

Here are some of our teachers' thoughts about their event experiences....

Luc Bertrand CBA

Memories of your first event

Our first event was The EBS European Balloon Symposium in Paris 15 years ago. We had seen in Balloon Images what was possible to be made with balloons. I had certain expectations, yet reality was so much more impressing. That is the place where we met for the first time many of our friends in this business. We were even competing next to Sue Bowler who was doing her first competition piece too. We were all very excited to be part of it and had lots of fun.

What made you decide to attend the event?

We quickly decided to go as we were new in this business and we wanted to learn as much as possible in a short time. The price of an event seemed very low when considering the amount of knowledge we could gather in one go.

How was it was beneficial for your business?

We learned a lot as we were able to touch balloons and try out things. We were able to share ideas with colleagues and could see the different approaches. As newbees in the business we gained lots of confidence and could show off to customers when mentioning we had been at a real balloon convention.

What's your most memorable moment at an event?

When I read this question a zillion things go through my head, too many to mention and I find it hard to pick just one moment. I think the most memorable moment was when becoming "best European newcomer of the year" and being awarded for my sculpture that had loads of details and distortion techniques. Amongst all the warm congratulations I got there was Treb Heining, who then was and now still is an Icon in the balloon industry. He came over to me and said "I never ever liked this kind of work, but today you changed my mind" to me it was memorable moment. To get the recognition from a peer in the industry is one of the most beautiful moments.

What do you think is special about events?

We live in a time where technology brings us loads of downloaded knowledge just by pressing a button. Yet no picture will ever show the real impact balloons have. They will never show the little tricks, details and techniques that make a design work. They will never bring you in contact with colleagues. Not going to events and courses is as living on an island. Going to an event is getting the buzz, the boost and the bang! All in one go!

Sue Bowler CBA

Attending my first event is still very memorable! I attended EBS Paris 1996. It was a huge turning point for my business! Making the decision to attend was one thing, but it was taking part in the competitions that really made its impact on me. I had never competed within the balloon industry, so preparing and taking part was a huge learning curve and I learned so very much from taking part, only 1 month later after EBS Paris I earned a 1st place at the UK Party Show for my delivery design and I believe it was by taking part in Paris that I started to understand what it took to win in competition. After that I was hooked, and competing became a very important part of my business development, being a 'winner' made great headlines in my local newspaper and I was never short of regular (free) editorial. Making friends and networking is also a huge part of any event, I am still very much in contact with people that I met in Paris for the first time, and consider them to be part of my 'balloon family', and they have also continued to grow their very successful balloon business's around Europe.

Probably one of the most important aspects of attending an event is gaining the confidence to turn your business into a profit making venture, by truly understanding the value of the designs you create and the investment that you make to learn new skills.

For me the most memorable moments:

Making very special friends, working with very talented people and winning the occasional competition!

Alberto Falcone CBA

If I'm understanding well you asked me feeling like delegate to my first seminar...

It was amazing!

It was 1997 and I went to Florence where Roberta organized two days courses. I went there because curious... Paola received the invitation to go but she cannot so I went instead of her...

In that period we didn't have a balloon business but we had a gadgets shop where we sold also some foils. After this course I come back very excited about balloons. We did soon an order of latex to offer some small compositions to our clients.

I remember it wasn't easy to explain to the people our new job but slowly we started to sell more and more until the moment balloons became our main business.

After the first event I went to many others, like delegate. I remember with passion my first lbac to Chicago. So many people, so big energy and so many things to learn...

My memorable moment was a Bruce Walden class. He spoke about CBA and professionals... From this moment I started to think about balloon like a probably and concrete business.

I think every event could be special for different things. The classes, the parties or the hand on experiences are all very important situations but also the possibility to share opinion and experiences with other professionals coming from different reality... Normally you can feel the advantage to attend to an events just later... When you are at home and you can improve your business with ideas and experiences you learn in the event...