

# Lollipop Events



Orpington 1st Royal Wedding  
May 2018



Director Rachelle Harte

Based in Dartford, Kent, Lollipop Events plan and project-manage private parties and corporate and public events. In addition, they have their own children's party venue for hire. Director Rachelle Harte says that flexibility and inclusiveness reside at the core of the company's ethos – flexibility in terms of the services Lollipop Events will perform for their clients, and inclusivity in terms of helping those who are most vulnerable to partake in events they might have otherwise avoided. Rachelle explains these company values in greater detail, while also offering insight into market developments over the years.

When the business started, we wanted to stand out in the market. We decided to concentrate on organising children's parties, and at the time we did not know of any other companies offering this service. The plan was to build a reputation before moving into other areas of event management. This happened more quickly than we imagined, as satisfied customers soon began to ask us to do more and more for them.

We are very focused on our clients' goals and are passionate about providing the right end result for each client. We look at how we can help them achieve their business goals through events and deliver professionally managed projects with objectives agreed upfront so that we can be held accountable and our clients can measure the return on their investment. We do not advertise; most of our business is by word of mouth, and we have helped thousands of clients put on events.

## FACTS ABOUT LLOLIPOP EVENTS

- » Director: Rachelle Harte
- » Founded in 2002
- » Located in Bromley and Dartford
- » Services: Private parties, corporate and public events
- » No. of employees: 22
- » [www.lollipopevents.co.uk](http://www.lollipopevents.co.uk)



Elegant Baby Shower  
The Belvedere Holland  
Park

“The recession hit the events industry hard, and many event companies went out of business”

### Surviving waves of disruption

We do a lot of work with business improvement districts, town centres and shopping centres. Our own experience of adapting our business strategy to guide us through the recession helps us understand the challenges facing our high streets. Through events, we help our clients achieve their aims. So, rather than just putting on an event, we are very proud to be contributing to building communities, driving footfall to areas that are in need of regeneration, helping to put businesses in empty shops and enabling consumers to

regain confidence in their local shops. In short, we're doing our part to ensure a future for town centres.

Events are totally discretionary and will be the first thing to cut when times get hard. The recession hit the events industry hard, and many event companies went out of business. Political events, technology and consumer trends have a huge impact on us. We must therefore constantly think about how we can continue to differentiate ourselves in the market and look at what's happening in our clients' world that may affect our business. An example of that is the recent news around the decline of shopping centres. If they close, we will lose customers, so we have to consider new types of customers and come up with new ways to keep growing. You have to be nimble and able to adapt quickly if you are going to remain future-proof. By doing this, we have increased turnover by more than 100 per cent in the last five years.

### Inclusion and reaching out

We have recently set up a not-for-profit company so that we can help community-led volunteer groups raise funds to put on professionally managed events. These customers are groups that have previously run events that have become so large that they can no longer manage them. Through this model, we can apply for grants and sponsors, so that we get paid and can make sure the events are safe, enjoyable and well attended.

We have a goal to make all our events completely inclusive to everybody – every age and every ability. We imagined what it would be like for people with complex disabilities and how likely they and their families are to be able to enjoy public events. Most event organisers will have arranged for an accessible toilet and parking, but

Caption





we recognise that is not anywhere near enough for someone with complex needs and that getting out into the community is essential for their mental and physical wellbeing.

We are working with various groups to put together a package that will really support them and make sure they can enjoy public events. This will include early entrance before the general public, adult changing tables and hoists with attendants to provide assistance buddies on hand to welcome guests and help them orientate around the event. It will also include a quiet space to go if things get too much, medical provision, downloadable maps and social stories pre-event, sunflower lanyards for people with hidden disabilities and an online version of the Herbert Protocol for guests who are likely to wander off so that we can quickly reunite them with their carers or families.

## Customer-centric flexibility

We have always listened to our customers and let them guide us in new directions. An example of this is customers have asked us to run their social media campaigns and write applications for awards on their behalf. We have been able to use the skills we have built up over the last 17 years to be able to offer these new services and generate additional revenues.

As mentioned earlier, we want to develop real relationships with clients. We want to know their needs so we can align our interests as much as possible. This not only ends up being a good service; it also ensures future work on the basis of trust. This ethos of flexibility, combined with inclusiveness, gives me strong reason to be hopeful for the long-term future of Lollipop Events.

“We have always listened to our customers and let them guide us in new directions”

Jamie Laing at Roof Top Fest Bexleyheath

