

Meet the Flock

An interview with... Catherine Beck

The Ops Nest

What was your first event and what's your lasting memory or 'take away' from it?

The BSAVA Congress (British Small Animal Veterinary Association) in Birmingham. Content and social events took up the whole of the ICC, and the exhibition took up the whole of the in the NIA (now known as Utilita Arena Birmingham). Biggest takeaway: eat breakfast before you go onsite...it took me 4hours to finish a bacon sarnie on my first day of build 😊

What's your mantra?

I've a couple depending on the situation, but I've found these two work best for those moments when you're tired and up against it, and you can feel yourself about to take on some uncharacteristic behaviours (everyone knows those moments!):

- o Be your best self
- o Don't be a dick!

What can we be doing to encourage new and diverse talent into our industry?

In the last 6 months I've recruited my whole team from scratch:

- o 50% are black
- o 50% are male... which is not something I'd normally shout about, but the Ops industry is heavily dominated by women
- o 75% also had no experience of the events industry before joining my team and they're all doing great! So much so, one of them was awarded a place on the Ops Nest course, based purely on the work she'd delivered in her first 3 months.

So for me, the answer to this question is not hard. To put it bluntly: care about it, be pro-active in finding talent, then take the time needed to coach them into their roles...because if you can't, then who should?

What would having a well-represented industry look / feel like?

For me, a starting point would look like the below:

- o I wouldn't be the only person of colour in an Ops team
- o I wouldn't be the only person of colour in a planning meeting
- o I'd be able to host a supplier meeting onsite without hearing racial slurs towards international contractors
- o I'd see more women in Senior Leadership roles throughout the business (not just in Ops)
- o I'd see more men in Ops and more women in Sales
- o I'd be able to talk about DEI matters with Senior Leaders without fear of consequence

What attracted you to the Ops Foundation course for your team?

I put my Senior Ops Exec forward for the course as part of her progression plan to become an Ops Manager. She's new to the Events industry, but has all of the qualities you look for in an Ops Manager...and as much as I'd like to think I can teach her everything she needs to know, you can't deny the value of being taught by the best in the industry! Not only will this course make her a more rounded professional ahead of her first event, she'll become a better ambassador for our team when collaborating with suppliers, venues, exhibitors, and customers.

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

When I was a kid my dream job was to be a police dog handler! I still love dogs, and I also like H&S...so maybe I'd be a Floor Manager for Crufts!

What value does The Ops Nest bring to you?

So much! The main one for me is the networking opportunities. I've sounded out some COVID matters with the group, and asked for supplier recommendations which was really helpful in narrowing down the procurement search. It's just a great supportive platform where you all learn from and support each other, regardless of who you work for or what your job title is.

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

 [linkedin.com/in/catherine-beck-5547bb](https://www.linkedin.com/in/catherine-beck-5547bb)

