

The Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) Deputy Director for Museum Operations & COO

The ROM seeks an experienced museum professional to manage much of the organization's administrative infrastructure as the CEO's designee, including advancing and directing day-to-day implementation of the ROM's new 10-Year Strategic Plan.

Intrinsic to this role is extensive experience and a track record of success managing museum operations and finances within the context of an internationally prominent museum, as well as extensive familiarity with best practice and innovative approaches in non-operating aspects of museum life, from curatorial and collections management, to exhibitions and programming.

Candidates must hold an earned place of respect among other top museum professionals who will depend on the COO's leadership and judgment.

BACKGROUND

The [Royal Ontario Museum](#) is Canada's largest museum and houses one of the world's great permanent [collections](#) of art, cultural artifacts and natural history specimens. With exhibitions and collections that span the globe and cut across time, the ROM is an indispensable resource for building community by nurturing discovery and inspiring wonder.

The ROM welcomes approximately 1,350,000 visitors including 100,000 students annually, has a membership of over 32,000 households and an annual operating budget of about CA\$65 million. Of this, about CA\$33m is supported by earned income led by revenue from admissions, programming and events/concessions; CA\$5m comes from private philanthropic support, and CA\$27m is funded by the Province of Ontario. There is a CA\$140 million endowment, of which roughly two-thirds is held by a third party and directed towards acquisitions, publications and endowed curatorial positions. Individual curators also benefit from cross-appointments with the University of Toronto, and much of their research is funded separately through grants. Over 550 full- and part-time staff and 1,200 volunteers and docents support the ROM.

The ROM is transforming the way it engages with diverse audiences and partners, and is committed to an increasingly trans-disciplinary, participatory and public facing approach. This visitor and partner-centered strategy presents artworks, objects and specimens in ways that reflect different viewpoints and interpretative perspectives. A 10-Year Strategic Plan has been developed that will transform: a) the ROM's approach to collecting, exhibiting and contextualizing objects, b) its relationship with its audience, c) its physical and on-line footprint, and d) its internal infrastructure and workflows. This transformation is being funded by a Capital & Endowment Campaign that will run in parallel to implementation of various aspects of the 10-Year Strategic Plan.

The ROM's overarching objective is to be perceived as a [must-visit](#) institution by audiences across Canada and internationally, and by 2028 to be viewed as a leading model for 21st century museums to emulate in terms of audience engagement, [exhibitions](#) & [programming](#), and museum best practices.

The COO will be responsible for managing and transforming the organization's operating infrastructure, and will take a leading role in managing day-to-day delivery of diverse improvement projects tied to the Strategic Plan.

Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer Royal Ontario Museum

BASIC FUNCTION

Reporting to the Director & CEO, the COO is responsible for ROM's operations and infrastructure, including Facilities (security, maintenance and housekeeping functions) and Finance (budgeting, accounting, controlling, payroll, purchasing and contract compliance functions).

The most important responsibility of the COO is her/his role in managing the day-to-day implementation of the 10-Year Strategic Plan as the designee of the CEO. This Plan consists of projects, budgets and reporting that will cut across departments in both the operating and content side of the institution, and involve seconded resources that come together in staff, board, volunteer, vendor and subcontractor teams to deliver projects defined by discrete objectives, milestone deliverables and resources allocated.

The COO must possess strong experience in project planning, budgeting, definition of critical path dependencies, organizational design, and project accounting. Many of these projects will involve a form of matrix management and budgeting across departments. The COO must have strong experience balancing differing priorities and personalities, an ability to bring structure and controls to ambiguity, and a high degree of emotional intelligence.

ROM is embarking on a major physical renovation project with a budget of about CA\$300M. The COO must possess: strong experience overseeing cross-functional teams dedicated to developing and delivering on major capital projects; an understanding of how to assure smooth back-of-house operations during a period of great change; and an ability to deliver a quality patron experience while the museum undergoes substantial physical upgrades to public spaces.

The COO will function as the operations management extension of the CEO, with the understanding that the CEO will set and periodically adjust the organization's course. The ROM's Deputy Director for Collections & Research, Deputy Director for Engagement, Chief Human Resources Officer, Chief Digital Officer, and Chief Marketing Officer all manage departments that report directly to the CEO, yet all will interact with the COO and be accountable to her/him for delivery of certain kinds of project outcomes. Similarly, while the COO's office will include the CFO and his/her area of responsibility, the CFO will also be an Executive Management Team member and will interact directly and independently with the CEO. The COO must possess well-rounded museum-based experience in order to be effective in the central coordinating role envisioned, and must encourage others across the ROM to take on the mindset and strategic intent of the CEO. About CA\$18m – \$22m is allocated to support the departmental activities of the COO, with 91 full-time and 25 part-time staff assigned.

The COO will catalyze, coordinate and implement change across the organization in accordance with the 10-Year Strategic Plan; proactively collaborate with the Director & CEO, the President of ROM Governors, other members of the staff and Board, various partners, consultants and vendors; and make the ROM THE must-visit museum in North America.

INITIAL PRIORITIES

- Understand the Royal Ontario Museum as a whole— its history, culture, structure, facilities, budgets, finances, revenue streams, collections, exhibitions, programs, projects, visitors, volunteers, docents, and the surrounding communities, including individuals and organizations served through programs and ROM partners; establish productive and collaborative working relationships with colleagues, board members, patrons, volunteers, partners and vendors;

Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer Royal Ontario Museum

- Review the current state of play of the museum's finances and operations, taking charge of in-process departmental work; provide for a secure, safe, high quality working and operating environment for staff and patrons, and for timely, efficient, accurate and effective workflows, reports, controls, etc; implement responsible planning and budgeting, strong cost controls, and accurate reporting systems;
- Develop an in-depth understanding of ROM's 10-Year Strategic Plan; partner with the Director and CEO to transform the Strategic Plan into discrete actionable projects with budgets, assigned staff and subcontractor resources, discrete measurable objectives and timeframes; manage project implementation;
- Partner with the Director & CEO on planning and oversight related to the upcoming major physical renovation project, and with the President of the ROM Governors on the interrelationship between the Capital Campaign and the funding needed to realize this project;
- Serve as a visible proponent for ROM locally, nationally, and internationally, assuring that the interests of ROM are advanced and fully understood, and are at the forefront of museum practice and innovation; appropriately manage various relationships with government oversight agencies, partners, vendors and contractors;
- Work closely with the Director & CEO, the President of the ROM Governors, and with colleagues on advancing the ROM as an institution of unique importance within the museum field.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate should have the following experience and qualifications:

- Proven managerial, problem-solving and planning capabilities and significant financial, administrative, human resources, bond debt management and day-to-day operating responsibility in a museum, experiential learning or similar institution of significant size and scope; prior experience as a COO, CFO, Museum Director or Deputy Director or equivalent is desirable;
- A strong, hands-on background in museum workflows, financial management, budgeting and planning, procedures and controls, and analysis and reporting; an understanding of the strategies and mechanics of budgeting aligned to funding and managing the expenses of a museum institution undergoing significant transformation would be useful; experience in governmental processes and funding is desirable; familiarity with the essential role philanthropic support and restricted funds play in the creation of a sustainable museum financial model is a must;
- Facility and comfort with technology; an ability to successfully integrate financial and information systems to support a rapidly evolving museum; knowledge of and experience with financial, project accounting, project management and other applications systems is highly desirable;
- A mature level of judgment and decision-making in a changing, forward-thinking operating and customer service environment; the ability to collaborate and explain financial and project workflow management concepts to people who do not have such experience; exercises tact, skill and diplomacy when engaging in negotiations with colleagues, other entities, officials, contractors, employees and their representatives;

Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer Royal Ontario Museum

formulates and expresses ideas concisely, clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing; the ability to guide and counsel colleagues, partners, employees and others;

- A high energy level and an ability to solve problems and manage multiple activities and responsibilities; a high degree of patience, attention to detail, good humor and fortitude in managing relationships with various parties within a museum context, including with unions, vendors and other partners;
- Demonstrated ability to forge mutually-respectful and effective relationships with a diverse group of personalities in a collegial and cooperative manner, including members of the Board, volunteers, staff, unions, supporters, auditors, accrediting orgs, government officials, vendors, etc;
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills, including the means to address issues in non-confrontational and non-polarizing ways, but nevertheless with determination; the presence and credibility to serve as an effective spokesperson for the ROM, especially in operational and financial matters.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate should be:

- A mission-driven individual with a passion for museums; analytical and strategic, yet tactically skilled in translating ideas and principals into practical programs and exhibitions that conveys knowledge through engaging story-telling; an entrepreneurial attitude with a passion for innovative approaches;
- A team builder— confident and competent, with strong skills in management and leadership; one who understands the subtleties of motivating and directing a diverse group of personalities with different work styles;
- A good listener and strategist; comfortable receiving input from many internal and external sources, and able to analyze and formulate disparate information into sound, well-organized plans;
- An individual with outstanding human qualities; one who is straightforward, flexible, shares information easily, listens as well as gives advice, and respects the abilities of others; someone who projects trustworthiness, integrity, and solidity and guides others in a similar vein; a graceful communicator and tactful diplomat who acts as an ambassador for the ROM and engages the active support of diverse constituents; and
- Results-oriented, adept at seeing the big-picture, planning, prioritizing, organizing, and following through; a hard worker with a high energy level; emotionally mature with a sense of humor and an ability to maintain balance and perspective.

For further information, please contact:

Dennis Hanthorn
(404)806-8200
dennish@moppenheim.com

Mark Oppenheim
(415)762-2640
marko@moppenheim.com

m/Oppenheim Associates
425 Market Street, Suite 1020
San Francisco, CA 94105