**Purple Guide Grant – Understanding careers in the outdoor events industry**

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**Professor Kate Dashper, Leeds Beckett University**

Overview

The purpose of this project was to conduct research to identify career paths in the sector. There is lack of clarity relating to job titles, career trajectories, promotion possibilities and job expectations which limits the ability of both those new to the sector, and those already working in events, to envisage a rewarding and successful career. This in turn may affect retention and deter people from considering the outdoor events sector as a place to focus their career efforts.

The research from the project has been used to create a careers guide in order to begin to address some of these issues.

What we did

The project covered four stages:

1. Analysis of events-related job adverts.

Over a period of six months, all events-related job adverts on the top job sites in the UK were collated and analysed. This demonstrated the lack of consistency in job titles and descriptions, with 105 different job titles within the 171 adverts analysed. Analysis revealed similarities in role expectations, skills required, levels of responsibility, necessary experience and qualifications, and other job features, which enabled the identification of distinct stages in a career in the sector, despite this inconsistency.

1. Interviews with senior events professionals.

Senior events professionals were recruited to take part in a one-to-interview about their career journeys. 20 interviews of approximately 1 hour each in duration were conducted. This qualitative data provided valuable insights on career journeys and progression to supplement the analysis of the job adverts and provide further nuance to the descriptions of career paths and progression in the sector.

1. Interviews with events management students.

Interviews were conducted with 24 undergraduate students enrolled on an events management degree programme. These interviews revealed the limited understanding that young people have of careers in the sector, even people who have chosen to study events management. This underscores the need for more guidance, such as this career guide.

1. Design and production of a careers guide.

Based on analysis of the above data, a careers guide was developed and professionally designed to be available in both physical format, as an A5 booklet, and digital, as an online pdf.

Outputs

The project has resulted in the production of the Careers Guide, a resource that can be used across the sector to help showcase the possibilities and opportunities that events offers in terms of careers. This guide is written for people considering a career in events, or those already working in the sector but unsure of how to plan a career path.

The findings of the research will also be published for academic audiences. An abstract based on the findings has been accepted for a special issue of *Event Management* on careers in the events sector. This will ensure that academic audiences – lecturers and students – also engage with the findings and what a career in events might entail.

Additional benefit

The project entailed the recruitment of a part time research assistant who is a postgraduate research student. This student gained valuable research skills and increased her knowledge of the events sector. She has previously worked in events and is likely to return to the sector in future, and will be a valuable asset and potential leader.