Strategies, broken digits and saltwater seminars

Vivienne Wootten¹ takes a revealing backstage peek at the BDA Conference Team ahead of the British Dental Conference and Exhibition 2015.

When writing this in sunny August, next year's British Dental Conference and Exhibition still seems an age away but given that it's such a huge undertaking, I can assure you that plans are already in place for what promises to be a really great event. The team at the British Dental Association (BDA) work round the clock to ensure that the quality of the speakers, topics, features and social events surpass expectations and try to include a few surprises along the way.

Over the next few months we will be revealing details about the event and how to make the most of your time there but in this edition, we will take a look at the BDA team who pulls it all together.

¹Events, British Dental Association

MEET THE TEAM

Supported by a number of BDA members and other staff members, there is a core team of staff who work on developing the event.

Elise Cole
How many conferences have you worked on at the BDA?

I joined as Head of Events in March 2003, so was thrown

into the deep end and attended my first conference in April 2003. 2015 will be my thirteenth conference.

Amusing anecdotes from past conferences? In Manchester 2008, we developed a large banner to go right across the front of the Manchester Central Convention Complex building to make a real impact on approaching the venue, only to discover three working days before the banner was due to be rigged that it said 'Strategies for success' instead of Strategies! We contacted all of our printers to see if they could rush through reprinting the banner in a couple of days but found this would not be possible. We then approached our exhibition contractor to see if they could do anything with the existing banner to amend it. Luckily they managed to create a patch to go over the typo and in the end we managed to display it on the front

of the venue in time. With large events you never know what to expect and every year it is always something that you hadn't thought of that causes a challenge.

What makes our event so special?

For us, the organisers, it is such a huge event that takes around 18 months to produce and each year brings with it new approaches and new challenges. It is never the same challenge twice and that is what keeps things interesting. Each year, we try to bring that attitude to the conference programme, the exhibition activities and the social events, always taking a fresh approach to deliver an event based on research with what our audience want to see and hear at the event. We are trying to create an event that has something for all the dental family: our members, all dentists, their dental teams, as well as the companies and suppliers working in the dental market. We are also pleased to work with students and young dentists to help support, shape and introduce them to the richness and breadth of a career in dentistry. With such great support from over 100 speakers from all walks of dentistry, including academia, practising dentists and business professionals, we truly can deliver something for everyone in the three day event.

What are you looking forward to in 2015?

In 2015 we are back in Manchester in the MCCC venue that caters brilliantly for

the format of this event. It's a great city with fantastic, reasonably priced hotels and a huge range of restaurants to try out on days when we've not arranged social events for attendees. We are currently midway through producing the programme, but have received some great recommendations from our Programme Planning Committee for topics and potential speakers. There's also lots planned for the exhibition area and we always look forward to working with our exhibitors to offer added value to delegates attending the event with great new products to try and buy. However, mainly I always look forward to how so many small elements we have been working on all year come together to create a giant of an event that runs smoothly on the day, even if behind the scenes we are sometimes paddling a lot faster below the water than many would see front of house.

Rebecca Hancock

I manage the exhibition and exhibitors at the event. So from exhibitors requiring wine on their stand

through to designing the Demonstration Theatre, you will find me interfering.

How many conferences have you worked on at the BDA? Six

Amusing anecdotes from past conferences? Heading into the organisers' office to find the rest of the conference team sat down working away wearing masquerade ball masks while the venue manager was trying to have a conversation with them.

What makes our event so special?

That you have such a wide variety of the dental industry in one place learning together!

What are you looking forward to in 2015? A packed Exhibition Hall with happy delegates and even happier exhibitors.

Sarah Rockliff

I work closely with the registration company, organise the Presidential Meeting and oversee all the social events.

How many conferences you have worked on at the BDA? 2015 will be my seventh conference.

Amusing anecdotes from past conferences?

I think my most famous moment would have to be when I fell down the stairs in Glasgow and ended up in A&E with concussion and then had to spend the Gala dinner absolutely covered in bruises! It wasn't a good look.

What makes our event so special?

The community feel of our event. It's not just a place to learn, but also to network and socialise. It brings the whole dental community together for three days.

What are you looking forward to in 2015?

I am slightly biased but definitely the Cuban night, and the Honours and Awards dinner which we are hosting at the event in 2015.

Vivienne Wooten

My role is to produce all the marketing materials for the event, co-ordinate all the PR, advertising and other

promotional opportunities.

How many conferences have you worked on at BDA?

2015 will be my fifth conference. My first one was Manchester 2011 and every year the three days just keep getting better and better.

Amusing anecdotes from past conferences?

We all sound terribly accident prone but breaking my little finger the night before the event opened last year was not my finest hour (don't ask!). But the show must go on and I didn't let it hold me back.

What makes our event so special?

I spend most of my time in the exhibition. There is a real buzz in the Exhibition Hall as friends and colleagues meet up and explore the wide range of exhibition stands. Last year we introduced the Members Lounge for BDA Extra and Expert members. This feature was very well received and I look forward to welcoming more members and their colleagues to the lounge next year.

What are you looking forward to in 2015?

I've been lucky enough to get to know some really nice delegates that I only ever get to see at the event, so I'm looking forward to our annual catch-up.

Emma Yates

As Conference Manager my year-round focus is everything relating to the Conference side of this event and more.

How many conferences have you worked on at the BDA?

Six. Our challenge as a team is to find ways of making Conference different from previous years and of course making it even better than the last one!

Amusing anecdotes from past conferences?

Each Conference brings a dose of drama behind the scenes to keep us on our toes. However, rumour has it that one year when the conference was in Bournemouth a delegate went for a swim in his suit after a few drinks too many... we haven't had a beachfront conference since. I think Manchester may be a safer place for the event! A suit covered in seaweed is not a good look for a conference.

What makes our event so special?

The varied three-day format of the event allows professionals in the industry to immerse themselves in all things dentistry and really get inspired. The event is definitely much more than a tradeshow and conference; it's a hub for the profession and everyone gets the chance to create their own blend of learning, networking and meetings in the tradeshow – no two experiences will be the same. The show has grown so much over the years with many more elements compared to when it first started. It's a fantastic event to organise and experience – conference week is an intense few days of highs and lows but seeing it coming to life after a long time in the planning makes it all worthwhile.

What are you looking forward to in 2015? The latin/salsa band at the Friday night party!

The British Dental Conference and Exhibition 2015 will take place from 7-9 May 2015 at Manchester Central Convention Complex.
www.bda.org/conference

bdjteam2014100