

Museum of Fine Arts Houston (MFAH) Head of Marketing and Communications

The MFAH seeks a hands-on senior marketing executive to: drive outreach to the region's diverse audiences; maximize attendance to the museum's exhibitions, programs and events; oversee branding; and continually enhance the museum's standing among visual arts professionals, collectors, artists and donors.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, functions as an integrated visual arts experience centered in one of the nation's great cities. Counted amongst North America's largest museums, the [MFAH](#) has [permanent collections](#) spanning more than 6,000 years of history with 64,000 works from six continents. The main campus encompasses 14 acres in the heart of Houston's Museum District, with buildings contributed by world-renowned architects housing permanent collections; 300,000 square feet of permanent and temporary exhibition spaces; a variety of horticultural features and visually stunning gardens, fountains and outdoor exhibition areas; restaurants and arts-themed retail shops; school, classroom, research and lecture hall facilities; archives, libraries and conservation facilities; and administrative offices. During most of the transformative [campus redevelopment](#) that has been in process since 2012, annual attendance reached a high of 1.25 million despite significant construction. The project is nearing completion, with opening celebrations scheduled at the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021.

[Houston](#) stands among America's largest cities by population and area, is incredibly diverse racially and ethnically, and is an economic powerhouse with a very strong arts ecosystem that attracts over 7 million visitors alone to the [Museum District](#), where the MFAH is centered. The MFAH employs over 663 permanent and temporary staff funded solely by MFAH; 400 docents support the educational mission; and 1,500 volunteers support a broad range of MFAH activities. Marketing and Communications has a full-time staff of 7.

The annual budget is approximately \$70 million. Annual income breaks down roughly as follows: 1% funded by the City of Houston in personnel and operating costs; 25% in contributions from major gifts, philanthropic grants, sponsorships and restricted gifts; 5% in membership dues; 3% from tuition and other programming; 9% from retail operations, facilities rentals, various services provided by MFAH and miscellaneous revenue; 6% in tickets for general admissions and special exhibitions; and 51% from the endowment. Marketing has an annual budget of about \$2 million**.

BASIC FUNCTION

The Head of Marketing and Communications will lead, plan, direct and implement strategies for all marketing on behalf of the MFAH, and will be specifically accountable for:

- Maximizing outreach and engagement to diverse audiences across greater Houston;
- Maximizing online, social media and mobile engagement and interactions;
- Maximizing general admissions and special exhibition attendance;
- Maximizing visitor and patron engagement in education, public programs and events;
- Continually improving awareness of MFAH, its brand, exhibitions, collections and thought leadership among visual arts professionals, collectors, artists and donors.

Attendance to MFAH exhibitions, programs and events is the single most important indicator of success for the Marketing and Communications Department.

The Marketing Head will ensure that data collected in the course of marketing outreach is accurate, comprehensive and useful to MFAH's Director and his leadership team as they shape strategy. Such data is particularly useful to efforts to maximize earned and contributed revenue as MFAH seeks to engage visitors and members in further support of MFAH.

The Head of Marketing and Communications will monitor and specifically seek to engage a diverse array of visitors of all ages, backgrounds, ethnic origins, economic means, linguistic and cultural traditions, including a mix of Houston residents and visitors. The MFAH cultivates new audiences for the visual arts, and seeks to make the newly refreshed campus enticing to those who currently visit museums frequently and those who have never visited a museum. This is not a museum reserved for the select few; rather, MFAH evangelizes for the visual arts among those who love sports, popular entertainment and movies, those who work with their hands and in offices. MFAH is a quintessentially Houston, Texas, American and international institution, and the marketing organization must be able to powerfully advance these multiple identities. The organization as a whole feels that engagement of new audiences is critically important to the health and vitality of the community, Houston's economic future, and the quality of life of Houston's workforce, citizens and guests to the city.

The individual will position MFAH, its brand, venues, collections, programs, events, curators, art and artists with the public and the media. Perception can be difficult to measure, but is nonetheless critical to the vitality of the organization because positive perception translates into visitors, members and contributors. Attendance metrics, regardless of whether free, sponsored, ticketed or by members; whether by individuals or groups to exhibitions, events, education programs or just to publicly accessible areas of the campus... all are important to the success of the MFAH.

Working in close partnership with MFAH's Director, and the management team, the Head of Marketing and Communications will be a catalyst for innovation, creating plans for new communication channels and refreshing the customer outreach infrastructure of MFAH. The Marketing Head must "see around corners" and anticipate visitor interests and behaviors by carefully analyzing data to shape practical, real-world, highly visible marketing initiatives aligned to the Director's strategies.

The Head of Marketing and Communications will also manage, recruit and retain a small marketing department of top-notch staff and contractors capable of supporting MFAH's conventional (video/audio/print), and new (online/mobile/social) media marketing and communications needs in the future. It is critical that all marketing strategies are sustainable, offer a positive return on any financial investment and are consistent with the organization's overall arts agenda and business objectives.

PRIORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Head of Marketing and Communications will be expected to:

- Rapidly acclimate to the organization; thoroughly know the history, culture, traditions and base of financial support of the MFAH; understand the complexities of marketing in-person experiences of the MFAH redeveloped campus; also know all functions of the Marketing Department including public relations, advertising, communications, the use of the web and social media, connection to ticketing and connection to fundraising, approaching activities and strategies with the highest level of innovation and

entrepreneurship; serve as staff liaison and partner with various committees on all critical marketing and communications initiatives;

- Develop marketing plans and strategies that advance the artistic vision and drive attendance; with the Chief Financial Officer, develop pricing strategies and ticket prices for programs that, along with attendance, enable MFAH to meet earned income goals; engage all members of the MFAH family in the effort to maximize earned income;
- Understand the various communities that make up the diverse audience for the visual arts; be an interactive and collaborative partner with colleagues throughout the organization, educating them on the marketing and communications challenges of maximizing engagement by diverse audience cohorts;
- Develop, implement and maintain brand strategies and consistent messaging across all channels that complement both short- and long-term goals of MFAH; oversee all public relations efforts including but not limited to driving public awareness of MFAH's permanent collections, temporary exhibitions, education programs, public programming, events and facilities;
- Manage all audience and market research, including but not limited to: print, electronic and media advertising, direct mail telemarketing, social media platforms, etc.;
- Provide leadership to the department in all respects, including mentoring, hiring, day-to-day management and motivation of marketing staff and contractors, ensuring professional excellence; manage relationships with a broad range of public relations, advertising, merchandising and communications vendors, partners, arts sector influencers and subcontractors;
- Stay informed on: new distribution channels for news and information; electronic and social media as tools for serving, informing and engaging constituents, and for retaining contact after their museum visit; marketing trends across the museum and arts field; and technology that might be adopted by MFAH to advance its objectives;
- Oversee budgeting and planning functions for all components of the Marketing Department; collaborate with MFAH leaders to maximize total MFAH earned and contributed revenue from individuals, organizations and businesses and foundations.

EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS and CHARACTERISTICS

The ideal candidate will have the following:

- Significant experience with marketing that increases audience/visitor mind-share, engagement and attendance is a pre-requisite for success in this position, as is solid experience managing a complex marketing department; demonstrated hands-on experience in direct sales organizations offering experiences to customers through memberships and ticketing distributed at the point-of-sale, via the web or through alliance partners, would be beneficial;
- Sophisticated marketing, branding and public relations experience, with a track record of conceiving and implementing successful, innovative marketing strategies, plans and programs for museums, other arts organizations, or other ticket-selling/audience development organizations with a reputation for quality and excellence; broad-based knowledge of the full range of marketing techniques and tools, including branding,

advertising, direct marketing, market research and interactive technologies;

- Proven ability to manage and work with a diverse group of personalities, particularly in shaping a positive perception and experience for constituents in order to involve them more closely in the work of MFAH;
- A successful record as a change agent who is politically astute and able to work collaboratively across organizational lines; demonstrated ability to gain the respect and support of the museum's Director and various constituencies, including board members, curators, education and public program professionals, development and finance staff, partner organizations, and other stakeholders;
- Demonstrated ability to plan, organize and manage key functions of communications, including cultivating and maintaining media contacts, and developing and implementing public relations and marketing strategies with the goal of driving attendance to exhibitions and events;
- Excellent written and verbal communication and persuasion skills, with ability to present effectively internally and externally from Board level to peers and subordinates as well as patrons, donors and community business and government leaders;
- Bachelor's degree with a major in business, liberal arts, social sciences or related disciplines; advanced degree is preferred; familiarity with technology and how different technologies can be used to improve awareness and brand loyalty, drive ticket sales, improve the customer service experience, track performance indicators and provide for a lean and effective department infrastructure.
- Outgoing and straightforward; one who shares information easily, listens as well as gives advice and respects the abilities of others; critical thinker who can analyze data, capitalize on information, and develop and implement strategic marketing initiatives and plans; a confident, intelligent and articulate self-starter and finisher who is creative, energetic, accountable and entrepreneurial, yet collaborative and team-oriented;
- Well-organized and deadline-oriented, with exceptional attention to detail and follow-through; able to work both in structured and planned environment, and in situations where rapid response and instant decision-making is required;
- Emotionally mature and self-possessed; patient and tactful, with a sense of humor and the sensitivity to work with diverse personalities; persuasive and persistent in the pursuit of the organization's marketing goals.

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