Director, VolShop  
The Official Campus Store of the University of Tennessee

Introduction

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) seeks a collaborative, innovative and strategic Director of the VolShop, the Official Campus Store of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The director reports to the Associate Vice Chancellor of Operations and is responsible for the overall operation and development of the VolShop. The VolShop consists of multiple brick and mortar locations, a well preforming ecommerce site, an off-campus distribution center and a multitude of event locations during most sporting events. The candidate must be a forward thinker and be willing and able to continue the onward momentum of the VolShop’s success by implementing new strategies to expand locations and increase revenue.

The VolShop brand is the business leader within the bookstore industry. The innovative ideas and experiences implemented by the VolShop staff are seen by other bookstores as “iconic” and immensely important for bringing attention to the value of the independent college store platform. Other campus bookstores consistently look to the VolShop to guide the way for improving current practices and often request our assistance and insights for working with campus leadership, departments, and current customer base.

The University and Region: UTK is the state’s flagship, land-grant university. We are a Research 1 university, housing 11 colleges and 900+ programs of study. With an enrollment of 30,000 students, our undergraduate and graduate programs are repeatedly ranked among top national programs. The city of Knoxville is a hidden gem with a beautiful and walkable downtown, a diverse music scene, active neighborhoods, unique restaurants, and a robust offering of outdoor and cultural activities. UTK is located within easy driving distance to Asheville, Nashville, Atlanta, and the Great Smoky Mountains; and a day’s drive to Memphis, Chicago and Washington D.C. Knoxville and the surrounding counties have a statistical area population of over 850,000 people. The Knoxville region houses many leading corporations, including Bush Brothers & Company, Discovery Inc., Tennessee Valley Authority, and Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

The Opportunity

The director is the senior leader of the VolShop and exercises administrative oversight of the budgetary process and financial review of a twenty-three (23) million-dollar annual operation. The director provides leadership and direction for personnel within the organization that includes 4 direct reports, 33 staff, and student and seasonal employees. The director develops and implements marketing strategies to enhance and expand the store’s services and programs to meet and grow the financial objectives and goals. The VolShop is an auxiliary department of the University of Tennessee, and therefore all proceeds from all VolShop locations go back to the University of Tennessee for student scholarships, community outreach and campus building projects.

The different entities within the VolShop brand operate separately and independently among the campus community. For example, VolTech focuses on technology needs for staff, faculty and students; and is only allowed to sell products to this select group of customers. VolBooks focuses on the ever-changing area of course materials and improving student accessibility and affordability. The VolShop has the largest Inclusive Access program in the country and are the leader in this area. As course materials continue to evolve, VolBooks is positioned to remain an innovator, setting the direction of course materials and academic resources for the campus. VolBooks is also responsible for charging the way for encouraging staff and faculty to submit faculty adoptions early. Course materials continue to evolve and
VolBooks must be at the forefront leading the way, finding new solutions and options that work for students and the University of Tennessee.

The VolShop strives to be more than a college bookstore, and consistently works with various professors and higher-level classes to allow students to learn real-life skills in a true working environment. The VolShop also has a strong social media following, which helps to maintain transparency and accountability with fans, customers, students, families, departments and the University as a whole.

**Duties and Responsibilities**

The director should value the talent within an organization, commit to consistent and ongoing evaluation of staff strengths and opportunities for improvement and provide opportunities for professional development and growth. The VolShop is committed to the highest standards of care to our customer base, upholding our reputation as an industry leader. It is critical that the incumbent recognize the commitment to exemplary customer care, which includes visitors to our campus, faculty, staff, students, administrative leadership, and supplier contacts. The director is expected to deliver a collaborative and consistent high standard of customer service, to add value and cultivate customer satisfaction, as measured by the number of visitors to the store, increased sales, repeat orders, and customer and colleague feedback. The director must invest time networking with other college store directors, participate in national organizations, and utilize available resources.

**Expectations include:**

- Develop and implement fair college store operating policies and procedures.
- Oversee development, implementation and execution of annual sales, and a marketing plan with efforts to increase revenues and optimize margins.
- Establish sales and profit goals with each direct report: constantly monitoring for achievement and developing, executing, and planning in conjunction with management team to meet or exceed budget targets.
- Consistently seek new and innovative ideas and best practices for marketing a college store operation.
- Proactively monitor latest technology trends in software and hardware lines with effective recommendations on improving business segment.

**Ongoing Evaluation and Innovation:**

- Continue to enhance the VolShop’s e-commerce division of the operation as a convenience for customers and a strategic focus in overall sales growth.
- Continue identifying opportunities to partner with internal departments for cross promotions, cost sharing, and improve efficiencies.
- Continue to diversify the delivery of course materials and explore alternative pricing models to offer course materials at the most economical price for students.

**Education:**

- Bachelor’s degree is required; MBA preferred

**Required Experience:**
• History of progressive responsibility to include leadership experience in a college store operation or other retail operation in an institution of higher education
• Established record of success in planning and problem solving within a successful organization
• Establishment, oversight and management of annual operating budget and associated reporting, analysis and stewardship of organization funds
• Experience managing inventory, minimizing loss and eliminating product lines as appropriate
• Evidence of commitment to highest customer service standards
• Evidence of commitment to principles of diversity and inclusion

Knowledge, Skills & Abilities:

• Ability to communicate, both written and orally, with all university and external constituencies is essential.
• Ability to analyze staff skill, talent and potential and translate this information into professional growth and development opportunities within a positive, supportive environment.
• Superior problem solving and research skills
• Demonstrated knowledge of inclusive access offerings such as eBooks, online courseware, exams, and language programs
• Knowledge and experience in negotiating with vendors and merchandisers
• Demonstrated knowledge in managing large volume apparel operation with specific focus on the collegiate market is critically important

Interested applicants should submit a cover letter, resume/CV and three (3) professional references with an application through our formal applicant site. Questions regarding this opportunity may be directed to Brooke Swart, Executive Recruiter at bswart@utk.edu.