

Business Development Officer for Kindling Farm

Job Description

Hours:	Full time, 37.5 hours per week. Must be able to work some weekends and evenings.
Length of Contract:	12 months - with possible extension.
Salary:	£24,382 per annum (gross) for a 37.5 hour working week, plus a 5% employer pension contribution.
Probationary Period:	4 months.
Locations:	Bridge 5 Mill, Ancoats, Manchester. Veg Box People, Salford. Kindling Farm, Knowsley Liverpool.
Closing Date:	Thurs 10th August
Interview Date:	Tuesday 22nd August
Preferred Start Date:	18th of September 2023 or as soon as possible.

Responsible to:	Board of Directors of the Kindling Trust and Kindling Farm.
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Role:
An exciting new role to increase demand and customers for our delicious local organic fresh produce, grown at our new 77 acre Kindling Farm and our existing market garden in Stockport.

Background:
The Kindling Trust works to create a fairer, more sustainable society, starting with the food system. Over the last 15 years, Kindling has established a series of projects & enterprises to engage people in sustainable food and farming. This includes our thriving Woodbank Community Food Hub; FarmStart market garden and training programme; Veg Box People; and Kindling Farm.

We are at a very exciting time in the life of our organisations. We very recently purchased a 77 acre farm in Knowsley, to establish Kindling Farm: a pioneering agroforestry farm for the Northwest (and beyond!). Here we will grow organic vegetables, fruit, cereals and pulses producing climate and wildlife-friendly food that pays farmers fairly and is accessible to a wide range of people.

Crucial to making this a success is financial viability, which means we need to increase the demand for our delicious fresh produce. We have developed our markets in Greater Manchester over the last decade, through our relationships with Unicorn Grocery, the University of Manchester and establishing our own veg box scheme, so there is a base to build on. But we have never really had the time and resources to develop our markets, so we are excited to be creating this role to do just that.

We won't pretend that this isn't a challenging role. Following the various uncertainties of the last few years (Brexit, covid, the cost of living crisis, rising prices), we (along with enterprises locally and across the country) have experienced a cooling down of some of our markets. Various restaurants we used to supply closed at the start of covid and (following an initial boom) veg bag numbers saw a dip once the lockdown ended. However, we are experiencing a gradual increase in interest once again and, now that we have purchased a farm, growth in existing supply as well as potential new markets are opening up to us (in Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helen's etc.). We are confident that this increase in demand will continue and could grow significantly, especially as our story (and produce!) is becoming better known, we just need someone on the team with the time and skills to turn the interest in our produce into sales.

We are looking for someone with the experience, skills, energy and commitment to make this happen.

Main Duties include:

This role will be to help us to increase the markets for our delicious veg grown at Kindling Farm as well as that grown at our Woodbank Market garden site in Stockport and other local organic growers that we work with. This can be done via a number of routes including:

Veg Box People in Greater Manchester

Helping us to greatly increase the number of veg bags we sell each week and encourage large institutional buyers to buy our local organic fresh produce. The key focuses will include:

1. Increasing our veg bag numbers through proactive in person sales and marketing. This will include having stalls at our collection points, approaching new collection points, attending events etc.
2. Building on and developing our strategy to increase veg bag numbers to 1,000 customers over the next 3 years. Help us reach a target of 500 bags by the end of your first year of employment up from 370 presently.
3. Explore opportunities to supply additional public institutions (on top of the University of Manchester, who we already supply) and other large scale buyers (this could include cafes and restaurants but will need a minimum order to ensure viability and systems to avoid build up of debt).
4. Working with the Communications Coordinator to combine and implement market and communications strategies.
5. Working with the team to refine our systems in a way that will improve our customer care and make efficiencies whilst ensuring our veg remains top quality on delivery.

New potential markets locally to Kindling Farm

Helping us to develop potential new markets for the fresh produce, cereals and pulses we will grow at the farm, for example by:

1. Identifying:
 - Other existing similar businesses (*we want to work together with, not compete with other local veg box schemes, farm shops, etc.*)
 - Customers who would buy from us directly at Kindling Farm
 - Other potential veg collection points in Knowsley
 - Public sector institutions and other large scale buyers in Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helen's etc
2. Developing a strategy to build these new markets
3. Working with us to implement that strategy: working with the Kindling Farm team to make initial contacts, build relationships and develop active customers and sales.
4. Working with the communications coordinator to combine and implement market and communications strategies
5. Work with us to better integrate our sales and farming activities for our greatly increased food production.
6. Help us to explore markets for potential new product lines (e.g. signature crops, pulses, cereals)

General responsibilities

1. Reporting progress to our Board of Directors

2. Reflecting the Group's vision and principles, strategy and policies at all times.
3. Working with other members of the team in order to fulfill your role
4. Fulfilling such other duties and assignments as may be required from time to time.

Person Specification:

Competence, Skills and Knowledge:

Excellent business skills and experience.

Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

Experience and/or skills in sales and marketing.

Experience and skills in communications and publicity work.

Experience of and ability to engage people from a variety of backgrounds.

Problem-solving skills.
Analytical skills.

Good planning, prioritising and organisational skills.

Good administration and IT skills.

Personal:

Awareness and understanding of the challenges within the food and farming sector.

Enthusiasm and dedication to ecological justice and social change issues.

Ability to encourage and get the best out of individuals.

Flexibility to work in various work conditions including traveling to meet people in different locations (mentioned above).

Drive and enthusiasm to meet set objectives. A high degree of personal motivation and initiative, the ability to work under pressure, whilst working cooperatively in a team environment.

Ability to learn on the job, and respond to possibilities and potential opportunities.

Willingness and flexibility to undertake any relevant training required.