

What could a School Business Manager do for you?

Running a successful school today is often compared to running a business. Investing in a School Business Manager can help you get the most out of your school.

The challenges of running a 21st-century school are many and complex. A headteacher holds ultimate responsibility for developing and implementing strategy, as well as being accountable for the smooth day-to-day running of the school. This is all in addition to the time required to maintain and raise standards of teaching and learning.

A headteacher needs to build a leadership team with a wide range of professional skills – both teaching and support staff – to fulfil these responsibilities. This is where a School Business Manager (SBM) can alleviate pressure, become a key member of the senior leadership team, and share the managerial and administrative complexities of running a school. A good SBM will support your teaching and learning programme by ensuring the most effective use of resources and securing the best possible outcome for pupils.

It is important to recognise that the role of an SBM is not set in stone. It can be adapted to serve the specific needs of your school. First and foremost, they are well placed to ensure the school makes best use of its budget, buildings and resources, as well as contributing to the delivery of:

- School improvement and fundraising initiatives
- Human resource systems and processes
- Professional development and performance management of support staff
- Improved integrated working with extended school services, such as community liaison
- Effective management of administration, facilities and buildings
- Marketing and communications.



SBMs can help headteachers achieve a better work/life balance

SBMs - the stats

- Recent NCSL research shows that an effective School Business Manager can save a headteacher up to one third of their time
- Since 2002, over 5,000 School Business Managers have been trained
- NCSL projections suggest that there will be a need for 13,000 School Business Managers as more schools adopt the model over the next few years
- By identifying savings and additional funding, a School Business Manager can help the average primary school increase their budget by £18,000, and the average secondary school by £56,000.

With support in these crucial areas, a headteacher will have more opportunity to concentrate on their strategic priorities. This can help them to focus on teaching and learning, raising attainment levels, developing teaching staff and improving their own skills.

Equally importantly, an SBM can help headteachers achieve a better work/life balance and this has long term benefits for them, for you and for your school.

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Recruiting an SBM

The role of the SBM varies greatly from school to school. This means that there is no standard job description for the role and many schools are not sure how to attract the right person with the right skill sets to meet their specific needs.

First of all you need to identify the type of SBM that you need, and then begin the step-by-step process of recruiting the ideal candidate. Key to this is creating a bespoke job description, which will help you better understand what you are looking for. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Why do you want an SBM? For example, are you looking for an HR expert to help with a restructure, someone with strong financial skills to get the most out of your budget, or a marketing professional to increase your community profile?
- What do you want them to achieve in the short, medium and long-term?
- Where will they sit within your management structure in order to meet their objectives?
- Are there particular characteristics that you would like your SBM to have? For example, a good communicator, an innovator or leader?

SBM salaries

Many SBMs are paid less than £25,000 a year, others are paid more than £50,000.

A bursar in an independent school can earn upwards of £70,000. It all depends on the scope of responsibility.

As the role of the business manager is becoming more widely acknowledged, the salary is increasing accordingly.

Answering these questions will help you to formulate a job description that describes exactly who you want and how they can fully contribute to your school. The next step is to start looking for candidates in the right places.

Where to find your SBM

SBMs working in schools today have a range of career backgrounds. A third come from the financial sector, and with the recent economic downturn, more may be looking for jobs in alternative sectors, such as education. The remaining two thirds have experience



working in schools as teachers, governors or admin staff. Ultimately a good SBM needs to bridge both worlds, demonstrating the ability to run a school like a business without making it feel like a business.

It can seem daunting as you could find your SBM in any sector. Working with a recruitment specialist will help you to target the right sector. They will advise the relevant media to advertise in and can create an engaging advertising campaign to talk to each audience in the right way which will result in



highly qualified and talented people applying for the role.

Qualifications

Once your business manager is in place, there are formal qualifications that they can work towards. The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) offers three courses: the Certificate of School Business Management designed for those who want to train as an SBM; and the Diploma and Advanced Diploma of School Business Management which aim to help SBMs further their skills.

“The school business manager role is becoming increasingly significant in terms of management and leadership.”
NCSL

▶ Number crunch

50%

of secondary school business managers work at a strategic level

29%

of business managers have a business or professional qualification

36%

of secondary school business managers are paid on the leadership scale

64%

of business managers say finance is their most important responsibility

Source: NCSL School Business Managers: their role in distributed leadership. Summer 2008

Succession planning – the key to success

All high-performing organisations need leaders with a range of experience. Leadership training alone cannot provide the hands-on experience that is critical for creating skilled and confident leaders.

Succession planning is fundamental to the future success of your school. A robust plan will enable you to take positive steps to identify and develop talented leaders in your school. If you plan ahead, you will have a greater chance of securing a supply of well-qualified leaders for the future.

The process of succession planning will help you to identify your current and future leadership needs so that you can retain, recruit and develop leaders with the right mix of skills, qualifications and experience to deliver your short, medium and long term priorities. Your succession plan should filter down through your entire staff structure so that you can identify and harness talent at every level. This will enable you to create opportunities for talented teachers to grow into leadership roles more rapidly while finding ways to utilise more experienced leaders.

Core components of a succession plan

There is no one model for succession planning and there are no hard and fast rules. But most good succession plans will include the following components:

- The future of the school – how it is likely to change over the coming years
- Key short, medium and long term goals of your school (informed by your school improvement plan and other key strategic initiatives)

Questions to ask yourself

- What staffing and skills do we need to implement the school development plans?
- What posts do we know we have to fill to replace staff leaving in the next two to three years?
- Are we confident in our capacity to cope with resignations or long-term absences?
- How does our staffing profile compare with similar schools?
- Do we have links with other schools to share opportunities for leadership development?
- Can we use forthcoming recruitment opportunities to strengthen leadership capacity?
- Can we improve the marketing of vacancies to highlight our commitment to leadership development?
- How do we integrate leadership development into the appraisal process?

- Identification of the key skills required to deliver those goals
- A grid mapping out your current leadership structure (including skills and experience)
- A grid mapping out your ideal leadership structure (including skills and experience)
- Gaps between where you are and where you want to be
- An action plan outlining how you will address any gaps in your leadership capability

 Meet us



The TES Prime recruitment team will be attending some key events over the next few months. We hope to see you there.

Tuesday 2 & Wednesday 3 June

ISC Annual Conference
London

Wednesday 10, Thursday 11 & Friday 12 June

NCSL Annual Conference
ICC, Birmingham

Monday 22 & Tuesday 23 June

NCSL Achieving world class schools *In search of excellence – exploring the impact of the school business manager conference –*
Manchester United Football Stadium

 **TES Prime**

If you have any ideas for future issues or questions you would like our recruitment experts to answer, contact us at info@tesprime.com



Carbon footprint

If you would prefer to receive *Governor Focus* electronically, send your email address to: aileen.grant@tesprime.com