

CURTIS BROWN

Literary and talent agency

JOB DESCRIPTION: Assistant to Cathryn Summerhayes - Book Department

PURPOSE OF ROLE:

This will be an evolving role which changes as the assistant gains experience. It will also be dependent on the level of publishing experience the candidate currently has. Curtis Brown sees this as a potential training position for someone with some industry experience who wants to develop his or her skills and ultimately become an agent working alongside the team at Curtis Brown. Please note that this is not an entry level position.

MAIN DUTIES

To work closely with Cathryn Summerhayes and provide the best possible service to her authors, potential clients, publishing and publicity partners.

To carry out administrative duties and projects where required for the Book Department and help Cathryn to develop her list and find new writers.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1 Client Care and promotion

- 1.1 Build and in-depth knowledge of clients, titles and genres represented by Cathryn Summerhayes.
- 1.2 Develop positive relationships with clients based on trust, speed of response and reliability. To offer excellent client care which builds loyalty to Curtis Brown.
- 1.3 Maintain the publication schedule including liaison with clients, publishers, editors and production team to ensure smooth transition from delivery to publication.
- 1.4 Ensure that the Curtis Brown website offers maximum promotion and opportunities for all clients and their titles, working with them on the creation of interesting profiles, according to Curtis Brown style guidelines. Updating the website with new information and news stories according to style guidelines. Flagging up items for Curtis Brown's Facebook page and using Curtis Brown's Book Department Twitter account to help in the promotion of the clients and their work. Work with Cathryn in managing the day-to-day running of the website and submissions portal.
- 1.5 Coordinate with editors and publishers on behalf of clients. Track and make copies of press reviews, entering links to reviews on the Curtis Brown website. Negotiate client fees for articles and other projects. Work with Cathryn to maintain the Publisher List, an essential resource for the entire department.
- 1.6 Field permissions requests.
- 1.7 Handle requests and enquiries from clients, colleagues in other departments and other industry professionals.

- 1.8 Stay abreast of industry developments, seek new initiatives and identify opportunities for clients and for Curtis Brown.
- 1.9 Read manuscripts and produce reports as required.
- 1.10 Support Cathryn with administrative duties related to Literature Wales, Port Eliot Literary Festival and other one-off events as directed

2 Partner Agents

- 2.1 Work closely with agents in partner teams from ICM Agency. Keep track of scripts and ensure good communications.

3 Contracts and Finance

- 3.1. Process contracts, which includes: negotiation of some terms, drafting and keeping track of contracts for clients following agent negotiations.
- 3.2 Invoice for advances and fees once monies have been agreed and chase as required.
- 3.3 Ensure contracts are correctly administered and recorded and can be quickly accessed. Maintain and update Curtis Brown's in-house accounting system. Scan copies of contracts to 'Therefore' database system.
- 3.4 Ensure that Curtis Brown has an accurate record of all new client details including bank details and tax status.
- 3.5 Check and approve client statements when directed.
- 3.6 Send reversion letters when required and chase for responses.

4 Web-enabled and Digital Technology

- 4.1 Research ways of enhancing the department's services through the effective use of emerging technologies
- 4.2 Help to improve the experiences of publishers and other industry professionals who are searching on the Curtis Brown website for information about the department's clients
- 4.3 Assist in developing new ways of promoting the department's clients using new technology i.e. social media platforms.
- 4.4 Liaise with Curtis Brown's Digital Content Manager and staff in other departments to ensure a coherent approach to content on the Curtis Brown website

5 Unsolicited Material and New Talent

- 5.1 Build links and networks in and outside Curtis Brown to encourage new talent appropriate to the office.
- 5.2 Research background information on new authors and seek out potential authors for Curtis Brown.

- 5.3 Read enthusiastically and refer unsolicited material. Use templates for brief, constructive feedback to unsuccessful writers.
- 5.4 Take an active interest in literary trends in order to be able to evaluate new material.
- 5.5 Undertake editorial tasks. Hone editorial skills.
- 5.6 Take initiative in finding new material and identifying business opportunities.

6 Office Administration

- 6.1 Field and handle calls, deal with incoming/outgoing post and email messages.
- 6.2 Handle requests and enquiries from clients, colleagues in other departments and other industry professionals
- 6.3 Work closely with other members of the Book Department team, sharing information, ideas and networks.
- 6.4 Welcome visitors at reception on behalf of Cathryn, escort them through the office to their meeting.
- 6.5 Book and setting up meeting rooms in advance as directed including organising any refreshments.
- 6.6 Assist with arranging schedules for London and Frankfurt Book Fairs, and any other business travel abroad. Arrange travel (flights, trains, car-hire, taxis etc), accommodation and restaurant bookings etc. as required.

Our Ideal Candidate:

We're looking for a confident and dependable person to join our team, an enthusiastic professional wanting to take the next step in their publishing career. We need someone who can run a busy office, manage authors and their myriad needs whilst drafting accurate contracts which support the best possible deal. You will need to take responsibility for overseeing various areas, for example, author finances, invoicing, tax forms and the day-to-day checking of outstanding monies by liaising with our Accounts Team. You will be required to support the management of all stages of clients' publications, to spot and address any potential issues or problems at the earliest stage. You will also have to multitask, manage frequent interruptions and not be afraid to ask for your Agent's help!

You should have a creative flair, be clearly passionate about writing and writers and enjoy promoting clients through the website and social media and building strong, positive relationships with them. We need someone who can help utilise the Company website and social media channels for the benefit of clients. Cathryn likes to think of this role as a third member of the team for each author - where the team comprises herself, the author and her assistant in each case, all working closely together. She likes to work collaboratively and she values feedback on author material, cover design and copy, also feedback on submissions to her office.

We value assistants who are alert to industry developments and innovations, and we're looking for someone who is interested in thinking about and suggesting future possibilities for authors and their writing. We expect candidates to be voracious readers, aware of literary and cultural trends across genres (they should enjoy reading contemporary fiction and non-fiction) but they should also have a keen interest in other arts and media. Do you take a keen interest in culture, stay abreast of emerging publishing trends, and follow daily news? Are you curious about new publishing models and keen to learn about different genres? You should show us that you're eager to get out and about to as many publishing events, festivals, creative writing evenings and readings as possible. You will be expected to showcase your knowledge of cultural, media and technological trends and developments when helping Cathryn find new clients and in helping promote current clients' interests.

You will need to demonstrate that you are serious about becoming an agent one day.

Essential skills and qualities required for this position:

- Excellent organisational skills. Ability to prioritise effectively and perform basic administrative duties efficiently. Good record-keeping. Confidence to establish and implement new systems.
- Attention to detail, particularly when dealing with rights and contracts.
- Ability to manage a full and varied workload and work to tight deadlines without compromising on quality.
- Skills to remain calm under pressure, to know when to employ discretion and tact – and to always project a calm and reassuring manner to clients!
- Able to write good copy concerning authors and books for Curtis Brown’s website and catalogues.
- Excellent communication skills, able to deal effectively with colleagues and publishers and be appropriately attentive to clients and co-agents. A good phone and email manner essential. It is our aim to be as efficient as possible, so we encourage people to use the telephone whenever possible.
- Confident with IT including websites, Microsoft Word, Outlook and Excel. Unafraid of using new IT systems.
- Ability to read fast and engage critically with literary material and write concise and intelligent reports.
- Ability to handle a complex and often changing diary schedule and supporting your agent in meetings, thinking ahead, and providing material/information ahead of time where necessary.
- A versatile team player: As part of a lively department, this will be happy to use your skills to facilitate colleagues’ projects; to roll up your sleeves and pitch in.
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Experience:

- You should have 12 to 18 months’ experience of working at a publishing house or a literary agency.

Salary

- The salary range for this post is £23-25k p.a. depending on experience

To apply:

Please complete the application form and send it to Cathryn via jobs@curtisbrown.co.uk making sure that you put “Assistant – Cathryn Summerhayes” in the subject line of your message.

Closing date for applications is 30th January 2019

Please note short telephone interviews with first sift candidates will take place 31st January and 1st February, with face-to-face interviews for final shortlisted candidates taking place w/c 4th February.