

Meet the Flock

An interview with... Nika Czoch

The Ops Nest

Please tell me about your experience within the industry thus far?

I've been around for a rather long time (25+ years!) and like many people of my era, I fell into the events industry 'by accident' having been hired by the amazing Jane Risby as her PA at Blenheim Publishing & Exhibitions, which is where I met Lou. I went on to publish exhibition catalogues, so my overriding earliest memory of events was running around, counting and moving large numbers of cardboard boxes in and out of Organiser's offices and various dark and dingy venue cubby holes before opening morning! That was a good taster for my role in operations which I instantly fell in love with. I've organised all sorts of events; exhibitions, conferences, conventions, festivals, big, flagship, small, niche, indoor, outdoor and in some far flung corners and for all sorts of clients. I can honestly say it's true that the thrill of seeing any live event materialise before your eyes, that you worked so hard to nail every conceivable detail for, never leaves you. Over the years, I have also helped out my industry 'family' friends by selling stand space, organising speaker programmes and writing the odd bit of marketing copy – a real jack of all trades exhibition girl but with a passion for ops, is how I would describe myself!

Do you have any tips for working in the Middle East?

A great place full of very friendly, hospitable and helpful people but don't expect to get anything done in a hurry. Be sure to build some time contingency into your planning!

What could you not do without onsite?

Not a very exciting answer and a bit obvious - but a comfortable pair of shoes for opening morning! Also my personal on site folder which is a trusted friend that never leaves my side during build up – nothing like an ops tick list, floorplan, highlighter and pen and great source of immediate answers to instant client questions!

What piece of advice would you give to someone starting out in our industry?

You'll either love it or hate it. Be prepared to work hard, don't expect to become instantly (or ever) rich and don't expect your rewards to be purely financial. Be warned, once infected with the events bug, there is a good chance you'll never recover. Also, it's one of those unique careers where a by-product of you simply doing your job is inherently picking up a little bit of knowledge about a lot of other industries outside of events, which is kind of cool.

What event are you most proud of and why?

Oh that's a tricky one to answer as there have been a few over the years but I would have to say DogFest. Not because it was the 'biggest' event but a great challenge as a launch event with A-List celebrities, animals, children and audience participation including a public 'dog walk'. What could possibly go wrong?! We had very little time to turn the ambitious idea into a reality and with it being late in the already busy festivals/wedding planning season, I seem to remember every generator and port-a-loo in the country was already booked! It was one of those event snowballs that started off with small intentions and grew very quickly! I was tasked to make it look amazing with next to no budget coupled with zero personal experience in the world of outdoor events, let alone navigating a hurricane warning during build up. My client was amazing and helped with their little black book of contacts and festival knowledge and I am proud to say that it turned out to be a huge success. The photos looked great and the sun shone, proving the old age adage that it will always be alright on the night!

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

In my imaginary life I am a successful dressage rider and coach and have a farm full of rescue animals – we can all dream!

What value does The Ops Nest bring to you?

A sense of being part of a connected community, which you often miss being a freelancer. During these fast-paced times, not only as a by-product of Covid but with some looming changes in legislation set to seriously impact event operations, I feel that it is especially vital to stay connected to your kind and have a great resource pool of knowledge at your disposal. If there is one thing Covid has taught us is that we are stronger together.

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

The most direct way is by email at nika@eventdoctors.net but you can also look on www.eventdoctors.net

