

What is a Conference Producer?

Conference Producers find ideas and topics for conferences by conducting in-depth research on the market, trends, and themes – looking online, interviewing people and using other tools available, they'll produce commercially viable programmes. Delegates, speakers, and sponsors can pay significant sums to attend, so maximising their return on investment by providing networking opportunities and facilitating discussion is key for any conference and exhibition business.

This is an interesting position for graduates looking to apply themselves and gain experience of end-to-end delivery of a project. Conference Producers will liaise with other internal parts of the business (operations, sales, marketing etc) and bring everyone together to deliver a successful conference. A big benefit is that these conferences can cover pretty much any topic and take place anywhere in the world!

This is a truly fascinating and multifaceted position because Conference Producers are responsible for their conference from inception to delivery. This includes working with all parts of the business to ensure the success of the event.

The key parts of your role as a Conference Producer are:

- Knowing the market – Researching the hot topics of a sector and identifying the target audience, so you can find out what they're interested in. A conference is nothing without the attendees so home in on their needs and wants and you'll have a hit on your hands!
- Filling the programme – Influencers are trending in every industry right now and that's no different in the events world – find those important VIP experts and get them on the programme, and you're far more likely to attract delegates to it.
- Copywriting – A key part of any conference is writing the collateral for the event. Conference programmes, webpages, direct mail and emails all need to be sent out. To hit those all-important conversion targets they'll need to be researched, well-written and engaging.
- Being there on the day – Naturally, once you've arranged the conference... you want to be there! You'll likely be on the ground during the event ensuring everything runs smoothly and to a high standard. You'll get the chance to network with key contacts across the sector and thank the people who make up your programme in person!
- Project Management – As mentioned, you'll work across internal teams to manage the success of the project – it's very important for it to be delivered on time and within the allocated budget.

How to get into Conference Production

Being a Conference Producer requires a strong academic background. This could be in a degree that involved a lot of research (such as English literature, history or business/economics) or a specialist degree in the area that the conferences are in, e.g. life sciences or law. You'll need to have a real passion for your subject, with the ability to pick up the phone or arrange face-to-face interviews to get the information that you need.

Other than research, conference production requires top-tier people skills and excellent communication. You should be confident speaking to people from the most junior right to the top of an organisational chart. You should be calm under pressure, able to adapt on the fly and deal with any situation that arises with efficiency. Another key skill, naturally, is multi-tasking – there are many different aspects to this role which consistently overlap. If you're highly organised with a keen eye for detail and killer time management skills, this could be the job for you.

Conference Producers need to be commercially driven. They need to identify conference topics that will attract paying delegates and sponsors. They are creative with entrepreneurial spirit!

Try to show that you are entrepreneurial – think outside the box and be keen to learn about elements of the business outside your immediate remit. Having extra-curriculars is also a good sign of a graduate who would fit in well here.

Salaries and Progression for Conference Producers:

The starting salary for Conference Producers is between £25,000 - £28,000, with a decent bonus on top based on profit which could be in the 4-figure range. Careers and salaries can progress pretty quickly, which is one of the most attractive aspects of the role. In fact, most managing directors of conference businesses get their start as a Conference Producer, which shows that there is a lot of room for growth in this industry.

There is no set career journey for Conference Producers, but it often looks a bit like this:

- Junior/Graduate Conference Producer
- Conference Producer
- Senior Conference Producer
- Conference Manager
- Conference/Division director

While this may be the traditional route, there is no need to feel limited to this – if you enjoy the creative side, you can switch between industries and sectors and broaden your experience. Or you could go freelance, as some of our own candidates have done. The choice really is up to you, and we're here to support and help you develop your career long after we've got you your first Conference Production job.