

INDEPENDENT

Position: Business Director

About Independent



Independent, New York, 2026, Pier 36. Photography by Iwan Baan.

Independent is a mission-driven organization that serves galleries, collectors and institutions internationally. Originally established in 2010 with a collective art exhibition at the former Dia Center for the Arts, we now produce two landmark shows (Independent and Independent 20th Century), publish editorial features and scholarship, and program a range of research-based initiatives that bring together leading artists, gallerists, curators, and thought leaders.



Independent 20th Century 2026, to be held at Sotheby's at the Breuer.

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Our Shows

As curatorial and artistic directors of critically acclaimed shows, we are active influencers of the New York and global art landscapes. Our shows are invite-only via nomination to prospective galleries to ensure curatorial excellence.

Independent, our show devoted to 21st Century art, premieres more solo artist debuts than any other New York art fair. We contextualize, validate, and forecast future-facing trends for established collectors and collecting institutions.

“Independent has a near cult status among art world insiders, consistently serving up intriguing, original contemporary art.”

– *The Wall Street Journal*

Independent 20th Century broadens our understanding of the canon from 1900–2000, featuring new perspectives on historically recognized artists alongside lesser-known voices.

“Independent has completed its transition from boutique outlier to art world institution.”

– Will Henrich, *The New York Times*



Independent, New York, 2015, Dia Center for the Arts, Nicolas Party, The Modern Institute, Glasgow. Photography by Etienne Frossard. Courtesy of Independent.



Independent 20th Century, New York, 2024, Casa Cipriani, Lenore Tawney, Alison Jacques, London. Photography by Alexa Hoyer. Courtesy of Independent.

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About the Role

Position

Business Director

Compensation

\$110,000 - \$140,000, commensurate with experience

Reports to

Founder / CEO

Start Date

October 15, 2026

Independent is looking for a seasoned Business Director to sit at the commercial center of the company. This role will be the primary point of contact for outsourced vendors in finance, legal and HR; is the commercial lead on pricing, from tickets to booths; and will own the sponsorship business and its team.

Responsibilities

Finance

- Serve as the primary point of contact for all finance functions.
- Develop and manage the operating budget. Discuss variances with stakeholders, and course-correct as needed.
- Validate AR/AP with the finance team (weekly) and ensure adequate cash flow for daily operations and new investments.
- Develop RFPs, recruit, select, and manage key vendors. Regularly evaluate performance and pricing for critical vendor relationships.
- Represent Independent's interests in all contracts.

People Operations

- Liaise with outsourced HR on all joiners and leavers.
- Anticipate new hires and manage the recruitment/talent identification process year round including drafting job descriptions, conducting interviews, making hiring recommendations.
- Manage onboarding and offboarding jointly with outsourced HR and the Project Manager.
- First escalation point for employee issues.
- Set and maintain policies and procedures.
- Handle performance and scope issues, leading difficult personnel conversations.

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Legal

- Refresh terms and conditions in Gallery agreements, vendor and contractor contracts, and sponsorship agreements.
- Manage the relationship with legal counsel, including turnaround expectations against fair deadlines.
- First escalation point for contractual disputes.

Business development

- Financially model new business opportunities — fairs, formats, adjacent revenue.
- Run feasibility studies with credible assumptions and honest downside cases.
- Prepare materials for management meetings, including the analysis behind the recommendation, not just the summary.

Fair management

- Partner with Sr Project Manager to deliver a successful fair.
- Own venue relations.
- Procure high-value vendors, including production and catering.
- Own floorplans and booth pricing — where the commercial model and the curatorial vision have to be reconciled.
- Escalation point for gallery and vendor issues.

Sponsorship

- Manage the communication flow between the internal team and external consultants.
- Structure and negotiate sponsorship contracts.
- Hire around sponsorship fulfillment as needed.
- Serve as the senior on-the-ground point of contact for sponsors during each fair (issue escalation).

Qualifications

- 15+ years of progressively senior commercial and operational management, including P&L ownership and direct team management.
- Business development experience
- Strong financial capability: budgeting, multi-year planning, modeling new business, and running a budget meeting that changes behavior.
- Contract negotiation and vendor management experience.
- Knowledge of the art market, galleries, or the cultural sector.
- Experience managing external agencies or contracted commercial teams.
- Live event, festival, trade show, or venue experience, and comfort with a business whose entire year turns on a small number of days.

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- Range. This role moves from a three-year plan to a booth pricing dispute to a personnel issue on the same day.
- Comfort being the escalation point rather than the person who escalates.
- The instinct to raise problems early.

Independent is an equal opportunity employer. To apply, please email a resume and brief cover letter to sofie@independenthq.com.