adding business activities to maximise revenue while allowing operating costs to be controlled
- Private hire, contract hire and bus fare pricing strategy and implementation
- Costing
- Submitting tenders
- Publicity, including digital and traditional media, bus and staff notices
- Dealing with complaints
- Promotion of services, particularly talking to and understanding existing and prospective customers, and liaising with other stakeholders
- Managing bus advertising contract with third party supplier
- Bus timetables/scheduling/registration/publicity/BODS/real time information
- Bus destination blind programming

Financial

- monitoring and analysing business performance in order to inform commercial decisions
- Bus Service Operator Grant (BSOG) including external audit
- Covid-19 Bus Recovery Grant (BRG) and similar/future financial support schemes
- ENCTS (concessionary) and 'deminimus' bus support income systems/procedures
- Bus contactless payment/mobile phone payment systems, refunds etc
- Supplier agreements/contracts, build/maintain business relationships critical to business performance, cost control and reduction, approval of supplier invoices
- deputising for Accounts & Payroll Manager in respect of payroll processing including HMRC outputs, pensions, cash processing (cash processing, petty cash)

Administration, Compliance & Support

- dealing with insurance claims, claims history, insurance policy maintenance and assisting with renewal of terms
- GDPR compliance
- Data and record management (including server backups)
- HR support including staff policies and handbook, employment contracts, meeting notes
- Compliance, health and safety policy support
- Companies House, Government returns etc
- Systems integrity/operability (including hardware, phones, servers, MS Office, Coach Manager, Sage Accounts/Payroll, Ticketer, Fuel Management Information Systems (MIS), vehicle telematics, RTPI, BODS, bus WiFi, third party systems eg contactless payment, smartphone tickets etc).

Other Responsibilities

The post holder may be given other responsibilities connected with other aspects of the Company's activities on a permanent, regular or ad hoc basis, according to the abilities and experience of the post holder, including occasional bus and coach driving (if PCV licence held).

In particular the post holder will be required to support other managerial/administrative staff/functions as required in any aspect of the business and at busy times and/or when staff are on holiday, off sick or otherwise absent.