



How The Black Market champions equality

Romy Alford explains equality is achieved by changing the conversation in the hospitality and entertainment industry. She encourages corporate business to have a circular business model through supporting our champions for change and creating long term impact in these industries.

Good Business

Inequality in the hospitality and entertainment industry

Let me start by saying that there are a lot of good businesses out there who are dedicated to championing equality in the hospitality and entertainment industry. My focus is bringing businesses together to create partnerships and really make sustainable and long-term change, rather than working in isolation. I'd really like to create a community of businesses who become representatives of the same

values and ideologies because to me, this is how society is changed in the long term.

Since entering the world of entertainment I've seen a lot of good representations of diversity and equality, and I also have seen the opposite. What strikes me is the lack of consistency in the industry and I've yet to see one industry leader whose representative of the changes that ultimately will benefit us all.

I focus on giving up and coming entertainers the opportunity to perform in a venue that they wouldn't necessarily

have access to as well as mixing them with more seasoned professionals who can pass on their experience. Innovation to me is borne of being open to new ways of thinking and not being afraid of development, feedback and reflection. The Black Market is about creative expression and creating educational as well as entertaining moments in time for audiences, as a producer I want audiences to make conscious choices about the entertainment they support and how their support makes impactful change not only to the performers but to the wider community. Call it 'ethical entertainment!'



The other area that's close to my heart as a former union rep in secondary education and as someone who's been subject to exploitation across many of my jobs is the working practices across these industries. It cannot be that a performer or waitress or producer has to have three jobs in order to survive.

As a single mother, I see lots of solo parents who are unable to pursue their dream careers in hospitality and entertainment because the hours are horrific, don't work with childcare, are unsustainable and don't pay the bills. I'm also aware of lots of working practices which would (in my old world of education) be a cause to call in the unions. I get riled up when I hear about performers working in a culture of fear and exploitation, let alone the sexism that seems to be rife, especially in the cabaret world. It's just not on. But it needs champions in the businesses to lead on making change, and for that to happen businesses need to work together across all levels, corporate and independent.

My goal is for The Black Market to be known as a representative of good practice within the industry and become a leader of change and innovation in these areas on a national scale.

What's the potential benefit to society if this changed?

In terms of overall society, reflecting our natural diversity and promoting a society based on inclusion can only benefit people in the long run. Persistent isolation obviously allows other negative attributes to fester and we already struggle as a society to cope with the range of mental health issues that impact people on a daily basis. Our national services (NHS, social services etc) are overburdened and so many people either slip through the net or are unable to be helped. There has to be a grassroots revolution to resolve this, it can't be left until children become young adults with a range of mental health issues that are so ingrained they can't be undone.

A lot of my work through The Black Market has been informed by my career as an educator. I've seen what can happen when children don't see themselves as valued, loved, able to explore or be themselves. The Black Market is about giving opportunities to be seen and heard, standing in your own power and being celebrated for being your authentic self. I think if there were more days lived by society being happy and comfortable within

themselves and feeling valued, there'd be a lot less conflict across the globe.

How is The Black Market making that change happen?

I live out this ethos through my working practices and how I represent performers and brands I work with. Each performer is a valued member of my TBM team. I spend a lot of time working with performers to ensure they have the maximum value from the facilities and space in the venues we work with e.g. arranging custom lighting, staging, animations, venue tours etc.

I am an independent business that's entirely self-funded so I show my gratitude to performers for their time and effort where I can. I arrange a promotional photoshoot (currently at Hotel Pelirocco) because it's important to me to have high end advertising but also because I know how important portfolios are. Performers receive a catalogue of professional photos with some retouching, they also receive footage and images from the show for their showreels.

I think you can only carry on living out your authenticity as a business and invite people with similar values and ideologies along with you, in order to affect change my next step is to engage corporate clients to book TBM so we can start to make long lasting partnerships and encourage more businesses to adopt this circular business model. The more the message gets out there, the wider the is spreads?!

Come to the December event!

Sussex Business Times' readers are welcome to utilise the code TRADE10VIP for my show on December 2nd, which entitles them to 10% off VIP packages and silver standard seating.

DISCOVER LOCAL TALENT
Aurora Starr
Kiki LaHula
Beatrix Carlotta
Spectre

Hosted by
Glenda Swing &
Rita Herringbone

SUPPORT LOCAL BRANDS
G&H
PH
THE OLD MARKET

"At the end of the show you are truly left wanting more so returning is a definite, not a maybe!"
Kairen Kemp- Discover Brighton

"The whole night was fab. We will be back!"
Lyndsey Clay- Connected Brighton

Gold Package (VIP)
-Cabaret table of 6 people minimum
-Welcome cocktail OR mocktail by Mixologists
-VIP room with handmade canapes
-Burlesque accessories
-Meet & Greet with performers
-Entry into competition to win 6x tickets to after party at Plotting Parlour
£60pp

Silver package
-Standard seating
-Welcome cocktail OR mocktail by Mixologists
-Entry into competition to win 6x tickets to after party at Plotting Parlour
£35pp

Friday 2nd December
The Old Market theatre
Hove

Doors 6.30pm
Cocktail hour 6.30-7.45pm
Show 8pm-10pm
Meet & Greet for VIP 10pm-11pm

CODE: THANKYOU10 FOR 10% OFF STANDARD SEATING

What's the idea?

Part of The Black Market's uniqueness is not only that the events are made up entirely of local entertainers, food and drink brands as well as other local businesses, but we provide an entirely plant based, seasonal and 'free from' menu that ensures none of the 14 allergens are used in my recipes for the VIP canapes. The food is 'free from allergens, definitely not from flavour!'

Your experience

As a guest of The Black Market, you will be treated to a welcome cocktail by our mixologists (made using our local handmade spirit brands), saunter to your seat and get ready for a non-stop, super sexy and stylish show packed with the best of local talent all wrapped up in a beautiful burlesque bow! Hosted by the fabulous Glenda Swing & Rita

Herringbone (@wereallylikemovies) you will be transported back into a bygone glitzy and glamorous era, but is all as it seems...? Join us to find out!

As a VIP, after indulging in handmade canapes in your VIP room, sashay to your cabaret table, sample another fabulous cocktail and glam up with our burlesque accessories, with an opportunity to meet and greet the artists after the show.

All seats are automatically entered into our competition to win a chance for six tickets to our VIP after party at The Plotting Parlour.

Hope to see you there - it's Christmas and our first birthday so expect lots of surprises!

Gold package
(VIP: Cabaret table of 6 people min.)
£350+£10 levy

Per person

- 2 x cocktails (worth £8 each) made by mixologists and using local handmade spirits
- Cabaret table with burlesque accessories
- VIP room with handmade canapes
- Meet & Greet performers after the show
- Chance to win 6 tickets to performers after party

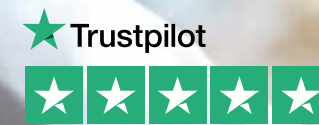
Silver package
£33 + £2 levy

Per person

- 1 x cocktail (worth £8) made by mixologists and using local handmade spirits
- Seat in main audience
- Chance to win 6 tickets to performers after party

Book tickets via: bit.ly/3CrSrdR

www.theblackmarketbrighton.com



Does your business need a helping hand?

During these unprecedented times, many businesses are struggling so we would like to help. We are offering free general guidance on:

- Unpaid invoices & contract disputes
- Commercial landlord & tenant issues
- Professional Negligence
- Commercial insurance claims
- Trading Standards & consumer complaints
- Shareholder & Partnership disputes
- Employment claims & settlement agreements
- Franchise disputes

Call us on 01273 223290
or visit www.mayowynnebaxter.co.uk/here-to-help

Offices across Sussex