

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Regional Operations Director

Responsible to: Director of Operations

Role Purpose:

The Regional Operations Director is responsible for the strategic and operational leadership of a large education catering portfolio, ensuring the delivery of exceptional food and service standards across multiple schools.

The role has full accountability for operational performance, client retention, financial results and compliance across a designated region. Leading a team of Operations Managers, the Regional Operations Director will drive a culture of ownership, accountability, continuous improvement and customer excellence while ensuring the business delivers against its commercial, people and quality objectives.

As a senior leader, you will act as a role model for the organisation's values, developing high-performing teams, building long-term client partnerships and creating an environment where people are engaged, supported and empowered to succeed.

Main Duties and Responsibilities:

Leadership & Ownership

- Take full ownership of operational performance across the designated education catering portfolio.
- Provide visible, inspirational and strategic leadership to Operations Managers and site teams.
- Lead, mentor and develop a team of Operations Managers, ensuring they have the skills, confidence and support to deliver exceptional results.
- Create a culture of accountability, engagement and personal responsibility at all levels of the organisation.
- Drive a high-performance environment that encourages innovation, continuous improvement and operational excellence.
- Lead by example, consistently demonstrating company values and expected leadership behaviours.

Client Relationships & Retention

- Develop and maintain strong relationships with Headteachers, School Business Managers, Trust Leaders and other key stakeholders.
- Act as the senior point of escalation for client issues and ensure prompt and effective resolution.
- Drive client retention through exceptional service delivery, proactive communication and relationship management.

- Lead strategic contract reviews and renewal discussions, identifying opportunities of growth in existing and new business. Ensure customer feedback is actively reviewed and translated into meaningful operational improvements.
- Work collaboratively with the Commercial team to support new business development, providing operational expertise, contributing to tender submissions and participating in client presentations to demonstrate the organisation's operational capability and service excellence.
- Support the successful mobilisation of new contracts, ensuring a seamless transition from sale to operational delivery and the establishment of strong client relationships from the outset.

Financial & Commercial Management

- Hold full P&L responsibility for the designated region.
- Deliver agreed revenue, profit and growth targets.
- Develop and manage annual budgets, forecasts and financial plans.
- Monitor financial performance and take proactive action to manage risks and maximise opportunities.
- Drive efficiencies in labour management, procurement, stock control and waste reduction.
- Analyse operational and financial KPIs to identify trends and improve business performance.
- Ensure commercial decisions support both profitability and long-term client satisfaction.
- Oversee all price negotiation within the designated region, ensuring they are agreed in a timely manner for each contract.

Operational Excellence

- Ensure the consistent delivery of high-quality food and service standards across all locations.
- Develop and implement operational strategies that improve efficiency, performance and customer experience.
- Hold operational teams accountable for delivering agreed KPIs, service level agreements and continuous improvement plans, taking timely action where performance falls below expectations.
- Lead operational change programmes, contract mobilisations and business improvement initiatives.
- Ensure best practice is shared and adopted across the operation

Culture, People & Work Environment

- Foster a positive, inclusive and supportive working environment where colleagues feel valued, motivated and able to perform at their best.
- Create a culture of high performance, accountability and continuous improvement, ensuring clear expectations and consistent standards across all teams where achievements are recognised and underperformance is addressed promptly and fairly.
- Oversee the effective management of employee relations matters, absence management and performance issues, ensuring cases are managed promptly, fairly, consistently and in line with company policy and employment legislation.

- Lead workforce planning and recruitment across the region, ensuring vacancies are filled in a timely manner, succession plans are maintained and teams are appropriately resourced to meet operational requirements.
- Support succession planning and talent development identifying high potential individuals and developing future leaders.
- Encourage open communication, collaboration and teamwork, promoting the sharing of knowledge and best practice across the organisation.
- Empower managers to take ownership of people management responsibilities, providing coaching and support to build confidence and capability.

Brand Standards & Customer Experience

- Ensure company brand standards are consistently implemented across all sites.
- Maintain a strong focus on food quality, presentation and customer experience.
- Promote innovation in menus, service delivery and pupil engagement initiatives.
- Lead on initiatives that increase meal uptake and customer satisfaction.
- Act as an ambassador for the organisation, ensuring the company's reputation is enhanced through every client interaction.
- Ensure all your team members are delivering the agreed brand standards and customer experience.

Health, Safety & Compliance

- Develop and maintain a workforce that is appropriately trained, competent and equipped to deliver safe, compliant and high-quality services.
- Ensure full compliance with Health & Safety legislation, food safety regulations, safeguarding requirements and company policies.
- Promote a proactive safety culture across all sites.
- Ensure effective management of allergen controls, food hygiene standards and statutory compliance requirements.
- Lead compliance audits and implement corrective action plans where necessary.
- Maintain the highest standards of governance, risk management and operational compliance.

KPI's and Measures of Success

- **Commercial** (profit, P&L performance)
- **Growth** (revenue growth and retention)
- **Operational Excellence** (quality, brand standard, compliance & safety)
- **Customer** (satisfaction, meal uptake and client relationships)
- **People** (leadership, engagement, performance, succession and culture)