

Job Description: Head of Digital Product

Reports to: Product Strategy Director

Line manages: Digital Content Lead

Location: Currently operating hybrid working in our West London Office

Contract: Permanent

Pattern: Full Time (standard hours 9am – 5.30pm)

Salary: £65,000

About the role:

The Head of Digital Product is accountable for the digital product strategy and all aspects of the digital user experience of AC+ programmes. They will work as a tight-knit team with the Product Strategy Director and other Heads of Product to ensure this coheres to create a compelling offer that brings AC+ strategy to life and meets school and MAT needs in a commercially sustainable way. They will own, develop and deliver a digital roadmap to drive increased impact and financial returns.

The digital roadmap is informed by closely working with customers unpicking their needs and usage and other relevant data. They also work closely with the Education Director and relevant Heads of Subject to understand educational priorities across all components of our subject excellence programmes. They have a deep understanding of the competitive landscape, the potential market for new developments, and needs within Ark Schools, other current users and non-users. They lead a small internal digital content team and manage our external platform supplier(s) and digital partners to implement agreed developments, ensuring strong project and product management processes are in place and followed. They work closely with the Partnerships and Fundraising teams, as appropriate, to ensure the benefits of the programmes and new developments are well understood and communicated and sales and renewal targets are met.

Key Responsibilities:

Leadership

- Contribute to and implement the organisation's strategy and mission
- Lead the organisation's understanding of and vision digital experiences, and communicate and implement this vision, to contribute to the overall organisational mission, strategy and sustainability
- Work with Ark Schools other digital platforms and relevant stakeholders to share, learn from each other and align where appropriate
- Bring together departments and subject teams and lead them towards a coherent digital user experience that delights teachers and subject leaders in schools
- Lead identified cross functional projects and activities as appropriate
- Present as necessary to the AC+ Leadership team and Ark Schools' Steering Committee

Educational best practice and impact

- Work closely with the Education Director and relevant Heads of Subject to understand the vision for subject excellence underpinning AC+'s portfolio of programmes
- Ensure that best practice is at the forefront of developments across all digital experiences so that the impact of our subject excellence programmes is amplified
- Establish and maintain relationships with the wider educational and digital community

Market insights

- Build a clear and coherent understanding of all AC+ educational markets and user needs
- Build and share a strong understanding of competitor propositions and how AC+ wins against these
- Conduct school visits, user testing, interviews and other feedback mechanisms including review of usage data, to observe and gain feedback to inform future developments and iterations
- Use strategies to continuously test, learn and refine ideas throughout the product development process
- Assess the market for new product concepts and maintain a deep understanding of current users' experience and renewals behaviour
- Work with the Product Strategy Director to continue to improve feedback mechanisms to strengthen market insights

Product management

- Based on these insights and educational priorities, develop a roadmap for digital developments to set AC+ up for success
- Define, propose and deliver digital products and iterations through tools such as user journeys, and manage technical implementations with internal resources and external suppliers
- Build strong proposals/business cases to justify new developments/products
- Work with the Product Strategy Director and other Heads of Product to phase developments within the cashflow available, to be affordable and sustainable
- Influence internal and external stakeholders including funders to further of the digital experiences.
- Manage and support pilot programmes in building launch proposals, consistencies with other programmes and setting them up for success prior to launch

Developments and project management

- Manage our digital platform supplier(s) and digital partnerships to deliver the best user experience for teachers and leaders on our programmes
- Build strong relationships at all levels of the digital platform supplier(s) and external digital partnerships' organisations and drive a shared understanding and vision for the AC+ digital experience
- Challenge and monitor implementation plans for new developments, monitoring progress, problem-solving, and mitigating risks to ensure releases are on time, within scope and budget and to a high quality
- Work in an agile way, testing and gaining customer input and failing fast, with the aim of ensuring developments meet school needs and have a positive impact. This includes agreeing and implementing consistent processes to co-create and test new developments with Ark and other MATs
- Ensure clear release schedules and scoping documents are in place and work closely with the digital platform supplier and internal Content Lead to stay within scope
- Lead and manage a consistent and rigorous quality assurance process, ensuring subject and delivery teams remain engaged in the process and deliver their commitments on time
- Create or input into clear guidance and policy documents ensuring digital aspects of design principles are considered and implemented pan programme

Commercial leadership

- Input into AC+'s evolving long term vision and participate in strategy days as required
- Build and lead the programme strategies across the relevant programme portfolio
- Ensure the product life cycle 1- and 3-year growth plans and prioritisations are clear, approved by leadership and Ark Schools and realistic within available cashflow
- Ensure all developments align with a viable business case, prioritising elements that create the highest impact within commercial constraints, and seeking the most cost-effective ways to deliver them
- Work closely with the Product Strategy Director to contribute to the financial planning, forecasting and organisational planning processes for the digital portfolio
- Oversee and manage the digital budget, ensuring costs and expenditure are within plan
- Use digital enhancements to challenge AC+ teams to build pan programme consistencies

Partnerships and fundraising

- Work collaboratively with the Partnerships team to build business cases for digital developments, particularly those relating to renewal revenue
- Work with the Partnerships team to ensure the digital benefits of the programmes are well understood and communicated to enable sales and renewals targets are met
- Work closely with the Partnerships team to lead external partnerships. Build proposals for new external partnerships by evaluating, producing cost/benefit analysis and presenting to the Leadership team
- In conjunction with the Leadership and fundraising team, develop relationships with existing and potential funders. Create proposals, updates and meet with funders as appropriate to secure funding for organisational priorities and priorities within their portfolio of programmes

Line management

- Recruit, manage and mentor staff as required and be accountable for line managing the Digital Content Lead
- Lead and inspire their team to meet defined goals and objectives
- Ensure effective induction and orientation processes for all team members
- Ensure there is a strong learning and development (L&D) programme for team members to equip them to meet their goals

Person Specification: Head of Digital Product

Qualifications

- Educated to degree level
- Shows a significant commitment to ongoing professional development and specialist qualifications

Knowledge & Skills

- Experience managing external suppliers/partnerships through change to deliver a roadmap of product developments
- Digital Product experience – being able to translate user needs into a digital product
- Working with developers and technical professionals
- Leadership and team building skills
- Creative thinking and customer empathy: the ability to articulate new propositions based on customer needs
- Demonstrates interest in education developments and best practice in teaching
- Able to actively listen and provide radical candour
- Ability to multi-task and re-prioritise workload quickly
- Strong understanding of the performance management cycle and how to drive a high-performance culture
- Experience of leading, coaching and managing teams to deliver a consistently high performance to meet defined goals and objectives
- Strong negotiation skills and experience of working with external partners
- Expert communicator
- Has a strategic outlook when making decisions, recognising the wider impact
- An understanding of the opportunities and challenges of working in the non-profit sector

Personal Qualities

- An experienced and confident leader with a proven ability to lead and implement change effectively and sustainably
- Ability to probe, challenge and question appropriately and strive for continual improvement
- Highly developed communication and interpersonal skills
- Vision aligned with AC+'s high aspirations and expectations of self and others
- Enjoys working in a fast-paced, ambitious organisation
- Demonstrates commitment to personal development

Other

- Right to work in the UK
- Understanding of the education landscape and issues affecting education (desirable)
- Understanding of the digital and AI landscape
- Personal values aligned with those of AC+, with a genuine passion for education and a belief in the potential of every pupil
- Commitment to equality of opportunity and the safeguarding and welfare of all students
- Willingness to undertake training
- This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check

Ark is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in its academies. In order to meet this responsibility, its academies follow a rigorous selection process to discourage and screen out unsuitable applicants.

Ark requires all employees to undertake an enhanced DBS check. You are required, before appointment, to disclose any unspent conviction, cautions, reprimands or warnings under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. Non-disclosure may lead to termination of employment. However, disclosure of a criminal background will not necessarily debar you from employment - this will depend upon the nature of the offence(s) and when they occurred. To read more about Ark's safer recruitment process, please click this [link](#).

We aim to build a diverse and inclusive organisation where everyone – staff and students – can do their best work and achieve their full potential. We want to reflect and represent diverse perspectives across our organisation because we know that doing so will make us stronger and more effective. To know more about Ark's diversity and inclusion commitments, please click on this [link](#).