

DAMIAN CLARKSON

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Highly experienced, motivated and versatile Operations Director with extensive varied, in-depth experience of the luxury events and hospitality sectors. In them all, achieving a first-class reputation providing outstanding standards of production, delivery and service. In addition, skills and attributes include:

- Strategies to generate profitable revenue
- Excellent customer care skills
- Motivational HR and operational best practices
- Empathetic yet firm management style
- Recognised innovator
- Empowering colleagues to achieve their potential
- Cultural change to achieve goals
- Accomplished mentor
- Sense of humour and personal warmth which people connect to
- Strong negotiation skills

Available for consultancy for a quality led environment which will benefit from my extensive knowledge, strong work ethic, enthusiasm and tenacity.

CAREER

THE LONDON KITCHEN | Managing Director

2009 to 2017

Leading London event caterer with excellent venue listings and clientele. Later to include multi-award-winning restaurant, The Buntingford Kitchen and Middle East 'London Kitchen' franchise.

Venue listings | More than 25 major landmark venues including The Shard, The Roundhouse, Old Billingsgate, Leighton House and many others. One-off venues such as Farnborough Wind tunnels and Victoria and Albert Museum.

Venue design | Including kitchen design for several venues and a private ballroom for a private clients home.

Market Research and Development | Targeting key business sectors including fashion and motoring resulting in clients such as Wella, Toni and Guy, and launches for Bentley and Jaguar. Strong client awareness enabled us to develop creative products and services and maximise key account revenue.

Sales | Liaising with clients from enquiry, pitch and tender documents through to menu, styling and delivery. This included direct clients, agency and venue sales. Proactive sales initiatives ensured higher conversion rate and revenues leading to bottom line profit.

Media/ PR | Through social media and traditional PR ensured targeted and consistent coverage including TV, print and online media. Recent campaigns include The World's 1st Deliveroo canapé delivery service in July 2017.

Franchise | This is a pan Gulf franchise (through TLK Projects) including support, brand standards, manuals and delivery. Kitchen located in Kuwait city and shortly Qatar.

Collaborations | Delivering a number of highly successful Culinary collaborations working with Giorgio Locatelli, Atul Kochnar, Clare Smyth (Restaurant Gordon Ramsay), Jacob Kenedy (Bocca di Lupo) and others. Have also undertaken licencing and in-house training for a number of Michelin star restaurant's. Large-scale collaborations include Waitrose On Blackheath Festival, and House of Peroni.

Restaurant bought and refurbished a decaying shell of a building into The Buntingford Kitchen, winning Good Food Awards in both 2015 and 2016, Hertfordshire Food and Drink Awards, 'Best Fine Dining' and 'Overall Winner' 2015 and 'Best Independent Restaurant' and 'Overall Winner' again in 2016 and listed in the 2017 Michelin guide.

Major Events | These included Farnborough Air Show and a twenty day BMW Centenary event at the Roundhouse. BMW Olympic reception and running the Serpentine Galleries Summer Pavilion Café.

RED SNAPPER EVENTS

2002 to 2009

Event Catering Company

Founded this company with a modest bank facility, rapidly expanding to 2.5m turnover and major venue contracts.

Enjoyed excellent growth and major venue listings, achieving huge contracts such as Mask Christmas events delivering 28,000 covers in three weeks. Other successes included major contracts for dinners and award ceremonies. Accolades include ISES Event Caterer of the Year.

Director

Responsible for commercial, sales and revenue generation

Marketing and Sales | Responsible for client meetings and pitches, venue listings and tender pitches. Hosted tastings and client interest events such as LK Bennett and Visit London.

Operational Management | Growing one of the best teams in the sector, including an Acorn (for high achievers under 30). With a purpose-built kitchen, and the ability to deliver events for up to 4,500 seated guests over a 24-hour period.

Hospitality and Service | Improved an already good standard to excellent by recruiting a strong team both front of house and kitchen whose performances and standards met and exceeded expectations.

Delivery | Undertook events throughout the UK including Scotland, and Ireland as well as The South of France, catering for back to back events times at Villa l'Abri in Cannes for four years.

Notable events included | Lunch for HM The Queen, Lord Mayor of Westminster, San Pellegrino Worlds 50 Best Restaurants Awards for three years and William Reeds Pub Chef of the Year Awards for 1,200 guests.

MOSIMANNS PARTY SERVICE

2001 to 2001

Appointed Caterer to HRH Prince of Wales

General Manager

Major overhaul to low staffing moral and retention including appraising agencies and new benchmarking standards.

Revised staffing conduct and expectations, instigated compliant HR processes such as Working Time directive.

Dealt with historic complaints and set up processes to remedy and report in future.

Pitched for and won the Banquet for HRH Duke of Edinburgh's 80th at London's Guildhall.

Weekly operations could include events at 10 Downing Street, Highgrove and St James Palace.

Re-motivated a team lacking direction and management, and initiated business strategies to address potential business downturn, especially after the declaration of Foot and Mouth disease and associated business downturn.

RHUBARB FOOD DESIGN

1993 to 2001

Leading New Event Caterer

Senior Front of House Manager

Built and lead a team of first class managers to deliver an unexpectedly high level of business for what was a new start business, trading without a name for several months.

Drafted all standard operating procedures for venues and events.

Ensured excellent venue liaison, planned site meetings, event builds and risk assessments.

Attended tastings and meetings to confirm and upsell events at venues including the Natural History Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum and others.

Contracts which I oversaw included Hampton Court Palace Music Festival, feeding 3,000 guests in sixteen State Apartments over ten evenings.

Notable events included Sir Elton John's White Tie Ball, 50th Birthday Dinner for HRH Prince of Wales at Windsor Castle and a three day 50th Birthday Celebration for Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber.

THE ADMIRABLE CRICHTON

1990 to 1994

Waiter, Front of House Manager

Initially as a Waiter then event manager doing different events every day in exciting surroundings. Events included major venues and private homes throughout the UK and beyond.

FREELANCE CAREER, WHILE STUDYING

Lorna Wing Limited and Stephen Congdon Catering
Freelance events Manager

1990 to 1994

QUALIFICATIONS

Personal Licence - Westminster City Council

2012

BA (hons) Tourism Management with Languages – Southbank University, London

1990 to 1994

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Member of the IOD and regularly contribute to readers panel.
- Co- hosted a Guardian Masterclass in 2016 on how to break into the hospitality industry.
- Mentor to Hospitality Undergraduates, Oxford Brookes (2009 to date).
- Lead catering Judge, to The Wedding Industry Awards (2014 to date).
- Sole commercial supporter of The Food Chain Charity 2006-2009 lending the kitchen every weekend for volunteers to prepare meals for people at home with HIV.
- Mentored teams on BBC's The Apprentice, appeared as a business opinion on various news media including ITV news with both Richard Edgar and Laura Kuennsberg, consultant to the BBC on dining and etiquette and appeared on Fox News with menu predictions for the Wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Have also shared tips and had advice pieces in Esquire, Sunday Times and Stylist Magazine and created and trademarked the name *Manape!*