



#WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

# CELEBRATING CELEBRATIONS: Anika Azam's Event Planning Journey



Anika Azam's event management journey began in 2009, though her father had noted her creativity a good decade before that. "He would see me happily planning events for friends and family and would often tease me about becoming an event planner."

To Anika, that idea was ludicrous. "Wedding planner? Whatever would people need that for — I would tell him, and laugh." Ceremonies tended to be smaller, cosier functions, typically organised by families themselves, and it was unthinkable that people would hand over the planning of such a personal affair to external planners. "He was a visionary, however," she agrees. "Around 2009-2010, social dynamics really did begin to change: more people entered formal employment, schedules grew busier, urban traffic increased, and families increasingly relied on professionals to manage celebrations."

## BABY STEPS

It was around this time that Anika had just finished her graduation, suffered a brief stint with a 9-5 job and knew that it was simply not for her. "The pull toward events was simply stronger," she confesses.

Anika's first real assignment came when her best friend's sister was getting married; Anika had long been the go-to person for daalas and holud dances among cousins and university friends, and stepping into the role of a planner felt organic.

"Kri Events initially focused almost exclusively on weddings," shares Anika. "We sketched our own designs and also drew inspiration from international trends, experimenting all the way." Learning on the job, Anika's young team brought verve and fresh ideas to a developing field.

After five or six years of concentrating solely on weddings, Anika expanded Kri Events to offer birthday party, baby shower, and anniversary planning services. "Now, in its 17th year, Kri Events handles bridal showers, corporate functions, high-tea gatherings, club events, and a wide range of private celebrations," shares a proud Anika. She also takes pride in sharing that much of the company's business comes from repeat clients and referrals. "It's proof of our consistently good quality service in a competitive market."

## A TALE OF FAVOURITES

Several projects stand out in Kri Events' portfolio. One early landmark was a wedding for 7,500 guests at the China-Bangladesh Friendship Centre, an ambitious undertaking that made Kri Events the talk of the town, and demonstrated the team's ability to manage large-scale logistics. "It was only our second project too; can you

believe it?" gushes a proud Anika.

A more recent South Indian themed gaye holud, featured a bride in traditional white attire, food served on banana leaves, and a simple décor with folded banana leaves and diyas. Another prominent event from the previous season was a safari-themed party that included a highly realistic python mock-up; guests reportedly believed it was real, reflecting the team's attention to detail and theatrical flair.

## AN UPHILL BATTLE

"Watching other event planners blatantly use our designs for their work has been a challenge," shares Anika. "We started managing events much before most of the newcomers in the market, and at first, it used to feel really bad, because we would put in hours into sketching our designs, only to have it copied by someone else."

Gradually, however, Anika got over her frustration, reframing imitation as validation and continued to innovate. Anika



believes in protecting original ideas but recognises that it can be difficult to enforce design patents, especially considering the varying budgets of clients who look for similar designs at cheaper rates. "And you cannot discount creative freedom either," she agrees. Anika herself does not condone exact duplication in any of her designs, even if close inspirations are possible.

## THE 'CUSTOMER IS KING' APPROACH

Anika's customers are those that prioritise quality without running after extravagance.

For such clients, she maintains a set of non-negotiables, which she believes have played a part in taking her to the top of her game. Her two hard and fast values include quality work and maintaining respectful client relations. "The team's attitude matters as much as its output," she feels. "Every time my team meets a client, my ask is simple: behave courteously, and try, as far as possible, to have a can-do approach."

In line with this approach, Anika prides herself of having attained the reputation of 'The Last-Minute Queen.' "I once pulled off a grand, multi-hall event in 24 hours!" she laughs.

## THE EVOLVING LANDSCAPE OF EVENT MANAGEMENT

From changing names of events to changing styles and designs, cultural influence is inevitable at the time of social media and global culture. Anika remains flexible and sees these trends as opportunities for creativity and reinterpretation of tradition. "New designs, even if adapted from a different culture, allow me to expand my creative horizon," shares the open-minded designer.

Though Anika refrains from labelling the company with a single signature, her clients and peers often recognise a distinctive touch in Kri Events' productions. "Is this your work? They ask. I have no idea how they recognise it — I must have some unique imprint that even I am not aware of," she adds cheerfully.

Anika believes in strategic growth. "I see that there is no shortage of sprawling halls for large events. How many people can afford to have such lavish events, though?" Backward integration, in the form of purchasing space for parties and smaller events reflect a desire to bridge market gaps that she sees in this area.

Anika Azam, through her unique business acumen, cheerful outlook and a never-say-die attitude continues to pursue bigger, better, and more meaningful celebrations while preserving the same trust in quality. Her continued focus on client care, and dynamic creativity has allowed Kri Events to thrive in an industry that rewards unconventional, authenticity and reliability.

By Munira Fidai  
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