

Burning Man Project

Chief Financial Officer

Leading an already proven team, the CFO will be responsible for orchestrating Burning Man's financial planning, forecasting & budgeting, treasury & investment management, risk management, real estate investments, accounting infrastructure, controls, finance tech, audits and financial relations with partners.

BACKGROUND

The nonprofit [Burning Man Project](#) produces its annual flagship event in Nevada and provides inspiration, connection, education, and grants to a creative global ecosystem of builders, makers, artists, and community leaders active in more than 40 US states and 35 countries. Over the nearly four decades since its inception, Burning Man has become an influential global cultural movement sparking innovation in a wide range of disciplines including design, business, technology, and leadership development. Burning Man's culture, values, programs and events are based on [10 Principles](#): radical inclusion, gifting, decommodification, radical self-reliance, radical self-expression, communal effort, civic responsibility, leaving no trace, participation and immediacy.

The organization's premier event is [Black Rock City](#), a wildly imaginative temporary metropolis that is built and brought to life by 80,000 participants at the end of August through early September. With a year-round staff of 160 employees and a budget of \$70M, the organization's work spans six interconnected program areas: Art, Education, Civic Involvement, Culture, Philosophical Center, and Social Enterprise. Burning Man has benefitted from continued engagement by the organization's founders, the addition of new staff and board members with diverse skills, and a culture that embraces a deliberate approach to embracing changes that come with growth. Adherence to core principles and values, and the embrace of ongoing experimentation, play and beyond-the-box thinking, are important personal characteristics of team members and are key to Burning Man's continued evolution.

BASIC FUNCTION

As a key member of the team, the CFO will work closely with the CEO and COO, others across the organization and with Board members and advisors to craft and execute the organization's strategies, priorities and goals in a way that positions Burning Man for transformative and sustainable impact across civil society through its events, art, interactions, collaborations, programs and through its passionate global community. The CFO must be able to apply the kind of thinking, structured financial practices and workflows that are developed in complex corporate environments, to a world-changing cultural movement that thrives on experimentation. This will require a combination of technical, political (in a good sense) and ambassadorial skills, coaching, listening, dialogue and negotiation. They must be able to adapt to a continually evolving environment, thrive in an interconnected yet quasi-autonomous and deadline-oriented workplace, and bring adaptive leadership skills to the organization and team.

The CFO is responsible for all financial forecasting, planning, budgeting and modeling; Burning Man's finances, treasury management, financial and project accounting, controls and reporting, IT infrastructure related to property and financial management; audits, risk management, finance vendors, and interactions with finance and investment committees. They must have high professional standards and lead by example around the organization's core values.



PRIORITIES and RESPONSIBILITIES

IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES:

- Quickly get to know Burning Man – its culture, constituents, funding structures, programs, current and future operational needs, assets, projects and programs, people, its place in the community and its potential.
- Establish strong working relationships with colleagues in finance and across all departments; strengthen and sustain a culture of transparency, collaboration, communication, teamwork, and integrity.
- Partner with the Philanthropic Engagement (fundraising) group, to create the equivalent of donor advised instruments and endowment funds that enable philanthropic investors in Burning Man, its art, culture and programs, to ensure that their investment has a beneficial and sustained impact on the organization, its operations and constituents.
- With the CEO and team, review and manage existing systems and controls, operations, processes and financial procedures to ensure the integrity of the financial information and reporting, establishing new practices as they become necessary.
- With the finance team, develop, implement and communicate standards that integrate financial forecasting, budgeting, analysis, reporting, accountability, contract management and controls into all aspects of envisioning the organization’s future and managing its operations. Part of this role is about collaboration with the finance team to encourage a cultural shift that upgrades financial thinking at all levels of the organization, while ensuring that this encourages (and does not discourage) creativity.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP:

- Shape standards of excellence across all aspects of the organization’s financial function, in the process positioning the finance group as a “can do” and not a “can’t do” part of the organization; model the organization’s values in everything from the biggest organizational decisions to the smallest one-on-one conversations; engage fully as a member of the team, actively shaping and demonstrating full ownership for organization-wide decisions and providing other members of the team with the financial feedback and guidance they need to be successful.
- Demonstrate a commitment to break down silos and reach across organizational teams and functions to make the organization a more cohesive, engaged, and connected place to work, as well as a more efficient, effective, and creative organization.
- Serve as a member of the Audit a Finance Committee of the board; represent the CEO as needed in financial matters, negotiations with other parties, etc.

FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND PLANNING:

- Partner with the CEO and other team members to build a multi-year financial plan and underlying business model that supports the organization’s priorities, reflects market realities and operating needs, takes into account internal capabilities and constraints; ultimately enhance the long-term sustainability of the organization.
- Provide robust data to drive the organization’s financial, investment, treasury management, property management and other strategies, ensuring that the CEO and team have information required to oversee and improve the organization’s near- and long-term financial health.

- With the finance team, outside accountants, tax preparers and others, produce and present key financial information to the CEO, staff and board members on a regular basis (balance sheet, financial projections, income statements, cash flow analyses, etc.) and partner with the CEO to engage the board in supporting the organization's financial health. Drive a cross-functional annual budgeting process with the CEO and COO, department leads, and the board to ensure effective planning and a budget that reflects the organization's strategic priorities.
- Partner with program teams to assess the financial viability of new initiatives, programs and opportunities, and develop budget proposals to adequately resource against these opportunities.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT:

- Support the organization's core function and programs, and hold those responsible for various functions and initiatives accountable for all aspects of responsible financial management for their areas of responsibility, including budgets and revenue planning, expense management, and all related decision-making.
- Prepare and share timely financial data that clearly articulates financial performance and health at the organizational and project-levels, empowering leads to make sound decisions and providing transparency to the rest of the organization where appropriate.
- Ensure strong internal controls, financial policies, and systems for all aspects of financial accounting (in line with GAAP and relevant best practices) to contain financial risks and ensure responsible stewardship of the organization's resources (e.g., accounting policies and procedures, investment management policies, accounting systems, expense systems).
- Ensure all financial audits and related filing are completed on-time and in good standing; design, manage, and continuously improve the processes and systems that enable financial management at the organization to thrive (from cash flow analysis and planning, internal and external reporting, and organizational & project budgeting and forecasting down to the organization's chart of accounts, Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable, and time allocations).
- Manage relationships with key vendors, partners, government agencies, etc., to ensure financial processes between organizations meet needs, standards and goals; provide timely, accurate, and high-quality financial reporting to the organization's partners and funders, including ensuring compliance with their standards and requirements.
- Partner with the HR team to ensure human resources are effectively resourced against the organization's funding streams, while also solving for the needs of projects, partners, and individual team members.

FINANCE INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGY:

- Ensure the organization has the business systems and processes in place (formal and informal) to efficiently and effectively manage the organization's network, pipeline, and human capital and ensure the organization is strategically using these systems to manage relationships, secure and track earned and contributed revenue, manage property and its maintenance, and allocate resources.
- Oversee the organization's financial technology service providers and systems, ensuring the organization has appropriately scaled and backed up back-office technology, with particular attention to assuring that financial data is secure.

COMPLIANCE AND RISK MITIGATION:

- Ensure that the organization is in compliance with federal, state, and local laws and company policies, and has the legal capacity and capability--through paid resources, pro bono support, or board competencies--to proactively assess and manage financial risk throughout the organization (employment, contracts, understand of infrastructure needs for events, how to manage seasonal price spikes that affect budgeting, etc).
- Oversee internal and external resources and work with partners, vendors, government authorities, etc. to ensure contracts are shaped in a manner that reduces financial risks to the organization; ensure the organization has adequate insurance coverage in place.

APPLICABLE EXPERIENCE, WAYS OF BEING, and QUALIFICATIONS

- 10+ years' experience in a financial leadership role, preferably with business, nonprofit or government entities that stage large, complex events and have budgets in excess of \$40m. Experience with complex financial workflows, financial and project accounting, property management, and risk management practices is highly valued. Viewed favorably will be strong educational credentials in accounting/finance/business finance, along with a CPA, MBA or similar credentials.
- Experience partnering with executive staff, resulting in the development and implementation of innovative fiscal, management and operational strategies;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills; demonstrated experience communicating and implementing and promulgating financial forecasting, budgeting and practices in complex organizations.
- Demonstrated leadership ability, team management, and interpersonal skills; ability to work collaboratively with and coach staff and contractors at all levels; well-developed organizational skills and attention to detail; an innovative and initiative-oriented mindset that values teamwork and reaching goals.
- A strong commitment to Burning Man culture and values, and an openness to be guided by others.
- A creative thinker and doer who is inspired to take successful 'real world' financial principles and strategies and apply them to a world-changing cultural movement in ways that meet the organization's objectives to be financially thriving.
- A willingness to engage with the 10 Principles of Burning Man, including Decommodification, in ways that strengthen the culture while improving financial outcomes; the ability to work at the Burning Man event held in Nevada
- A creative human being, with a sense of perspective, humor, fun and experimentation.

To apply, nominate others, or for further information, please contact:

Kevin Redick

(415) 762-2646 or kevinr@moppenheim.com

Nzuki Waita

(202) 888-8417 or nzukiw@moppenheim.com

Mark Oppenheim

(415) 762-2640 or marko@moppenheim.com

m/Oppenheim Executive Search

San Francisco, CA