

## Q&A INTERVIEW EVENTUROUS AND FLASH POINT PROMOTIONS

This is a Q&A Interview with Michelle Harrington, Director of Eventurous, and hosted by Heidi Hamilton, Director of Flash Point Promotions

**Heidi:**

Let's get stuck into it Michelle! Tell us a bit about you!

**Michelle:**

Certainly, my name is Michelle Harrington and I am the founder and director of a promotional marketing agency in Melbourne, Aus.

I am also a Mum of 2 beautiful boys, a 4 year old called Jagger and a 5 year old, named Bond.

Keeping me busy whilst juggling a busy agency.

**Heidi:**

Awww beautiful! So, how do you find it with having two boys and running a staffing agency? I can imagine a lot of carnage and juggling acts!

**Michelle:**

Oh yes very challenging! Definitely a juggling act, I have run Eventurous prior to being mum, and I recall saying to myself, when I have children, I just will have to push to make it work and that exactly what I have done. I think the most challenging time was when they were babies, whilst running the business. I remember having both boys at the hospital, still working on my phone and laptop, right before I went in!

**Heidi:**

Oh my god, I can only imagine that! You are such a work aholic.

So, how did you actually get started in the industry and what compelled you to go into this industry?

**Michelle:**

Well, I was a promotional model and brand ambassador myself to start.

I started off doing all types of work! I was the Grid girl at the Australian Moto GP. Also appeared in a fitness calendar called pumped up down under, it was a very famous calendar, based in Melbourne.

That also led me into doing promotions with Jim Beam and the owner of the calendar.

I would manage and also work in the field, I organised national signings, have the girls tour Australia, doing on and off premise promotion, including night clubs and bottle shops.

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It was such a great and amazing start in the industry, and truly showed me both sides, or should I say all sides. In the field, the clients, and management. All of this made me think 'wow' I can actually take this into a business of my own.

Which I did, and that is how Eventurous was born.

**Heidi:**

Wow! And how long ago was that?

**Michelle:**

Many years ago, I started Eventurous 18 years ago, so around 20-22 years ago!

**Heidi:**

Go you woman of many talents! So how long would the jim beam and calendar campaigns go on for?

**Michelle:**

They would go for 2 months of the year, I did events and promotional work full time. So after the 2 months of organisation, management and travel I would fill my time with as much work as I could, kind of freelancing working on sampling activations, expos, trade shows, flyer handouts – whatever I could do! I loved the work, it was fun and kept me busy.

**Heidi:**

And what was your fav type of job?

**Michelle:**

Definitely Moto GP, the Aus Open, working at casinos and night clubs, Trade shows and expos! Long days, corporate and so much fun working with a great team.

**Heidi:**

Awesome! So, from then and now do you feel like the industry has changed at all?

**Michelle:**

I think the tech side has changed it and its evolved, as we are adding digital elements now to campaigns. But when you really look at it, and what I was doing 20 years ago, were still doing it now, so definitely has the same fundamentals, just everything has evolved with tech, creativity and innovation.

**Heidi:**

Mmmm I agree, do you think consumer behaviour has changed from then and now?

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**Michelle:**

I think there are 2 types of consumers to be honest, depends on who you speak to, some people prefer sitting at home buying things online digitally. And then you have consumers that actually love going out and experiencing the brand – touch, smell, feel!

**Heidi:**

I love a good brand experience!

So with everything going on at the moment, we both don't have staff really working due to COVID-19. How many staff normally do you have on your books?

**Michelle:**

We keep our books at around 100 active staff, as we are Melbourne only based, most of our work full time or part time hours, and we have selected staff for different areas, whether that's sampling or more corporate. We have whatever a client needs really and we have found around 100 active staff works perfectly for us!

**Heidi:**

That is still a lot of team you are looking after! So what sets Eventurous apart from other agencies?

**Michelle:**

Service, experience and knowledge!

We have been around for 18 years, so we have been there, we have done that, and we know how the industry works. Also, making sure we have the right hand selected staff for our clients.

I, being the director also go out on most jobs, manage, take photos and make sure everything is going well. Not many agencies can do that as they are national and do not have the capacity!

**Heidi:**

Its like being a match maker in the staffing world isn't it! I love that you go out on the jobs, its hands on and shows a face to the name of the agency – so personal!

What do you feel has been your biggest challenge in the industry?

**Michelle:**

There are always challenges and hurdles when you start a business, having a lot of staff to manage and staffing in general. But to be honest, COVID-19 has been our biggest challenge. Overall, I think I am lucky to have a successful company performing!

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**Heidi:**

I love your positivity! So if a client asks you how to market their product and your recommendations. What would you recommend a promotional campaign activation, an event or something else.

**Michelle:**

Look, I think that they all work well together. It depends on what brand or product that you are promoting. It is always a tailored approach for each business!

**Heidi:**

We have the exact same approach! So, when and where do you think brands should promote their businesses or products, if you're like a start-up brand should you promote and activate your brand as soon as you launch or should you wait what are your thoughts on that?

**Michelle:**

When it comes to a start-up depending the type of business, we would suggest as soon as possible you need to activate your business to get your brand out there into your consumers hands to spread awareness, engagement to be able to see sales come in! having this collaborated with socials and digital marketing is the most effective way.

**Heidi:**

Amazing, so having a budget for promotional marketing is it important

**Michelle:**

Absolutely, especially with a start-up – we find a lot of clients want to know the ROI for what they may be planning so they can budget correctly, and at the end they can review how it worked, if it was successful, if sales increased, how much by etc.

**Heidi:**

That is great! So, if a client was to contact you about having a promotional marketing strategy. Do you have any case studies in terms of where clients did receive a good return on investment for them to have a little bit more peace of mind going into promotional marketing.

**Michelle:**

Yes! We can compare similar products or businesses, what the goal was, what we did and the ROI, which puts more confidence in having the marketing spend.

**Heidi:**

So because you are so busy behind the scenes and on the field, do you have any staffing software or platforms to streamline your work?

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**Michelle:**

I believe in face to face communication, picking up the phone talking to people, and that real personal touch. This gives us better results with our clients and staff.

**Heidi:**

Yeah, absolutely. I think at the end of the day, humans want to interact with humans and that's why promotional marketing is out there so we got to practice what we preach. So what are your top tips for running a staffing agency.

**Michelle:**

Getting the right staff! You can plan all you want, but if you don't have the right team your event, promotion or campaign will crumble!

Building relationships in the industry!

And tailored service to clients and staff!

**Heidi:**

Lets look at what we are going through currently, with COVID-19 the industry has been shut down for going over 2 months. How has it affected your business?

**Michelle:**

Majorly, we had so many bookings and Friday March 13<sup>th</sup> all bookings all just got slashed.

**Heidi:**

With that being a short term affect, what do you think the long term affects may be for us?

**Michelle:**

I think it is all going to take time to come back, having restrictions lifted, when everything starts opening up, consumers will head out and we will see everything coming back slowly.

I am feeling optimistic about the future, and by the end of the year I am hoping this industry will be busier then ever! And next year, even busier. The future is bright and companies will be thriving to get their businesses out there.

**Heidi:**

I agree, QLD is a little different we have started seeing jobs slowly trickling in, but I think time will tell!

I commend you for staying in this industry for so long, congratulations for Eventurous nearing its 18 Birthday and thank you so much for your time!