

A career for life

Business and
Consumer
Events

Meet 10 people with 10 different career paths.
This could be you!



“Imagine being part of a team that organises events for 300, 3,000 or even 30,000 people... or creating something that doesn't exist yet... or turning your hobby into a successful career... This could be you!”





It takes all types of people, with all kinds of skills, to create an event.

There's the event planner or organiser who oversees the overall planning and delivery of the event, the marketers who promote the event, the experiential creatives, the tech and AV specialists who produce the show, the tradespeople who build the physical spaces, the safety and security crew who keep us safe onsite, and there are teams who work behind the scenes in accounting and finance, HR and administration.

There is a career for everyone in the exhibition and event industry.

By working in this sector, you are making a valuable contribution to our diverse culture, to our strong economy, to trade and investment, and to our tourism industry.

From boating shows to medical conferences, eSport and video gaming expos to aviation industry forums, sporting events and festivals, business and consumer events are a big part of our professional and personal lives.

Business and consumer events play a pivotal role in driving Australia's economy.

Events are powerful marketplaces for doing business and pursuing special interests. Each year, exciting new showcases are being created in emerging industries, such as space and satellite technology, drones and cybersecurity, clean energy, advanced manufacturing, health and medical devices.

In 2016, EY estimated the industry contributed just over \$30b in direct expenditure, \$13b in direct value add and nearly 200,000 jobs to the Australian economy. Globally, the exhibition sector has created over 680,000 jobs and attracts over 260 million visitors to its 31,000 trade and consumer shows.

We asked 10 young people who have found a home in the exhibition and event industry to tell us about their career and what makes the industry so appealing.

Through their eyes you can see why many who enter the industry never leave. It's a global industry that can take you all around the world, while small enough that you feel part of our family and team.

Whether you're a teacher, career advisor, parent or student, we invite you to consider the many career possibilities available in business and consumer events. There is a career for life!

Joyce DiMascio
Chief Executive
Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia

From qualified chef to sales to television producer (and a few others in between), Libbie tried many different jobs before finding a permanent home in the exhibition and event industry.

She explains that working in television production gave her a taste for technology and changed the way she viewed it. She followed this interest, which ultimately led her to a career in AV.

I always had the impression that AV was a purely technical, IT-style and male-dominated industry. But it is not like that at all. As I worked in the industry more, the passion really came from the fact that it's so much more than what you would really, from an outsider's perspective, think it is. It's so creative. Not just technical. It's so beautiful. It is a lot more female-friendly than I would have ever thought, as well.

You're producing the technology side, which is specialised, but it's really part of the whole journey. Working in exhibitions, we work with our clients to understand what outcome they are trying to achieve and what they are trying to communicate to their clients. We then work back from there, looking at how we can use technology to engage, excite and teach people.

We're constantly evolving and changing, reaching new heights. We create 20 to 30 events a week, so every week there's a new highlight. There's a new thing to be excited about and a new way to push boundaries.

Being able to work with clients that respect what you do and completely blow them out of the water giving them more than what they ever thought they could achieve - that's a really great part of our job.

Libbie's advice for anyone interested in a career in exhibitions and events:

If you're looking for a career, something that will constantly challenge you, something that you can shape and be part of for future generations, and be rewarded for your great work, then you should absolutely give our industry a shot. You won't be disappointed. You won't be bored. It is a very challenging industry, but with great challenges comes great rewards and it's certainly an opportunity for everyone to have a great working life and feel valued.



Libbie
Ray

General Manager
and Co-owner
AV 24/7

"I don't think that I would be able to find the same passion in any other space. You can create the uncreated, conceptualise things and see them come to life. It's such an exciting industry to be in. It's definitely something that has captured my heart."

With a bachelor's degree in commerce, Stewart joined the workforce unsure of what he really wanted to do. He started in a research/planning role at an ad agency, then was drawn to exhibitions and events because of the wide portfolio of events and industries on which he could work. Stewart has gone on to build his own business within the industry and has never looked back.

Stewart started out in the industry working for major event organiser, Diversified Communications, in a research role and explains how this led to starting his own company.

Coming from an organiser's background, it was really clear to me that data was crucial to the industry. I saw a gap in what ticketing and registration systems were doing. With the emergence of mobile - from nobody using phones for anything more than making calls, to mobile phones being ubiquitous and being able to scan tickets and badges - the disruption opened up opportunities.

The business evolved from a research business, into a technology business and then finally into a ticketing and registration business. That evolution started in 2011.

Once you're in the industry, there's opportunity to grow into lots of different areas. I didn't really enter the industry expecting to be running a ticketing company in 10 years.

My career has taken a couple of different trajectories.

I'm confident I could have gone into a sales role or an event management role. It's not an industry where you need to be shoe-horned into one job forever. Once you understand how the industry is built, managed and run, there's a lot of flexibility in the roles that you can grow into.

People don't leave this industry because it offers something that is pretty unique – there is a lot of variety and flexibility.

Stewart's advice for anyone interested in a career in exhibitions and events:

If you're passionate about something, then you can find an event that is in the category. I've worked on motoring events, health and fitness, fashion, industrial design and food. There are so many different shows. It's what I love about this industry.



Stewart
Buchanan

Managing Director
Clever Event Technology

"It's been a really enjoyable journey. I love the industry, I always have. I wanted something that had variety, so I wouldn't get bored. I didn't really enter the industry expecting to be running a ticketing company in 10 years."

From creating grassroots community-led events as a hobby to becoming one of Australia's leading eSports event organisers, Nick has built a career around doing what he loves.

Nick describes his business as evolving organically in response to the growing needs of the gaming community.

When I started my own business almost 10 years ago, we were directly servicing our fans and an audience that loved to watch the content that we produced. Those events were not like the big expos that we run today, they were more grassroots community-led events.

We ran our own events in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne for five years and built up a reputation. The gaming publishers – Xbox, Sony, Activision, Blizzard, etc. came to us to request our services on their own booths in exhibitions. After a while, those same publishers asked us to stage their events.

We still continued to do our community events in parallel. Then the eSports industry grew in popularity so that our own events were able to run on their own steam. Our first big stadium event, or mega event, was created in 2017 at the Qudos Arena.

The most interesting thing about events is that it is never the same. One day you're bumping into Bondi Icebergs setting up boxes and consoles beside the sea and the next day you're in an expo hall setting up booths.

It's never boring. It's always very interesting. That's one of the best things about the industry. I haven't even entertained the thought of working in anything else because this is my passion.

Nick's advice for anyone interested in a career in exhibitions and events:

Get yourself down to some of these shows. Pick a piece of content that you like or a pastime or an activity. It might be the boating and camping show, for example. But when you visit such a show try to peel back the layers of how you view the show. Put on a different lens and imagine what it might be like to be the guys who are working on the show. Getting involved in the content that you love is a huge thing. You can follow your passion and work in an industry that allows you to do that.



Nick
Vanzetti

Managing Director
ESL Australia

"It was my love for the gaming industry that drew me to events because of the need and desire to create something for an audience. Being able to reflect on where we've come from and where our passion project of eSports has really come from in the last 10 years... is really rewarding."

Stephanie stumbled upon an amazing career in exhibitions and events, rubbing shoulders with the likes of Buzz Aldrin, Richard Branson and Sheikh Mohammed, travelling the world and finally finding her passion as a B2B marketer.

I think in events there are two types of event professionals. There are the people that always knew that they wanted to work in events, they train, get that first role in the industry and never leave. Then, there's this other group of people that stumble upon this profession, realise how awesome it is and never leave. I'm certainly in the latter.

I started out "temping" for Reed Exhibitions while backpacking in the UK. I then moved into conferencing and started running conferences in the Middle East. My skill-set led me toward marketing and I was much happier doing that. Eventually, I decided it was time to come home and continue down that marketing path. I would consider myself a specialist B2B marketer now. I really enjoy the challenge of having a very specific purpose and talking to a very targeted and specific group.

Someone once said to me that events are the original social media and that's really stuck with me. Social media tries to create community, groups, interaction, engagement. Events have been doing that for years. We go viral through thousands of people walking through the exhibition door. And when you think of it like that, what is the biggest expression of engagement or interaction from a person? It's physically turning up to an event. We've brought people together, and we've given them the opportunity to do business, and I think that's really powerful. As to what small part I play in that, I'm really proud. When you can see that innovation happening right in front of you, you're like, "Yeah, I did that!"

Stephanie's advice for anyone interested in a career in exhibitions and events:

It's a really exciting time for people to enter this industry because the industry is changing so much. We so often look to London or to the Americas for innovation, but I actually think here in Australia, we are at the cutting edge of events. I find that really exciting. You need to be creative, and you need to think outside the box because you don't know what's going to be thrown at you. You need to be adaptable, and deadline-driven, because you know what, the show dates don't change. They don't slip. The doors will open no matter what happens, come rain, hail or shine. And, I've had shows in snow.



Stephanie
Bleakley

Marketing Manager
Diversified
Communications

"We've brought people together, and we've given them the opportunity to do business, and I think that's really powerful."

Guy may be the envy of every video gaming enthusiast. He turned his passion for playing video games into a successful career that sees him managing the content for some of the most exciting and popular gaming shows all over the world.

Guy explains how everything he did in pursuit of his passion gave him all the skills he needed to succeed in his career.

I had a very passionate love of video games and computer games. I started off as a graphic web designer and on the side started a gaming website. It became exceptionally popular and well-read within Australia. Through that website I started running events, small gatherings for the community, hiring out venues or pubs or clubs to bring the community together. I worked for a game development company, created a gaming TV show, and helped to found a B2B gaming publication. Then I was approached by the head of ReedPOP in the US to be involved in the expansion to Australia of PAX, the largest gaming show in North America.

After many years of growing PAX Australia along with a fantastic local team, I took a role to oversee the gaming shows that ReedPOP run globally.

It's amazing. I get to travel the world, meet with and work with all these different teams of passionate people. The event industry is always changing. Everyone that comes to an event expects something new and different and bigger and better each year.

Combine that with the video game, computer game and tabletop gaming industry, an industry that is constantly changing - an event from five years ago is so different to that same event today. At this point I have no interest in leaving this industry. It's way too much fun.

Guy's advice for anyone interested in a career in exhibitions and events:

The events industry is one of the most exciting and dynamic industries that are available to anyone that has the passion and the drive to get involved. Working with amazing people at the top of their game is an absolute privilege. Get hands-on experience at as many events as possible. Events have volunteer programs, intern programs, and they need help on-site. If you're successful in a specific area, then the opportunities to get involved and grow globally are almost infinite.



Guy
Blomberg

Global Gaming
Content Director
ReedPOP

"I love the fact my parents would tell me to stop playing so many video games to now where I can comfortably say 'well that's actually led to my successful career'."



Picture: Oz Comic-Con

Like many school leavers, Christine admits she was open to considering her career options. After speaking with a school careers advisor, she enrolled in an events management course because she 'loved the sound of it', and with plenty of opportunity to try out a few roles, now she couldn't imagine working anywhere else.

Christine attributes her early success to some good advice, which put her on the path to figuring out what she really wanted to do.

When I finished that course, I had great advice from a recruiter who told me, "Pick a company that you can see yourself progressing in. It might not be an ideal role or where you would want to be, but you can work towards your goals." She suggested trying to find a receptionist job to learn who the key clients are that are calling through to the business.

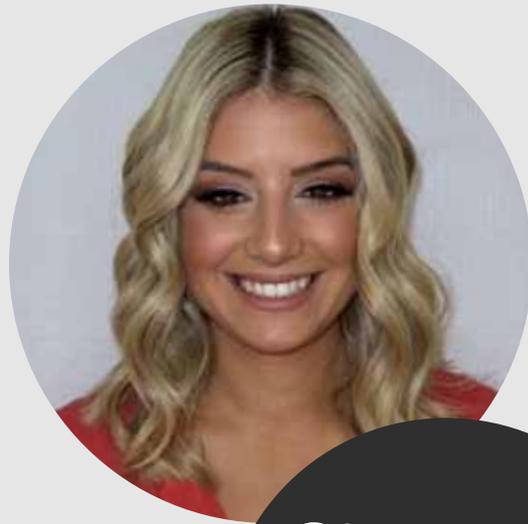
Starting in a reception role, I wasn't involved in anything to do with events or exhibitions in the beginning. I enjoyed sales and quickly rose through the ranks. Even though I've been in the same role for five years, I can't see myself getting tired of it because this role has evolved for me.

When I started, I was quoting smaller events. And then, as I built up my experience, I started working on international business and dealing with larger scale events. After a while there were opportunities for international travel too. I wouldn't have had those opportunities in the beginning.

I'm now also involved in other aspects of the business because of my long experience with the company. I have a business development executive reporting to me and I head up the company's StyleMe Division, for styling events and exhibitions.

Christine's advice for anyone interested in a career in exhibitions and events:

Participate in some form of study and don't be afraid to learn as you go. I find the events industry so versatile. If you've got the drive for sales, then you'll love this role. If you like working in a fast-paced industry and in a very busy working environment like I do, then it's definitely the best role for that.



Christine
Kotsis

Business Development
Manager
ExpoNet

"Things change from one day to the next. One day I could be in the office submitting proposals, the next day I might be entertaining clients, and the next day travelling internationally for an event. It's impossible to get bored in this role."

Pursuing an early interest in information technology and with the hope of becoming a network administrator, Craig thought he had his career all mapped out. After completing general IT studies, he started out in pharmaceutical data. However, after following a friend into the exhibition and event industry his eyes were opened to a world of opportunity he never expected. He's now on a career path to becoming a solutions architect for his current company.

I started off doing a Certificate III in Information Technology - just general IT studies. I then started to focus a little bit more on networking, computer networking and infrastructure. When I joined Ungerboeck, I took a side swing and went into customer service instead of following that path, obviously with hopes and dreams of moving up into a network administrator role at a company at some stage. It never quite happened, I suppose. I'm not upset about it. I've had the opportunity to do quite a few things with my time.

I think that I can help the industry innovate a lot more. This role gives me the opportunity to come up with ideas for software coming out of Ungerboeck to help our customers achieve what they need to a lot more efficiently.

You can't just think of it as, 'this is an event, or this is an exhibition'. You have to think about all of the pieces that make that work. There are so many different suppliers and so many things the venues need to manage. They need people to do that and the technology to make everything work together. From our perspective, there's plenty, plenty to do.

Craig's advice for anyone interested in a career in exhibitions and events:

Just get into it. I don't think any other industry would be so diverse, and have so much variety. A lot of the time you come into a company and work on one particular product - you never really get the broad spectrum of what you're doing. But I find in this industry, you get to see the inner workings of absolutely everything, no matter where you're joining from.

If you see a particular area that you want to move into, go for it. It will pay off. You can almost guarantee it.



Craig
Mather

Onboarding Specialist
Ungerboeck International

"If you look at exhibitions, there's so many moving parts and so many ways that you can help to digitise those moving parts. There will be a never-ending amount of opportunity there. I don't think you ever get bored. There's always something cool to do."

Trained as a marketer, Dean's true passion for technology was unlocked with the arrival of the digital age. He's now at the forefront of innovation within his company, using the latest technology to create change and improvement every day.

I started out in marketing. I did a Bachelor of Business Management many years ago and was working in marketing for about 6.5 years when the digital age came into play. I started getting more of a fascination and interest in the digital and tech space. From there, I dedicated a lot of my free time to self-educating in code and other web development and web hosting courses, which got me to where I am now.

Innovation is a fun area to be in. It's quite broad and can encompass a variety of things. I sit with different teams in the company and try to understand their pain points, and then use existing processes to help streamline the more manual work. I also look at new systems, products or platforms to improve efficiencies in the business and increase revenue.

My other hat, technology, is more focussed on our website and online assets. There's also a lot of backend work, ensuring customer data is securely collected, that the data is fed to the appropriate systems and that our teams can later access this data. In today's landscape I believe that vulnerability prevention is integral to any technology role.

Technology in this industry is interactive, fluid and flexible. So, a customer purchasing a ticket to go to an event or a conference has more touch points in terms of the end-to-end experience. All of those touch points are centred around technology and tools - it's my role to make sure we have the right tools for those touch points.

New ideas really motivate me. Technology is ever changing, and for me it's learning about new ideas, products and tools - understanding how those new features could be implemented to our own business.

Dean's advice for anyone interested in a career in exhibitions and events:

To be in technology or innovation in an events company you have to always be thinking about the delegate, the exhibitor or the sponsor and understand their needs and how you can better communicate to them from within the business.

It's fun, it's exciting, it's fast paced, it's always changing and it's topical. Events don't run unless someone is interested in the content they are offering or talking about. I think if you enjoy always being on trend and changing with the world, then events are where you want to be.



Dean
Forrester

Head of Technology and
Innovation, Asia Pacific
Informa Australia

"It's fun, it's exciting, it's fast paced, it's always changing and it's topical. I think if you enjoy always being on trend and changing with the world, then events is where you want to be."

Out of high school Millie joined the industry open to the opportunities it might bring. She soon found her calling in operations, where she's able to utilise her natural organisational and planning skills and travel the world doing what she loves. Millie started out in customer service and worked in a variety of roles, before taking on a position in operations.

When it came time to leaving high school, I wasn't sure what career I wanted to pursue. I had a friend who was working in event management and I thought that it sounded like a lot of fun. I've always been very well organised and enjoyed planning activities.

Event Management used to be packaged into different business degrees with events as an elective. I wasn't interested in doing business management so I decided to go to TAFE.

I'd applied to ETF for an Exhibition Coordinator role, not realising that it involved predominately event marketing. The Recruitment Manager suggested that I'd be better suited to operations, however, they didn't have a role available at that time. Six months later they contacted me with a role.

After one year at ETF, I was asked to join the international team. I am now an Operations Manager responsible for delivering all of the international events in the ETF portfolio. In the past three years I've delivered the World Gas Conference in Paris, LNG18 in Perth and I'm about to complete the 27th World Gas Conference in Washington, D.C.

I oversee all aspects of the event – including the exhibition, conference, gala dinner, entertainment, catering, security, registration and logistics. I enjoy collaborating with all of the different contractors to successfully deliver the event. Working on international events involves a different country with a new set of health and safety regulations and various industry norms to discover. There is no shortage of challenges working with different time zones and cultures.

Millie's advice for anyone interested in a career in exhibitions and events:

Get involved. It's a great industry to work in. The industry is very supportive, particularly of young people starting out in their career, so ensure you make the most of every opportunity. Be prepared to work hard - the events industry will certainly challenge you. Operations is a very rewarding career, being able to plan every detail of an event and then see it come to life is an experience that you won't forget!



Millie
Heslop

Operations Manager
Exhibitions and Trade Fairs

"My role includes a great deal of variety and a lot of challenges. No two days are ever the same and every event that I work on is different because I'm working in a new country with different people and diverse cultures."

Brittany always knew she wanted to be an event planner. After years of hard work, she is now able to say that she's achieved exactly what she's set out to do.

After high school, I took on a temporary role as a receptionist supporting the events department and then progressed to an administration assistant role within the events team. These roles gave me a broad understanding for how events came together. Event management became my career goal from that point.

There is a lot of hard work that goes into making an event happen, it doesn't just come together overnight. There's a lot of planning, there's the customer experience to consider and there's a high level of attention to detail. You constantly have to be thinking ahead and considering how the event will meet its objectives.

These days, a lot of people are trying to think outside the box more and more, throwing out the traditional style of event and thinking more creatively around how the event can come together. That excites me. It's being able to go, "How's this logistically going to work and play out for the event, and what are the guests' experiences going to be like?"

One day you'll be dealing with a conference, the next day you might be planning a concert or gala dinner, and then the next day you might be doing a large exhibition that brings people together from all over the world.

It's nice to reflect on my career over the past 10 years and to be able to say that I've achieved so much and there are still so many opportunities and experiences to be had. That's the joy of working within the events industry, you're constantly challenged.

I don't see myself leaving the industry any time soon. The industry will continue to grow and the traditional notion of 'meetings and events' are going to continue to evolve.

Brittany's advice for anyone interested in a career in exhibitions and events:

If you like project management, customer service and being able to work with different clients, then the event industry is certainly something for you to consider. Wherever there's an opportunity, take it. And, if you show that you've got a can-do attitude, are passionate, and that you have a drive to succeed, your manager will see your potential and support you with your goals.



Brittany
Monaghan

Event Planner
Melbourne Convention and
Exhibition Centre

"I've always had a passion for events. It encompasses all the things I enjoy doing – multiple deadlines, multitasking, quick decision-making and dealing with clients. It is a job where no day is ever the same and doesn't involve sitting behind a computer all day."

THIS COULD BE YOU

Have these stories inspired you to consider a career in exhibitions and events? There are many pathways into the sector to help make that first step easy.

Formal qualifications through **university** in any discipline will open the doors to a world of opportunity in the sector. Some of the professions in demand include:

- Marketing and communications
- Accounting and finance
- Business
- IT and Engineering

There are specialised **TAFE** courses in event management that will give you a broad introduction to career opportunities and entry level qualifications into the sector. Other courses also provide relevant skills for the sector. Some of the careers available through TAFE education include:

- Event operations and planning
- Graphic design and creative production
- IT - event technology, programming, business and information systems, data analyst
- Administration

Check out www.smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au or contact your local TAFE for more information on courses offered through the TAFE system.

You can also go to www.myskills.gov.au for information about VET courses around the country.

Traineeships and trade apprenticeships provide hands-on training and skills development in a range of career opportunities relevant to exhibitions and events. They include:

- Event staging and AV – lighting technicians
- Hospitality – restaurant managers, chefs
- Trades – carpentry, electricians, construction
- Transport and logistics

Contact **Apprenticeships Support Australia** to find out more about traineeships for school leavers in event management, and staging and technical services, as well as the many other apprenticeships that can offer a pathway into the sector.

Volunteer programs will get you a foot in the door and the opportunity to gain on-the-job skills in any area that interest you. Some of these might include:

- Sales and business development
- Customer service
- Administration and event support

If you're still unsure what to do next, get in touch with us at the Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia and we'll help get you on a track to a fulfilling and lifelong career in exhibitions and events.

Visit us at eeaa.com.au or phone +61 2 9413 9520



For more information on careers in
business and consumer events contact
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