

## EVENTS | STU KATZEN



# I WANT TO BE AN EVENT MANAGER

Oh really? Okay, well you'd better read this.

**O**n average, I get about five requests for work a week. They range from "I am looking to change career", to "I am just out of college or uni and looking for work". Then there are the overseas students looking to work in Australia and the ones looking for school work experience.

The problem as I see it, is that the universities, TAFEs and colleges are pumping out students who all believe they can run an event, because they did so at uni, or helped a friend throw their 18th birthday party; they should all be earning \$250,000 a year, drive a BMW and can manage a team of 10.

What they don't realise until they start sending out emails looking for work, is that it is tough out in the real world and the industry cannot support the numbers coming out of tertiary educational facilities. The job is hard, with long hours, definitely not glamorous, and takes more than being able to write a basic run sheet and know what a LED Parcan is.

I remember sitting across from a bright young college graduate and offering her a job with me. Her first and only question was what her salary would be and also if she got a phone with that. Unfortunately that seems to be the general perception of young grads.

There is also a lack of reality about what the job actually entails. Recently I had a grad student with me on an event. She was young, well presented and intelligent. After a full day bump in, I told her to go and get changed quickly as guests would be arriving soon and we needed to be ready. Half an

hour later, still having not reappeared, I went looking for her. I found her in the dressing room straightening her hair. When I asked her to please get out on the floor, she said she wouldn't be long.

So what should a young grad do in order to help land that job? First and foremost, the email is the first contact you will make with a prospective employer and it is the most important moment of make or break. It is your pitch! You have approximately one paragraph to impress or get binned. Sorry! Harsh I know, but true.

So make sure the email you send is:

- a** Addressed to the correct person – call and ask who that person is, don't just assume or guess. You can put Dear Sir or Ma'am, but Dear Stuart sounds so much better.
- b** Write more than just "Hi, I would like to work for you". Yep, I've had that so often.
- c** Ensure you have proofed the email properly and there are no typos – I get that all the time and there is nothing worse than an email or letter asking for work with errors in it. When using the first person "I"; it is ALWAYS capped.
- d** Make sure you get the right company when you address the person. I had an email thanking me for a job interview but it was for the wrong company – ouch!
- e** DON'T use abbreviations, text talk or be over familiar. Leave the LOL's, ur's and pls for your phone – you may laugh, but I get that so often.
- f** Offer to send your resume and a letter on why you want the job, or attach them.
- g** Follow your email up with a phone call.
- h** Don't be afraid to call again if need be and take the initiative. One of my things is to let the person asking for work drive the process to see how hungry, committed and persistent they are. This is usually a good indication of how they will be on the job.

If you get to the next stage, an interview, there are a few things that you should follow:

- 1** Don't dress too casually (no shorts – yes has happened) but also not too formal.
- 2** NEVER be late. That is an instant "see you later" as far as I am concerned.
- 3** Listen to what the interviewer is saying; s/he will usually give you clues. No business owner/HR manager wants to be interviewing. They want to be finding! They want each person to succeed or stand out, so they can finalise the process. Make that person you. Listen to what they say and work with that. Don't lie or be a sycophant, but you can work the system.
- 4** Don't wear sunglasses, even if it is bright, and always make eye contact and be engaged.
- 5** Always have 2-3 questions for them.
- 6** Later that day or first thing the next day, always send a text or email thanking them for the interview and follow up a few days later with a phone call.

My last tip is always phone or meet if possible. Good luck! **m**