

## A week in the life...

...of Inga Rose, Managing Director

Well the summer holidays came and went. It never fails to surprise me that despite always saying our clients are quiet over the summer, work ramps up and catches us unaware every year. For 2012 – I am prepared!

We moved offices over the summer and my goodness have we landed on our feet! We are now located in the rather unglamorously named 'R2 Rose Business Estate' in Marlow Bottom (yes really – no puns please). However, the inside is anything less than unglamorous. Joining forces with fellow creatives in the form of The Elemental Consultancy and The Narrative, we are in a superb open plan space with exposed beams, stripped wooden floors and over-flowing with delightful furniture and 'curios and collectables' all 'stolen' from the Narrative's other success story – the incredible vintage interiors store - Home Barn at Bourne End. Last week I walked in to find the front door guarded by a real stuffed leopard (over 100 years old) and a science dummy that can be pulled apart to correctly locate all the body's innards – perfect for a little distraction when you are stuck for some creative inspiration! We are all loving our new home and second family and look forward to welcoming clients to visit. The kettle is always on and the biscuit barrel full.

When we are not walking round the office chatting to our neighbours we are actually seriously busy this month getting ready for D Day – 1<sup>st</sup> Oct when Ampersand proudly takes over the catering contract at the cafés and restaurants across three of the properties managed by Historic Royal Palaces. It's a mammoth task but a delight – how could you not thrill in wandering the cobbles at the Tower (never in heels mind) or basking in the magnificence of Hampton Court. Watch this space for updates as the journey progresses!

Happy Autumn to you all.

**(14<sup>th</sup> September 2011)**



## **A week in the life...**

...of Inga Rose, Managing Director

Air Marketing is now seven years old! Where did all that time go? Honestly, back in 2004 if you'd ask me where we would be in 2011 I don't think I could have even begun to imagine the journey we've taken. It's certainly been a hell of a ride and so far, the thrill of taking Air to new heights is gathering pace rather than slowing down.

As always when I hit a birthday, I can't help but reflect on the past 12 months. But in the last seven years, there have been two big lessons that I really want to share with you. I learned these things the hard way – but I was lucky: not only living to tell the tale but also able to put my knowledge into practise.

### **First lesson of the day: trust your instincts.**

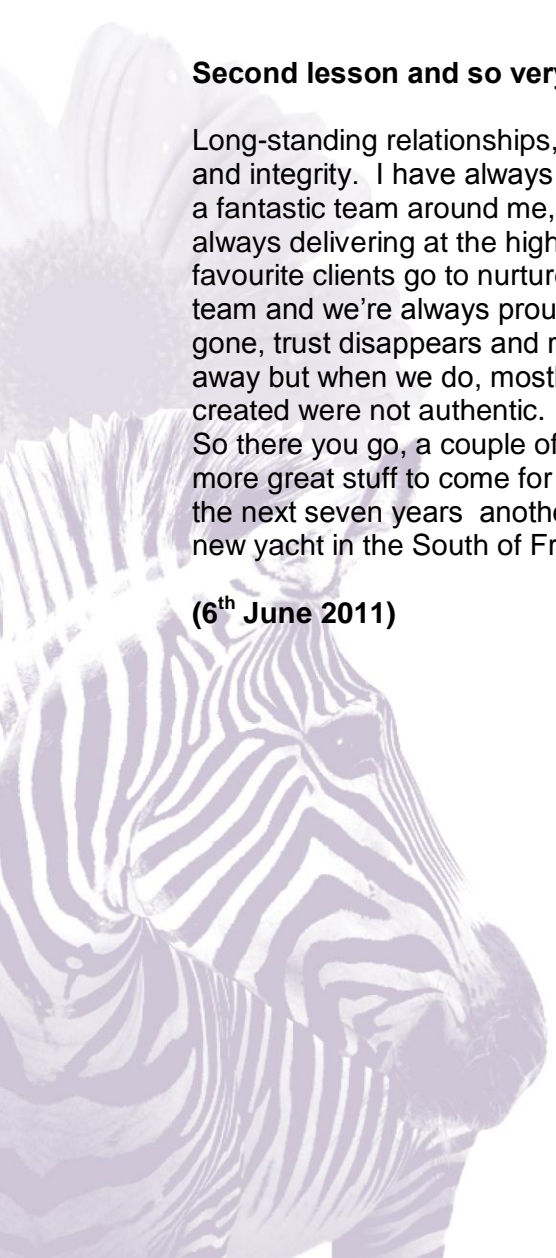
A friend who was a black belt in martial arts once gave me a serious lecture after I'd agreed to meet a potential client, alone in a very dodgy basement restaurant in Earls Court. My instincts were telling me it was wrong, yet I knew we needed more business that month so I went along. Fortunately, nothing sinister happened but it was scary and not a very intelligent thing to do. Now, I am always aware of my instincts whether it's taking on a new client/project or giving my views on design; whenever I ignore them, invariably I make a mistake and my gut feeling turns out to be the right one. Malcolm Gladwell talks about this with fascinating insight in his book, Blink.

### **Second lesson and so very true: 'do unto others...'**

Long-standing relationships, whether with clients or colleagues, always come from honesty and integrity. I have always worked to the mantra 'do unto others ....' And it pays off. I have a fantastic team around me, ready to pull the stops out when we get a short notice project, always delivering at the highest end. I watch with admiration the lengths some of my favourite clients go to nurture their relationships with obvious results: they are on the winning team and we're always proud to be part of that. Honesty underpins all of this and once it's gone, trust disappears and really it's time to walk away. Luckily, we rarely have to walk away but when we do, mostly it's because I didn't follow my instincts and the relationships I'd created were not authentic.

So there you go, a couple of business life's lessons learned by yours truly. I know there's more great stuff to come for Air and as a team, we are always learning. And who knows, in the next seven years another of my 'week in the life' stories will be all about my fabulous new yacht in the South of France!

**(6<sup>th</sup> June 2011)**



## A week in the life...

...of Deborah Parritt, Managing Director of adhoc pr.

### Who needs a crystal ball when you've got top tips?

January started with a round of meetings for me, all with a common theme. What will happen in 2011 and 2012? Is the swing-o-meter of good bookings going to be in the positive hemisphere over the next 24 months? If only we had a reliable crystal ball we could make a fortune.

Talking with Inga there is one thing we are very sure about however. Now is NOT the time to cut back on your marketing spend. Now is the time to have active plans for talking to your customer and potential customer base.

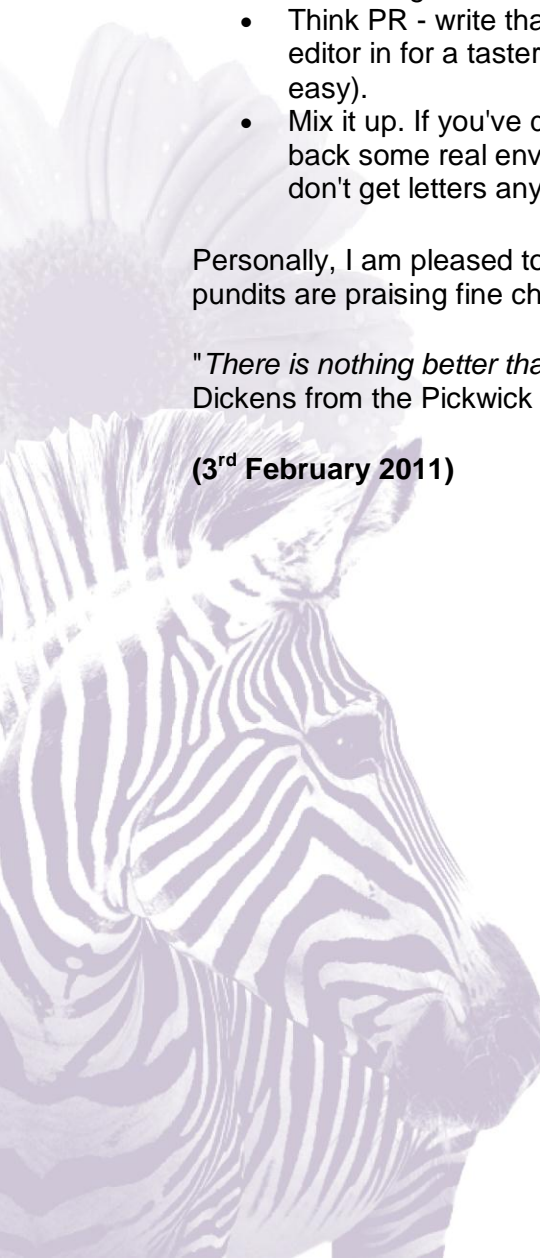
In the hospitality market we think the following are important:

- Offer good value for money - nobody wants to even think they're being ripped off in this economic climate.
- Be innovative - freshen up your offering. There's no need to be radical and throw out what works, but put in some new zip for 2011.
- Talk to your customers face-to-face; ask them what they think you are getting right and wrong.
- Think PR - write that article, run a competition in the local paper or invite the local editor in for a taster experience. Start a blog and embrace tweeting (honestly, it's easy).
- Mix it up. If you've done nothing but e-marketing in your last few campaigns, bring back some real envelopes! We're all a bit more intrigued by the post again now we don't get letters anymore.

Personally, I am pleased to see fashion gurus predicting brights are in this year and foodie pundits are praising fine chocolate. Both are good trends for me.

*"There is nothing better than a good friend except a good friend with chocolate"* - Charles Dickens from the Pickwick Papers.

**(3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)**



## **A week in the life...**

...of Sarah Wilkie

### **Our Girl Friday gets stuck in!**

As Inga's 'Girl Friday' I never really know what challenges will face me work-wise until I catch up with the boss on a Monday morning.

This week, however, I've had the slightly less glamorous tasks of doing the business administration. But this has been nicely balanced with co-ordinating preparations for an upcoming event with one of our partners, Benefit Cosmetics. The plan is to arrange a very special evening for one of our clients in March and we are very excited about it.

We've also wrapped up a significant market research project this week. Having conducted a face-to-face questionnaire with my Air team mate Josie Jordan, I submitted those results along with those from the online survey for Jackie to work her magic and produce a fascinating report of findings. The analysis of the results makes for very interesting reading and has become a valuable source of information for our client. Top pie charts too Jackie! It really has been an interesting and rewarding project for all involved.

When I'm not running around on Air business, I'm still kept busy with my own interiors business selling antique and vintage furniture. I have had the joy of helping Inga with the major re-design of her children's playroom. This beats the paperwork hands down Inga, thanks!

Who knows what next week will bring!

**(27<sup>th</sup> January 2011)**



## **A week in the life...**

...of Josie Jordan, Account Director

### **Perseverance and “working outside the comfort zone...”!**

I am writing this as the year comes to a close and I thought I'd reflect on the past twelve months. In doing so, I've realised that perseverance and working outside of my comfort zone have summed up 2010 and I think that this could well be a theme for many others too.

The year began and ended with extremely heavy snow. I live in the countryside in West Sussex, a fair schlep to London even in good weather, but these conditions really did make it extra hard work getting to meetings and looking after clients. But everyone was very understanding and we muddled by, luckily without getting stranded anywhere, which sadly wasn't the case for everyone.

Added to this, I lived in a caravan, or rather, to put it more grandly, a mobile home, for much of the year. Yes, a family of four living, playing, eating, working and sleeping in a mobile home in the garden of our house which was being renovated and all through THAT weather! It was quite an ordeal but we got through it and it makes living in bricks and mortar that bit more pleasurable once you get it back!

I achieved my first “by line” in 2010 – two of them infact, in the same magazine. One an article about off-roading on a training session with the fire and rescue team's off-road vehicles (don't ask!) and the other about buying a horse from a horse sale in Ireland (also don't ask!). I'm not a copywriter so I found it quite hard, so was very chuffed to achieve this!

On the theme of writing, an old friend of mine became a published author for the first time after writing brilliant work for over 20 years – now that is perseverance!

One of the more excruciating tasks of the year was being filmed interviewing candidates for an online training programme – the minute those cameras, lights and booms are there I lose the capacity to speak, so it takes me some courage to deliver!

Other achievements in the year included getting my second child started at school and running a very muddy, wet and cold 5K for the Chase Children's Hospice..... So, all in all, a busy year with lots of ups and downs but some definite successes and in a good place to start the New Year!

**(10<sup>th</sup> January 2011)**



## A week in the Life...

...of Vickie Smith, Managing Director of Air Uncorked

As a newbie to the Air team and having just set up our sister company, Air Uncorked, we thought you needed to know a little of what's behind the label sooner rather than later...

Having gained so much weight since giving up smoking, 18 months ago now, (I swear there is quite literally a size 0 person in there that needs to be exorcised out) I finally signed up to the gym and now, after going for over two months, things are going ok. But despite adjusting to this torture, alas, I still can't see my toes! Gym has now become more than just a passing phase this has become war and we (me and my size 0 friend) are trying everything to get back into shape. So action "0 Attack" has begun in earnest and I will keep you posted, however, I was told to write about work stuff so best get back!

I don't believe anyone who says they like Mondays; however, some Mondays are really worth getting out of bed for...

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November saw Air Uncorked off to Sofitel, St James (yes, the one where the French President always stays when he comes to town) to set up an exhibition for one of France's most exclusive luxury brands, Louis XIII, Grand-Champagne Cognac. They have collaborated with Baccarat, the world's finest crystal house to create probably London's most expensive Christmas tree this year with decorations costing in excess of £35,000! The centre piece is a unique five metre-high Christmas tree adorned with 200 miniature bottles of Louis XIII. Each crystal bottle, handmade by Baccarat, is created by a minimum of five expert craftsmen and finished with 24 carat gold. With everything so decadent it was only fitting for this exquisite tree to be switched on by Head Chef, Michel Roux Jnr. So some Mondays, this Monday, was a very special - one not to be forgotten and one to make my mother proud!

How do you top that? Easily: among trips to and from the gym and more exciting client meetings, we have started to plan for Coeur de Cognac's 2011 Experiential Campaign. The campaign is set to take us to seven locations over the UK during the summer and we've managed to team up with a great foodies' show. Looking out of the window today, I personally can't wait for summer to come!

This is going to be an exciting year for Air Uncorked; plus, hopefully by the time they let me write to you again the size 0 person will have disappeared forever!

[www.airmarketing.co.uk/uncorked](http://www.airmarketing.co.uk/uncorked)

**(22<sup>nd</sup> December 2010)**



## A week in the life...

... of Lacey Callanan, Air copywriter

### Copywriter 1, Parent 0

You know, I can write about almost anything; from treadmills to samosas and a whole lot in between. I love it all. But, to write about myself and my week? Honestly, I've been quaking in my snow-encrusted boots! When I think about it though, this past week has been another one filled with joy and challenges.

I'll be up front: I'm a new-ish mum (little one is now 18 months) and I'm still trying to get my head around juggling work and being a parent. Then about a foot of snow is thrown into the mix and I'm completely lost.

Faced with increasingly urgent copy deadlines but no childcare, plus a husband working from home and needing office space, I had a tough decision to make. In the end, my role of copywriter had to be gently shoved aside for the day.

So, instead of tackling assignments that require the use of sharp, scintillating copy to convey a memorable message in less than 10 seconds, I had to try and communicate to my daughter, mid-tantrum (her, not me) that a hat and gloves are this season's must-have as it's -1°C outside. No easy task, but I really thought I was up to the challenge. After all, she's only a toddler and my skill with language helps pay the mortgage, so surely my sing-along rhymes would be perfect?

Well, 20 minutes of using every trick in the book, much cajoling and bad singing finally resulted in about 30 seconds in the garden (no hat or gloves) and a firm 'no' from my daughter who was far from impressed with the winter wonderland.

But even so, it never ceases to amaze me how quickly we all learn to adapt language for our own uses. The joy at hearing my daughter grasp a new phrase or word is only slightly marred (okay, sometimes a lot) by the frustration at her using a word to get her own way. And you know that's exactly what makes great copy too: knowing how to use words to get our own way.

*(7<sup>th</sup> December 2010)*



## A week in the life...

... of Jackie Morgan, Operations Director

Last weekend, after years of pestering, I finally succeeded in dragging the family along to see a much loved childhood family annual tradition - the Somerset Carnival.

I wouldn't be surprised if you're scratching your head about now as, in spite of its huge scale and massive regional fame, Carnival seems to be a brilliantly kept secret. (The family was not expecting much either!)

In October and November every year, the streets of many Somerset towns and villages light up as the carnival tour takes place. It's regarded by many as the largest illuminated procession in the world; individual events regularly attract crowds of up to 150,000!

The processions of illuminated 'carts' (or 'floats') are part of an ancient tradition which stretches back to the Gunpowder Plot in the 1600s. These days there are often well over 100 carts. They can be huge, up to 30 metres long and covered in thousands of light bulbs, and are the results of months of work by carnival clubs whose members work throughout the year to raise money and to create the spectacular entries. They are always themed - historical, musical, futuristic, themes from childhood, travel... anything goes! And the booming music and fantastical costumes complete the incredible effect.

What's more, it's free! Over the loud speakers the organisers encourage you to donate £1 per person to the collectors, to cover costs and all funds going towards local charities (and I do feel for those poor people who must spend weeks afterwards counting all the children's coppers!). Of course, with my marketing hat on I wonder why the huge appeal of such a spectacle hasn't been used to expand the audience? It seems that once you get beyond Swindon no-one has heard of Carnival, so surely there is a great opportunity to draw in even bigger crowds? After all, more people equals more fund raising; although many would argue vigorously that the charm of this local treasure would be lost in expanding it. In any case, having been on the receiving end of quite a few 'bumpkin' jokes over the years, I am delighted that my family's amazement created by the revelation of the impressive Wells stint last Friday evening gave me a reason to be a little bit proud of my West Country roots for a change!

<http://www.somersetcarnivals.co.uk/>

**(17 November 2010)**



## A week in the life...

... of Inga Rose. Managing Director

It's never a dull moment in the Air office. One thing I've learnt in the six years of running this business is to always expect the unexpected! Just when you feel you are starting to get some order to your working week, bang, a fab new project lands on your lap and here you go again, all systems go, priorities to re-jig, clients to keep happy!

And I have to say, working on the rebuild of our new website has definitely been a project that has teased out some unexpected and exciting ideas. Insightful and enjoyable, it's actually been quite cathartic to be on the client side of the fence for once and working with a design agency for our own business. Trying to evoke all the brand qualities that you believe Air stands for is quite a challenge, but working with creatives who really 'get it' just makes our life so easy. Thank you Spoken Image for your patience and perseverance.

We're almost there now, with only some fine tuning to be done this week. So don't be shy in giving us some [feedback on our new look](#), we want to know what you really think. Do you 'get it'?

**(October 2010)**

