

SPOTLIGHT ON CAROLINE JAMES

EVENT DIRECTOR,
CAROLINE JAMES EVENTS, PERTH



Caroline's passion for bringing event plans to life and people together has taken her on an incredible journey, via Sydney, Europe, North Africa and Mexico and back to Perth to establish CJE – boutique event management agency Caroline James Events. She now leads the teamwork that made the dream work for the official opening of Yagan Square and Telethon Kids Institute, A Taste of Chittering food and wine festival and the chic, unique picnic event, Le Dîner en Blanc – bringing French high-society elegance and glamor to Perth's most beautiful public spaces.

“ I love giving people the opportunity to come together and collectively experience something truly unique and amazing ... taking them to places, spaces and communities they've never been before. ”

Give us your bbq pitch. What do you do?

When I say we specialise in event production and logistics management, people often assume it's just about booking the venue and catering. But there's so much more to it. It's PR and communication strategies and event risk management too. But to sum it up, it's really all about creating a sense of community and bringing people together to share inspiring ideas and amazing experiences. Whether it's a corporate event, a charity event, or a festival, our role is to make everything happen seamlessly, safely and beautifully.

Did you always plan to work in this industry?

In high school, I wanted to be an occupational therapist. But straight after finishing my exams, I did a one-year exchange in Denmark (Europe, not down south) and the travel bug bit me. So when I got back to Perth and started looking at career pathways in travel, I opted to study Tourism Management and Public Relations at ECU, followed by a Master of International Marketing at the University of Western Sydney.

So, how did you find your way into events management?

I took a work experience placement as part of my events unit at ECU, and that's what really sparked my interest and passion. I loved the buzz and excitement of working onsite with the events team and seeing all the plans come together.

That same company who gave me my first placement, later gave me my first paid contract. That really got my foot in the door to events management. From there, contract opportunities opened up over in Sydney, managing corporate and not-for-profit events. In London, working for the Commonwealth Business Council with events with the President of Sierra Leone and Prince Charles. In Algeria, managing the LNG16 conference. In Portugal, for the InVentaBrand Celebrity Golf Masters. In France and Spain, for the Gartner Symposium ITxpos. And Mexico, managing the Turaz Global Sales Incentive.

How would you describe yourself?

Even after almost 20 years, I still get a real buzz out of working

at speed and under pressure in managing live events. Thinking on my feet, adapting and solving problems in the moment. One of my clients recently gave a review and referred to me as "The unflappable Caroline James!" I quickly learned to avoid flaps with methodical and meticulous attention to detail, excellent organisation and customer service skills, and a good dose of creativity to pull everything together.

What do you love most about the industry?

I love giving people the opportunity to come together and collectively experience something truly unique and amazing. I love taking them to places, spaces and communities they've never been before, and showcasing our incredible city and regions across the state.

What's the best part of your job?

The variety of challenges and huge scope for creativity in bringing every client's vision to life. Each event is different, working with a different group of stakeholders and requiring different approaches to project planning and management. And I have a great team pulling it all together with me.

What's your best advice for anyone starting out?

Because events is so incredibly varied, I'd say jump in with both feet and experience all the opportunities available to find your own path. You might discover conference management is the place you want to be, or that music, food and arts festival management is more your thing. You could land the perfect job at one venue or agency, or multiple contracts as a consultant.

And what's next for you?

We're continuing to grow the CJE team and expand our events portfolio. And as WA's leading boutique events management agency, we have longer-term plans to expand into Asia.

Connect with Caroline on LinkedIn

Link: www.linkedin.com/in/carolinejamesevents/

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