

Jess Douglas, marketing manager of Confex

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‘What goes around comes around’

What has been the major milestone or turning point of your career?

Joining the family business, Confex. It was not always my plan, but after having my second child in 2013, Confex was advertising for a role that I had experience in (publishing/design). Four years later, I have taken over as marketing manager following Gilly Hunt’s retirement. Confex has a great team of staff, and joining my mother, uncle, brother and aunt in the office has also maintained it as a family-run business.

Who has been the biggest inspiration to you?

Without a doubt, my mum (Nicky White, Confex MD). She has given my brothers and I every opportunity we could want and I wouldn’t be where I am now without her. She continues to run Confex but never says no to anything – I’m still not sure how she fits so much into her day! On top of that, she also manages to be an amazing Granny to my two

sons, aged six and four. (Douglas is pictured above with her family.)

How do you maintain a work-life balance?

I believe that a good work-life balance is integral to being happy in both. We are extremely lucky with the technology today that we can really work from anywhere, and as a working mum this has enabled me to get back into the workplace on a part-time basis sooner than I would have possibly 10 or 20 years ago. Being available all the time does have its downfalls though, and because my husband also runs his own business, I do have a strict rule of no mobiles by the pool on holiday!

What most frustrates you in business (and in life generally)?

Blame culture – everyone gets things wrong in life or at work at some point and it’s always much easier just to admit it, rectify it and move on. I believe it is

always best to be as honest as you can be (without upsetting anyone!) in life. My husband is a firm believer in ‘what goes around, comes around’ and I try to use this mantra too to do the right thing.

If you were able to retire tomorrow, how would you spend your time?

I love horses and have my own so would spend as much time as possible riding them. I would also like to show my children the world and travel – I would need unlimited funds for both of these activities, however!

What advice would you give someone starting his/her first job?

Be truthful and work hard. If you are not fulfilled in a job, don’t pretend to be as you are wasting your own and your employer’s time. Find the right job that you enjoy and that makes you happy and you will reap the rewards.

What type of business would you go into if it wasn’t C&C/wholesale?

PR/publishing is my background and what I enjoy but I also love cooking so would possibly like to train more in this.

If you had a million pounds to invest in business, how would you spend it?

I would invest in IT and the future. Technology is moving so fast that you need to try to keep up as best as you can.

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Publishing first

Jess Douglas completed a degree in English & Publishing at Oxford Brookes University and a post-graduate qualification in Journalism at London School of Journalism. She then worked in publishing as a senior sub-editor at IPC Media in London for six years, and she was nominated for a Writer of the Year award in 2006. Douglas joined Confex in 2014 as digital asset manager and she became marketing manager in December.