

Some 'Europhia' with Louise Benson, Festival Director, Eurobest Awards

Author : BrandKnew

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Louise Benson is the Festival Director of Eurobest Awards, Europe's prized tribute to creativity and innovation emanating out of Europe.

Brandknewmag caught up with her to understand more about her drive, her vision and what makes the Eurobest Awards one of the most coveted recognitions in the field of creativity.

Q: Festivals & MICE seem to be a part of your DNA- what attracted you to this industry? And what is your biggest driver?

I spent the first part of my career in arts and entertainment, and have always been drawn to the many creative industries. I get my inspiration from meeting and learning from diverse and interesting people, and as a Festival Director that is core to my job. Plus ultimately my role is to make that happen for other people, and I find doing that deeply rewarding.

Q: Considering that this is emerging from under the same umbrella of the Cannes Lions Festivals, how do you position the Eurobest brand in order to make it distinct from the Cannes?

The intention of **Cannes** Lions and **eurobest** are shared, both celebrate and enable creativity. **Cannes** Lions is firmly established as a destination for creativity and inspiration, while **eurobest**'s nomadic nature allows greater flexibility that pulls from the heritage and influences of the host city. The awards provide a creative benchmark for the region and pushes the boundaries of what creativity is.

Q: How has the journey been for Eurobest since its inception in 1988?

In 1988 **eurobest** was launched as an awards. It wasn't until 2008 that it evolved into a 3-day

Festival. Travelling to cities across the region enables **eurobest** to build a programme of inspiring content that reflects the two way process between creativity and culture. The Festival has evolved over the past 27 years to include greater opportunities for learning and networking and each host city has played an important part in laying foundations for future success.



Q: 14 Categories, multiple entries, diverse juries, it must be a mammoth logistical challenge even for someone of your experience. What do you focus on to ensure that it goes like clockwork?

There's a brilliant team behind **Eurobest**, that all work away on their specialist areas, be it entries, delegate registration or the content programme – it would be impossible to deliver it without them! We're also lucky that this year, the City of Antwerp are providing fantastic assistance to incorporate the Festival into their year-long programme "Born in Antwerp", and introduce a wider audience to **Eurobest**.

Q: Technology has been playing both havoc and heaven with the creative industry, just like it has been in other industries- what in your understanding has been the most disruptive metamorphosis to have emerged, driven by technology?

This will probably age me terribly, but I'm still bowled over by mobile connectivity and the

infinite things it can enable.

Q: Within Europe, where do you see the best creative work coming from, consistently? And what would you attribute that to?

Europe is such a diverse region with a myriad of different languages, cultures, heritage and traditions in such a small area. Each country brings a unique reflection of its inhabitants.

Q: The Eurobest is like a travelling circus (if we understand correctly) straddling multiple European countries year after year- which European nation in your experience would you say have benefitted the most from hosting the Eurobest Awards?

When we approach potential host locations we look to the city's heritage and commitment to creativity to be strong. Since its inception we have travelled to London, Stockholm, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Lisbon, Helsinki and now Antwerp. Each city brings something dynamic to the mix, while inspiring local communities to be creatively brave. We like to think of it is a two-way process and that as much as the city impacts on the city so too the Festival impacts on the city.

Q: What is the in built mechanism that you have in place which ensures that the Eurobest Awards are just, fair, non biased & transparent, year after year?

The Festival follows a rigorous selection procedure to ensure a fair and balanced jury to honour entries with a **eurobest** award. We also have our own algorithm in place which monitors the voting patterns of every individual jury member, analysing how he or she is voting compared to the rest of the jury.

Q: What do you see is the Road Ahead for the Eurobest- what do you want to add/tweak to make sure that it always remain future ready?

eurobest is a reflection of the European industry so the path it takes is very much down to the path of the industry. We'll continue to adapt and tweak to ensure that **eurobest** is offering must-see dynamic content and that the awards continue to be relevant and the definitive benchmark on European creative communications.

Q: What is the best Award/Reward that you have been conferred with or aspire to have?

Being a mum is pretty rewarding. Can I say either that or some sort of Nobel prize please?