

Megan Caulkett, Compass Academy ApprenticeThe O₂, London

In September 2010, Megan graduates as an accomplished Compass Academy apprentice. She feels that she has come a long way since her first experience of working a big event such as the BRIT Awards where we met her for the first time.

Megan is currently based at The O₂ arena, undertaking a wide variety of roles at this world-famous venue. As part of the Compass Academy apprenticeship programme, Megan is also required to attend different events away from her main base and since starting her apprenticeship, Megan has worked at: The Championships, Wimbledon; The Cheltenham Gold Cup; and the BRIT Awards while also attending training courses essential to the apprenticeship programme.

“The programme has been extremely helpful to my progression,” says Megan. “When attending these different events, I come into contact with different managers and different clients, including some of the biggest concerts in the world, and working at The Championships, Wimbledon where my customers were the tennis players.

“At The O₂, we handle small and large events such as conferences, banqueting, celebrity events and concerts which offer exposure to a varied mix of customers.

“Experiences are the biggest thing, something you cannot get out of being in a classroom, and whilst qualifications are important, to be able to say that in the space of a year I have been involved in some of the biggest events the UK has staged, or even the world, is just so rewarding.”

“Being so hands-on at such huge world-famous events has been brilliant, but I’ve also really enjoyed the off-the-job modules on how food is prepared, packaged and delivered. I have been able to spend time with our suppliers understanding their business and have met a number of different clients which has taught me a great deal in terms of delivering excellent customer service.”

Spending time at The O₂ arena means that Megan is able to explore relationships with colleagues, contractors and find out more about the running of the business, all of which she believes are crucial to her progression.

Megan’s employer, Compass Group UK & Ireland, has put in place a dedicated mentor programme to help its Academy apprentices get the most out of the programme and maximise their potential.

As well as a dedicated mentor who has supported Megan both professionally and personally, every six weeks Megan also has the opportunity to shadow, and gain insight into the role of the Director of Operations at The O₂,

Megan also values the appraisal system and performance measurements that form part of the NVQ qualification and the Compass Academy programme: “The systems put in place to evaluate my performance mean that I am constantly getting feedback on the way I am progressing and I feel that my skills are channelled and I can actually see my route to progression.”

Megan recalls that one of the most special experiences during her apprenticeship was being chosen to meet Ian El-Mokadem, Group Managing Director, Compass Group UK & Ireland: “The exposure that I get as an apprentice to different management levels is very motivational. Meeting Ian El-Mokadem, the Managing Director and knowing that people at that level value you and have an interest in developing you is second to none.”

Before starting this programme, Megan had wanted to become a hotel manager. Whilst still wanting to pursue management, Megan is now very much interested in events management: “It is so rewarding when you exceed customer expectations and I get great satisfaction from building sound relationships with clients and receiving positive feedback.”

“Being an apprentice on the Compass Academy programme has been so rewarding and I feel very lucky to be earning while developing my skills and learning about the business. At the end of the programme I’ll come away with a qualification in Food and Beverage and Level 3 in Hospitality Supervision, while also getting paid to experience exclusive events and gain essential skills for life. For me the experience has been unbeatable!”

Megan wishes to gain a managerial position, preferably in events with Compass, and strongly believes that all the skills and experience she has been getting on this programme will make her a strong candidate for future positions.