

# Meet the Flock

## An interview with... Marisa Beckman

### Please tell me about your experience within the industry so far?

I've been part of the industry for a long time – I started at P&O Events in December 1994. My first role was Show Secretary, a kind of catch all admin role for the whole team, and then worked my way through various Ops roles to Acting Show Director of the Royal Smithfield Show in 2002 before leaving to go freelance and start Inovent – and I have never really looked back.

### Thinking about our industry as a whole, what excites you the most?

For me, it is the people I work with that excite me the most from the show teams, to security, stand fitters, traffic – most of whom I have known since I started – exhibitions is such a melting pot of nationalities, roles, characters and that makes it for me. Add in that I am slightly a control freak, and love working under pressure, to tight deadlines and I love a good negotiation and you can see why I stayed in the industry for so long!

### What event are you most proud of and why?

OMG – that is a really hard question – I know I should say the London International Horse Show, which I have worked on for 22 years and is a truly unique event, or Smithfield which was a livestock and agricultural machinery show and is largely blamed for trashing the EC1 floor loading, or even London Motor Show which was so glitzy... or Grand Design Live launch in 2005 with Media 10 who had never run an exhibition before, or Top Gear Live which was just an insane experience – but actually, I think it is Scotland's Trade Fair, Autumn, which Springboard Events re-launched in 2010 with no funds, no venue, no contractor – there were only 3 of us in the team doing everything – and it's now an annual, small, niche event which everyone loves!

### If you weren't in events, what would you be doing?

I have said that I would be an accountant, sitting in a darkened room with no windows chain smoking and playing with numbers, or a management consultant parachuted in to problem solve for a company in trouble! But now I would want to be a sustainability guru with way more knowledge than I have now - trying to change the world one reusable cup at a time!

### Who or what can you not do without onsite?

Andy Paul from Teem Services, a reusable cup for my Starbucks coffee, my phone which includes all my to do lists, and a lot of Camel Blue cigarettes!

### What skills can you bring to The Ops Nest?

Mentoring people starting out, a lot of experience across events of different sizes, complexities and roles in trade and consumer events - I would like to think the one thing my Show Director experience taught me was to firstly look at the whole picture, before drilling down into the sales, marketing and ops core of each event, so I often look at things from a different perspective. A bit of cheekiness in negotiating goes a long way, some solid budgeting skills and I am really really really good at writing procedures and documentation (which I am embarrassed to say I quite enjoy).



### What's the best thing about The Flock?

For me it's the collaboration between ops professionals – everyone in the Ops Nest has their own stories to tell and we can all learn things from each other! Then it would be the jokes, the masterclasses and of course the Sustainability Opstacle which Lou somehow talked me into helping to lead.

### What are the top 5 things that you have learnt since joining The Ops Nest?

- That we are all in this together
- We are greater than the sum of our parts
- There are lots of very cool ops professionals out there that I didn't know, and I do now
- That I hate multiple choice questions in the masterclasses
- That Lou is totally totally awesome and an inspiration to all eventprofs everywhere!

### If people would like to connect, where can they find you?

 marisa@inovent.co.uk  
 07798 643 414 – I am always up for a chat!

The Ops Nest



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