

“Life is never routine”

Lindy Cambouris, 32, business development manager: national, Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), has been in the industry for 10 years. She started her events career in 2005 when she worked on the Gastronomica event in Knysna.

At CTICC Lindy is responsible for the national conferences, trade fairs and exhibitions portfolio. “A huge contributing factor to the CTICC’s success has been the focus on the development of the knowledge economy.

Of the nearly 5 000 events hosted by the CTICC over the past 12 years, more than 450 were international association conferences across a broad spectrum of sectors, including agro-processing, the green economy, ICT, property, mining and medical industries.”

She added: “The CTICC’s expansion, scheduled for 2017, will double the centre’s existing exhibition capacity by adding 10 000m² of multi-purpose conference and exhibition space. This will enable the Centre to meet the steadily growing demand from exhibition and conference organisers across the globe.”

Lindy has worked on cruise liners as a group co-ordinator, which helped her secure a position at Sun City (Sun International), within two weeks of returning to South Africa. “While working at Sun City I was selected to fly to Lagos, Nigeria to manage the opening event for the Federal Palace Hotel. I was subsequently also offered a position at this hotel but turned it down as I had opted to join the CTICC instead. I was promoted from events co-ordinator to events manager within two months of starting at CTICC.”

Lindy has a post graduate diploma in business management from the University of Cape Town’s Graduate School of Business. She currently serves on the EXSA board.

When did you realise you wanted to be in business events?

My events career was set in motion when I worked on the Gastronomica event in Knysna in 2005. After four years of co-ordinating mostly incentive events on the cruise liners and at Sun City, I wanted to explore corporate events. The CTICC presented this opportunity.

Were you discouraged from pursuing a career in business events?

No, I was actually encouraged.

What challenges do you face as a young person in this industry?

I see an influx of young people into the industry, which is very exciting. Actually, the majority of my peers are young professionals. Even third year students are keen to conduct their learnerships at the CTICC. The down side to the influx of young professionals is the amount of competition we have,

thus making it more difficult to prove oneself. The trick is to keep up with the ever-changing dynamics within the industry, ensuring you stay on top of your game and competitive. Even better when you can find a niche in which you can upskill yourself and specialise. This will give you the competitive edge.

What does your job entail? Do you ever have a typical day?

In a nutshell, generating new business for the CTICC, especially in the national conference, exhibition and trade fairs sectors. Unless typical means busy, busy, busy and ever-changing, then almost every day is a typical day.

Which personal traits do you need for this?

Results-oriented, able to self-manage, accurate, assertive, adaptable, client centric orientated, enthusiastic, follow through and willing to travel.

What advice would you offer young people who are reluctant to explore the business events industry?

What is there to be reluctant about? This industry offers incredibly exciting opportunities for career growth and development. You meet so many new people from all walks of life. No two events are the same and work is never routine. ■

