

Nicole Reitz-Chidrawi + Samantha Ferguson = Flint & Tinder

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

1 May 2017

Celebrating a year of planning, organising and executing some of the country's most exciting product launches, promotions, weddings and festivals (you name it), from intimate events to grand exhibitions, and a portfolio that extends to some of the country's largest blue-chip accounts, are Nicole Reitz-Chidrawi (the flint) and Samantha Ferguson (the tinder) of boutique events company [Flint & Tinder Events](#).

Well on their way to becoming the 'biggest smallest' events company in the country, Ferguson says their strategy, for the time being, is to keep numbers and infrastructure relatively small. "This ensures we're able to maintain control over every aspect of the business and continue to provide the attentive and personalised event experiences that our customers have come to know and appreciate," she explains.

In the meantime, Reitz-Chidrawi and Ferguson are focusing on strengthening their existing relationships with their suppliers while working on building a larger supplier network in order to keep costs as low as possible for their clients.



Nicole Reitz-Chidrawi and Samantha Ferguson

Here, they share their thoughts on this milestone and the magic that makes an event memorable...

■ When and why did you launch Flint & Tinder Events?

Ferguson: This year marked Flint & Tinder's one-year anniversary and it's crazy to think how much we've already achieved in this time! I actually started an entertainment company quite a few years ago, so I still had the entrepreneurial bug in me, and, because Nicole and I share the same values when it comes to business, it was only a matter of time before we ventured into something we both love doing together. It was a natural progression and a business idea that I had always wanted to pursue with her, and I'm thrilled with how far we've already come.

■ Why the name Flint & Tinder?

Ferguson: We sat having coffee one morning, brainstorming every possible name to call our business, including some of the most ridiculous-sounding names you could imagine. In the end, we found that most of the names we came up with involved sparkle, glitz and glamour – from Foxy Events to Verve and everything in between, but nothing really grabbed our attention. Later that evening, Nicole called me and said, “Flint & Tinder Events”, and it just fit perfectly – I loved it!



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20 Apr 2017



The name Flint & Tinder Events signifies the soul of our business and our belief that there is never just one element responsible for making magic happen. Where the flint requires the tinder, the tinder requires the flint to ignite and come to life.

■ What events do you specialise in?

Ferguson: Our portfolio is mostly generated through corporate events such as gala dinners, conferencing, awards functions and public events such as exhibitions, roadshows and activations. We’ve worked hard to build a unique and efficient range of offerings, and provide the full spectrum of event services that any business, institution or individual may require.

■ Comment on Samone Vorster’s new appointment? Why do you refer to her as the ‘Spark’?

Reitz-Chidrawi: Sam and I have been fortunate to work with Samone on previous events. She’s the young, energetic and eager individual that everyone wants in an event co-ordinator. The term ‘Spark’ relates to the fire element of our name. We are the flint and tinder, and Samone is the spark that helps us make the magic happen!

■ Explain your experiential approach to event planning and design.

Reitz-Chidrawi: There has to be an undercurrent of excitement in every event, or you’re left with a boring and forgettable event – and in that case, what’s the point of planning an event in the first place? Clients and guests alike are bored with seeing the same old things. They want fresh ideas that not only leave a lasting impression, but achieve a desired objective – whether it’s a bottom-line impact for businesses or a celebration of love and life that people will remember for years to come. I think the events industry has previously lacked the out-of-the-box thinking, and event planning has always been rather black and white. We want to change that by giving clients and guests a memorable experience.

We always ask a customised set of questions before diving into any event or campaign and most hinge on creating the ultimate ‘event experience’. The five senses are an important consideration when drawing out and crafting an event, ensuring that there are multiple ‘layers’ to an event that appeal to your sense of taste, touch, smell, hearing and sight. That’s what makes a memorable event.

■ What sets the agency apart from its competition?

Ferguson: We provide practical and cost-effective solutions without compromising quality. We have mentioned our relationship with our suppliers and I think our most valuable asset would be that we keep our costs low in order to provide our customers with competitive price structures, which are often less than competitors – our growing portfolio of incredible clients can vouch for that! We also take a hands-on approach with client accounts, and we are both involved in all internal processes, as well as client and supplier meetings. You may even find us onsite getting our hands dirty alongside our suppliers!

■ What are some of the exciting projects you have lined up for 2017?

Reitz-Chidrawi: We have quite a few exciting projects in the pipeline for 2017. We are excited to be the chosen event company for the VW City Surf Series Roadshow where we will be launching the new California Beach model nationwide.

We also have the Yom Festival that we manage annually for the South African Zionist Federation, taking place in May.

We are fortunate to continue working with clients such as Bain & Company, GWK, Paycorp, Drive Control Corporation and Tribeca Public Relations in 2017. Other projects are still under wraps, so watch this space!

■ Why events?

Ferguson: We get to do something different all the time and constantly gain experience in a variety of industries, from banking and IT to automotive to interior decorating and even mining. Events is a wonderful industry because it's diverse and unpredictable!

■ What has been your most noteworthy learning in the space so far?

Ferguson: Always have a contract agreement in writing! And follow your intuition – the gut never lies!

■ What has been your greatest challenge to date, in setting up the agency or events management?

Reitz-Chidrawi: I think the greatest challenge for any startup is gaining and maintaining trust when it comes to new clients. It was a risky decision to take the leap of starting a business without any financial support, but we have been blessed with many opportunities and a number of incredible clients have come our way in the past year, who we have managed to build strong relationships with.

■ What trends do you predict for your industry in 2017?

Reitz-Chidrawi: There are some big trends taking shape in our industry, particularly from a technology point of view. We hope to implement a few fresh and exciting tech ideas that we've been brewing up for our clients in the months to come, but we have also had to accept that many people shy away from taking a chance and trying something new, often because these ideas come with a higher price tag.

■ What's at the top of your to-do list?

Ferguson: Another to-do list! Being relatively young, the Flint & Tinder team has plenty on its plate, but I think the most important thing on that list is to have a little fun along the way!

■ What are you currently reading/listening to for work?

Reitz-Chidrawi: Currently reading *Thrive* by Arianna Huffington and *The Secret*. I am currently listening to Sam tell me about a new tender.

■ Tell us something about yourselves not generally known.

Reitz-Chidrawi: I have South African colours as a drum majorette and studied health and skincare therapy, and Sam was an acrobat for most of her life!

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