

Welcome to the Event Tech Podcast, where we explore the ever-evolving world of event technology every week. This show is brought to you by Endless Events, the event AV company that doesn't suck. Now, let's talk tech.

Brandt Krueger:

Hello everyone and welcome to this edition of the Event Tech Podcast. He is Will Curran from Endless Events.

Will Curran:

And he is the stormy Brandt Krueger.

Brandt Krueger:

Stormy.

Will Curran:

All right.

Brandt Krueger:

Man, what are we going to talk about today? Because I just don't know.

Will Curran:

You know, I had this really cool topic idea, actually, and I got it, actually, as an idea from one of our awesome listeners. Abigail Campbell, actually, was talking to me on LinkedIn, and gave me this idea, and asked me, "Hey, does this sort of thing exist?" And naturally, I said, "You know what, I know somebody who actually does this, and I think that it would be a great episode to talk about. Like, how does this work, and why you need one."

Will Curran:

And it's the idea of a technical producer, which I think is one of the coolest things in the world. And just kind of give some preface, the message basically said, "Hey, I'm really passionate about event apps and all the event technologies and things like that. You know, is there someone in the events industry who evaluates all these and does all these things?"

Will Curran:

And I thought to myself, I said, "Yeah, I do know someone who does that," and so naturally, I thought of you, Brandt.

Brandt Krueger:

You shared the post with me, and it made me literally laugh out loud, because it was like, "Have you talked to Brandt?" And her response was classic, it was, "Is that a company or a person?" Fair enough, fair enough. And there is actually a company.

Will Curran:

Sometimes I think you're actually a company.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, there are a couple. Well, yeah, I'm not going to say who, but one of the industry associations contacted me about my company called Brandt Krueger, and I was like, "What? That's me." But yeah, it really is a fascinating topic, and I know it's a little self-serving, because it is what I do, but it's actually been percolating in the back of my head as an episode potential, because I see so much potential in this role.

Brandt Krueger:

So whether or not you use me is irrelevant, but there is a use for this role on your event. And so, I'd like to kind of dive in a little bit about, to be perfectly honest, my kind of journey and how I arrived at this position, and why I think it could be helpful and useful for planners and planning committees.

Will Curran:

Yeah, absolutely. So, yeah. I think the story is going to be really a great progression, because I think you naturally found this need in the market, and kind of just tried to add value, and then realized, "Hey, this is actually a ..."

Brandt Krueger:

"This is a thing, hey."

Will Curran:

"This is a thing." So yeah, yeah, yeah, I get it, Brandt.

Brandt Krueger:

Right, so I worked for ... And people who have listened to the shows have heard some of this story over the course of the last several years that I've worked with you and Event Icons. So I worked for a production company, a meeting and event production company out of Minneapolis, for the better part of 16 to 18 years, and really straight, pretty much straight out of college until I was well into my 30s.

Brandt Krueger:

And there were things that I liked, and there were things that I didn't like about the way that they were doing things, and eventually, we came to a very natural crossroads, and left on good terms, and I still do a lot of work with them. But a lot of the stuff was kind of percolating in the back of my head, and one of the things that, early on, was kind of bugging me, was just presentations. Like, how do we make our presentations better? Because I had seen so many bad presentations from the back of the room, working in meeting and events.

Brandt Krueger:

And so, I started doing some work on that, and there are all these books saying, "You have to use this font size, and that font size," and all that kind of stuff, and that all seemed kind of ridiculous to me, because really, it depended on how big your screens were, and how close you were to the screens. So I started actually talking on the speaking circuit about how to make our presentations better, just some of the smaller conferences, the event camps, things like that.

Brandt Krueger:

That expanded into my role of working with the Event Leadership Institute to do a class on technical meeting and event production, which, that's still going on to this day. When I finally made the decision to go out on my own, it was based around this idea that I saw a gap in planners' knowledge, right? That when it came to AV, and this is the stuff, Will, that you've been working on for a long time, as far as content and articles, is helping planners understand their AV.

Brandt Krueger:

And when I was still working at that production company, we would beg our clients, "Hey, let us take a look at your contract before you sign it, even if you aren't going to be using us. Let us just take a look at that contract before you sign on the dotted line, and we can look out for these things, the gotchas, right, of rigging points and point charges and power and all of the things that gets wrapped up, you know? 'Oh, we're going to give you a 25% discount on something that's been marked up 700%,' you know? A lot of those gotchas."

Brandt Krueger:

And so I kind of came out expecting to be what I considered a consultant, right, that the people would just pay me for my pearls of wisdom to drop about this stuff. But at the same time, I really wanted to keep my hands dirty, right? So I was still working on events, and over the course of the five years, now, that I've been out on my own, I've been settling into this role where you're a company that you're ready to take the next step, right?

Brandt Krueger:

You've been producing your events internally, or maybe you've got one or two people that are full time planners on staff, but for the most part, your marketing people, your sales people, your admin assistants, those types of people that are producing events all over the world, but don't necessarily consider themselves to be meeting planners, and those people aren't ready to go to a production company, right?

Brandt Krueger:

They weren't ready to go to the company that I used to work for, because there's costs involved in that. It's a whole team of people that come in and produce your event for you, basically. But they just need a guy, right? And I use that in the most generic term, a guy. Yeah, I definitely fall in the gender neutral guy camp.

Brandt Krueger:

And they just need someone that they can ... That will get them two or three AV bids, and line it all up, and say, "Okay, I think we should go with these people," and then be there on site to make sure it goes off well. And then, at the end, go through the billing, and make sure that everything looks all right. And really, the thing is, if you think about a lot of our meetings and events, especially ones that are produced internally, it feels like, a lot of times, there's someone on the team, right?

Brandt Krueger:

There's always that one person on the team that, oh, you know, Ted, or Cindy, she knows a lot about technical things. So all of those technical questions wind up getting filtered to that one person on the planning team, or someone in marketing, or something like that. But what if your organization doesn't have that? What if your organization doesn't have that person that is a little bit more technical, or you as a planner maybe know the basics of AV, but you don't know all the details?

Brandt Krueger:

And what if you wanted that person on your team? And that's where this technical producer role kind of came into play, and it's a thing, right? There are people out there that call themselves technical producer. But I'm starting to kind of hone in on a certain definition that I think is appropriate.

Brandt Krueger:

And that really is that this person is an extension of the planning team, that, just like you've got a head planner, and frequently, you'll have a creative director, or you'll have different people assigned to different roles on the planning team, this person acts in that role. So it's not really a technical director, where there are boots on the ground, and figuring out how many pounds per square inch that trust can hold, and that kind of thing.

Brandt Krueger:

It's more an extension of the planning team. It's someone who's going to help you plan your event with the technical in mind, and is going to be able to help you decide, which event app do you want to use? All of the technology wrapped into one. So not just the AV, but the event app, and the kiosks, and the registration, and really is going to be able to take ownership for all of that technical stuff on your event.

Brandt Krueger:

So, that was kind of the evolution of how I got to be what I consider to be a technical director. Kind of slowly, over the course of time, realizing it's less of a consultant and more of an extension of the planning team. So, I'm going to take a breath, because that was a long thing. I'm going to drink a sip of LaCroix while you formulate where we want to go from here.

Will Curran:

Yeah, I think what I'm most curious about, too, is the, how does this person ... You kind of start hinting at it, is the, how they fit into the team as an overall, because when I hear the word producer, I'm used to, as an AV event production company, being hired to be the producer of the general session, sometimes a producer of the entire show, but most of the time, the person in charge of the entire general session, make sure all the talent is done right, the messaging is right, the content is done right, and just kind of overall manage everything.

Will Curran:

Then I'm also used to a technical director, like you said, who is the making sure that all the cases arrive, that all the gear's right, when there's an issue, working with the warehouse to get it brought over right away, when the CEO goes up, and I say, "I want to do this," and it's completely outside of what the equipment and the staff are able to do, can technically figure out how to make that all happen.

Will Curran:

So, this person, though, like you said, is an extension of the entire planning team. So your belief, and correct me if I'm wrong, is that this person is involved in every technology related to the show, not just what's in the general session.

Brandt Krueger:

Right, exactly. And what it enabled me to do is, I'm thinking specifically of the last event that I did acting in this role, which literally wrapped up less than a week ago. We had, in the general session, we had a technical director, and in the general session, we had a show caller, and those are both roles that I've done.

Brandt Krueger:

But by having those people still dedicated just to that room, and having me as the technical producer over that, I was able to bounce out of the room quite comfortably, and say, "Okay, you guys got this. I'm going to go check in on my breakout sessions and make sure that those are running well, and maybe pop around the corner and take a look at registration, and just make sure they're all doing all right."

Brandt Krueger:

I judged a lot of my worth on that show based on how little I saw the actual planners in the general session, right? They were comfortable that I was handling the tech side, and that freed them up to deal with sponsors, and to deal with attendees, and to deal with their internal stakeholders, and to make sure that they were happy. And all of those things, all of those parts of the event planning team's roles, right?

Brandt Krueger:

That freed them up to focus up more time on those things, just knowing that I was covering all of the tech stuff. And so, "All right, we've got rehearsals are up and running here in the general session, I've got breakouts, though, that start in another hour, so I'm going to jump over now

and make sure that the ..." Because there was a house technical director that was running that site, too. "Make sure that they're all doing all right."

Brandt Krueger:

And sure enough, there's some problems, and this isn't the right equipment for that room, okay, great. And they're not having to then run away and grab the head meeting planner for the event and have them deal with that. So it really off loads all of the technical things onto this very specific role, and by not just focusing on the general session, or just focusing on the breakouts, I'm able to then bounce around and make sure that everything is being handled in a professional and quality way.

Will Curran:

I think you bring up a ton of good points. So I think, now, people are like, "Okay, this sounds like something I might need, and someone I want to look for." So, other than, obviously, the self-fulfilling, "Just call Brandt," obvious answer, but maybe there's someone that exists on team to be this. My question is ... Go ahead.

Brandt Krueger:

No, I think that's exactly, I think that's where you were going, is that, even if you're not hiring an outside person, I think we're reaching the point where, in internal planning teams, somebody's got to be assigned to this role. And I've seen that, actually, effectively done with people from the organization. It doesn't have to be an outside person. Obviously, I'm happy to be a part of that, be that role. But it doesn't have to be.

Brandt Krueger:

But I think we are reaching the point with technology where technology is so much a part of our events at this point that having that point person, having that person that's assigned to handle the technology, I think is becoming much more of a bigger and bigger thing.

Will Curran:

So my question, then, is, if someone's looking to either bring someone internally, or even hire externally for this, what sort of job skills, requirements do you think ... Maybe we start with what sort of skills they have, and then maybe we'll jump, then, into requirements.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah. Even general technical knowledge, I think, is going to go a long way, right? Having some idea of how some of this stuff works, even if it was just AV club in high school. I think you're going to be a leg up on a lot of people, because a lot of people look at AV and technology, and they're just like, "Oh, I'm just not a techy person. I could never learn that stuff."

Brandt Krueger:

But it's not true, right? You and I both have spent a fair amount of time promoting education side of AV and technology, and one of those strong messages is, you can learn this stuff. So, having

someone who's assigned on your team that maybe has a technical base, and then maybe is able to get out and get a little bit more training, whether that's taking some classes or even just reading a ton of blog articles on Endless, or something like that, just catching up and being able to learn a little bit more than the basics is going to give you a significant leg up.

Brandt Krueger:

But even if that's not the case, even if you just have a super basic technical knowledge, having someone who's assigned to that ... You and I, a few weeks ago, broke down, we did the crossover episode with breaking down the AV quote. And so many people, so many planners, are just so busy that they're not able to go through those quotes line by line. And I'll be honest with you, even when it's my job, I still miss things, right?

Brandt Krueger:

Because sometimes, these quotes are so complicated, and so many pages, that trying to go through it line by line, and I find stuff, it's like, "Why didn't I see that in the last round? Okay, great." Because sometimes, and I feel like sometimes, maybe intentionally, these things are meant to be confusing to look at. But having someone who's dedicated, who's going to take the time to go through your AV quote and just ask questions.

Brandt Krueger:

We've talked about this many times, just being able to ask questions, and understanding whether or not that answer makes sense or is kind of a, "Yeah, let me look into that," is going to go a long way toward making sure that you're getting the equipment that you need, and the technology that you need, at the right price.

Brandt Krueger:

So, regardless of whether or not you want to hire a full time person for that, having someone on your team who's just dedicated to that, I think, is an increasingly important role in the planning process.

Will Curran:

Awesome. I think you answer some requirements really well, too. What do they need to have as far as experience? Just like a little bit of interest and desire around it. Because again, yeah, this is a producer role. This isn't someone who's actually setting up the tools, correct? This is someone who's just overseeing the team to make sure it's alright.

Brandt Krueger:

And I want to be really key about that, that I think that it's important, then, for that person not to get too sucked in to any one thing. Because it's planner level, right? It's at that top level where they're helping the client, whether that's an internal client or an external client, put their vision together. And that person is just responsible for the technology side of putting that vision together.

Brandt Krueger:

So they're doing the interpretation of, "Hey, here's what we want to accomplish with the event. Here's our goals for the event. How do we use the technology to help implement those goals?" So it really is that kind of top level position that's going to be overseeing the general session, overseeing the breakout sessions, overseeing the technology and registration, making sure that we've got the power in the right places, making sure that we're getting the internet connections in the right places.

Brandt Krueger:

Because a lot of times, the left hand and the right hand don't know what each other is doing. So, by funneling all of those requests through a single person on your team, somebody's going to be able to keep an eyeball on this stuff. And so making sure that not just any random person, random speaker X in breakout Y is going to say, "Oh, I was told that there was going to be X, Y, and Z in this room," and just ordering it and making it happen. No.

Brandt Krueger:

All of those requests have to go through the technical producer, or at worst, not at worst, but you know, or otherwise, the head meeting planner. Just making sure that those types of requests are being handled in the right channels, I think, is going to go a long way.

Will Curran:

Awesome. And I think that you brought up an extremely good point, which is the idea that they shouldn't be hands on when it comes to it. Because I see this all the time, that the internal team, there's always the technical person, and usually, it seems like we always, as the AV event production company and event technology company, we're always teamed up with the video team, because they tend to be really interested in the cameras and audio gear, and all those things like that.

Will Curran:

And I find that they're usually also the person who's shooting the video, as well. And they're running around, they're, "Oh, I have to go this event, and then this event," and we're like, "Okay, well, we need an answer," and that sort of thing. And I think the important thing, too, is giving that person autonomy, as well, to make the decisions.

Will Curran:

So it's not just, "Oh, hey, that person's a point of contact, they have to still go to the planner." The idea is like, this person can make the decisions on behalf of the entire organization, correct?

Brandt Krueger:

Exactly, and so, yes, being able to have the authority, have the autonomy to do this, and to have the trust levels, right, of like, "Okay, we need to make sure this person knows all of the key stakeholders, knows all the goals," I'll be honest with you, it's really hard for me to keep my

hands off when I'm on show in this role, because I have to trust my team. I have to trust that they're going to do it, and they might not do it exactly the way that I would do it, right?

Brandt Krueger:

If I'm calling a show, then they might call the show slightly different than I do, in a different way. It's like, "I wouldn't have put that camera shot up there." That kind of thing. But at some point, you kind of got to let go, and only if it's a really egregious problem, diving in and getting your hands dirty. I just can't help myself sometimes. I got to go push a case from here to there sometimes, because the guy looks like he's sweating and about to fall over dead, so you know what, "Hey, let me help you with that case."

Brandt Krueger:

But also, then, dealing with the stakeholders. So being able to, when the CEO comes in, and this literally just happened on my last show, comes in and says, "Why is that leg of trust there?" "Well, you know, we needed to run cables back, and things like that." "Yeah, but why is it there?" Well, he's like, "What do you mean? Well, couldn't it be on the other side?"

Brandt Krueger:

And I'm like, "Well, yeah, but we'd have to bring it all back in again, and it took us nine hours to get it in the air the first time." That kind of thing. Just being able to deal. I was nicer than that. But at some point, I'll be honest with you, I've never had a problem telling clients no, whereas I know a lot of people are like, "You really want to do the 'Yes, and,' or the, 'Unfortunately,' or something like that."

Brandt Krueger:

I just kind of looked at him and I was like, "You know, I've just got to be honest with you. That's not going to happen. We're not going to move that from there to there. It would be ridiculously expensive and take far too much time to do so." And sometimes, that rubs people the wrong way, but other times, people really appreciate kind of the honesty and transparency level.

Brandt Krueger:

But anyway, so just, sorry, but I digress. This is all really one of these shows.

Will Curran:

No, I was going to say, I think you actually bring up a good point that this internal person is so aligned with the planning team that they have to be the one to be honest, too, and say, like, "Hey, this is not possible." Because yes, when a company is being hired, like Endless, we're trying to make the client so happy that they just are over the moon, and sometimes, yeah, it's a lot of, "Yes, and, oh yeah, we'll figure it out."

Will Curran:

But to be honest, if you were working internally as a team and you really work together year in, year out, all the time, chances are, your coworkers would say, "No, that's not possible," or,

"That's a bad idea," would be willing to be honest with you. So I think you bring up a good point that that has to be willing to be done.

Will Curran:

I think it's the whole idea of productive conflict, too. This idea you have to be willing to have a productive argument about things and state your cases, not, obviously, yell at each other and not want to get a beer afterwards, but you have to be willing to say no and state the other opinion. Otherwise, everyone's just yes men, and let's be honest, if we were all yes men, we would live in a pretty bland world.

Brandt Krueger:

And to be clear, I always try to give an example, a reason why. It's not just no. And sometimes, you don't have all the information, so you have to be careful with that, as well. On the very next show, I saw some guys obsessing about some stuff that I didn't think was really important, and expressed those opinions multiple times, of like, "Guys, this is ..." trying to color match a couple of blues, and they were spending literally hours doing it, and I'm just like, "Guys, it's going to be up there for 10 seconds."

Brandt Krueger:

Until I found out that the head of the company had specifically said, "Oh, why don't those blues match?" And so, it's like, "Oh, okay. All right, now I see. I'll just shut up, then, and we'll try and come up with a better solution. Sorry I was not being helpful, there." And I apologized to the planner, I was like, "I didn't realize that that was why this was happening."

Brandt Krueger:

So it's important, figuring out those relationships. And actually, that's kind of the fun, I think, of what we do, is, on a show with a new client, things like that, is navigating those relationships. And then, once you've kind of figured that person out, it's like, "Okay, great. Now, if we get this show next year, I know how to deal with this person from now on."

Will Curran:

True, so true. So, we actually have a really good question from ... That was come from our audience members, and one of our listeners. Gianna Darling actually had a really good question about, where should someone look to hire someone like this? Where do you go? Obviously, you can potentially find this person internally like we talked about. Let's say, for example, you're looking externally. Where do you think?

Brandt Krueger:

Well, that's part of the problem, right, is, and it's a problem in our industry that's wider, is that there's so many different terminologies being used by people, and it depends on whether or not you came from a television background, or a theater background, or even what part of the country or what part of the world you're in.

Brandt Krueger:

So I'm actually trying to do, I've been trying to be very intentional about using the term technical producer over the course of the last few months, because I feel like that is the term that defines this role the best. But it's still not something that's easy to be found, to be perfectly honest. So if you even Google, and I've done this, technical producer events, you get a lot of weird job sites that are trying to define it based on previous job postings and things like that.

Brandt Krueger:

It's not super easy to do. But I can tell you that it's probably ... Probably the better Googling would be like, technical production freelance, or something along those lines, for now.

Will Curran:

I'm almost thinking like an IT person, potentially, too, right?

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, yeah. Internally, that's easy. You just say, "Okay, who's got the most tech savvy? All right, great, you're the technical producer." But yeah, finding that person can be a little difficult. It's something that I'm pushing. I know a few of those cats, but they all kind of call themselves different things, right? Or they call themselves a producer, but really, their main area of expertise is the technology side.

Brandt Krueger:

So it's not an easy answer, unfortunately, and it just takes a little banging around to find those types of third party persons. I have seen people also call themselves consultants, and I don't think that that fits, either, because a consultant can be about anything. And so when you talk about a technical consultant, man, you look that up, you're going to find a billion things that don't have anything to do with meetings and events, right? It's going to be someone working on IT, or something along those lines.

Brandt Krueger:

Whereas it feels like technical producer is a term that doesn't seem to get used regarding IT positions, or something like that. Even event technology director is something that's been kind of diluted, because now every in-house AV guy is an event technology director, or director of event technology, right? And so, because I kind of went down that road for a while, as well, that I was an event technology consultant. I actually literally named my company that.

Brandt Krueger:

And it doesn't quite fit. So I hope I sort of answered that question for you. You're going to have to Google around a little bit. You can use technical producer, I'm trying to make that more of a thing, personally, which is why I wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to talk about it on the show. And then, otherwise, you're just kind of banging around for freelance or consulting or something along those lines.

Will Curran:

Definitely, definitely. And I think you bring up a really good point, too, that there's not a lot of people who can check all the boxes, right? Like you can find someone who's really good at tech, but they don't understand the event aspect. You can find someone who's a really good producer for general sessions, but they don't understand how event apps work, or they don't understand how wifi works, and things like that. You really need someone who has that broad scope of knowledge, which is...

Brandt Krueger:

In one of our other episodes, we talked a little bit about generalist versus specialist. I think this is another good example of that. I think a technical producer needs to be a generalist. They understand a little bit about how sound works, they understand a little bit about how lights work, a little bit about how computers work, a little bit about how apps work. Knowing a little bit about all of that stuff is going to help you weed out the BS and help you get the stuff that you need.

Brandt Krueger:

Whereas, if you're a really strong IT person, you're going to need to expand your horizons a little bit into some of these other genres, or roles, or whatever you want to call it.

Will Curran:

Yeah, absolutely. So I think the next point, now that we've kind of thought a little bit about what does this person look like, where you find them, is, how much does it cost in order to have somebody like this? Because I think the next thing everyone thinks is like, "Well, I don't have the budget to be able to afford someone like this," right? Like, "I'm the only meeting planner on the team, I'm the one person, or maybe I have an assistant. But I can't afford to get this person."

Will Curran:

So, I'm going to let you jump all over, what does that look like, what does the cost look like, all those sort of things, because obviously, even I don't even know.

Brandt Krueger:

Well, you heard me giggling there, because here's the thing, and this is the God's honest truth. I'm not just saying this. I almost always pay for myself, because of what I'm able to find in unnecessary equipment, or overcharging, or all of these things.

Brandt Krueger:

The AV bid that you and I broke down for the crossover episode started at \$350,000 for some breakouts, and it's still way too high, but things got added at site, and all that kind of stuff, and I think ultimately, it wound up being about 200, but that included all of those last minutes adds, and everything that we cut, and power, and all kinds of stuff that wasn't in that initial bid.

Brandt Krueger:

So, there's \$150,000 right there, and I can guarantee you that my bill is significantly less than that, right? Yeah, right.

Will Curran:

Yeah, I was going to say, obviously, your cost is not \$100,000.

Brandt Krueger:

And then, you know, also just having, again, having someone who's dedicated to going through the bids line by line and having some knowledge of what that stuff means, and being able to go back and say, "Hey, what's this, this and this?" And so as I'm closing out my billing for that group, that's exactly what I'm doing.

Brandt Krueger:

I'm going, "Hey, what are these service charges in this room, this room, and this room, but not in any of the other rooms?" And sometimes they've got a good answer, and sometimes they don't, right? And it's like, "Oh, yeah, well, that's because we actually didn't charge you labor, and if you look on that, you see there's no labor, so that's just like our house guy coming down and tapping you into the room."

Brandt Krueger:

Okay, well, that wasn't in the initial bid, but at least that makes sense, right? I get what that is, okay. "But what about this one here, where you did charge us for labor?" "Oh, I'm going to have to look into that." "Okay, great." And so, and that all adds up. So it's 6,000 here, and 2,000 here, and 5,000 there, and all of that stuff adds up much more quickly than you'd think.

Brandt Krueger:

And so I guess I would say, if you're wondering where that budget comes from, the answer is from your AV budget. Because you're going to ... If you have someone who's dedicated to this role, they're more than likely going to find things in there that you need or don't need, that can be removed, or negotiated away, or, "Hey, instead of a 20% discount, can you give us a 25% discount?"

Brandt Krueger:

All of those little things really add up over the course of an event. And this event was relatively small. It had a general session, it had seven breakout rooms, it had a nice little, actually decent sized expo hall. So spread out across all of those items, there's going to be these little things of like, "Oh, we don't need subwoofers in the breakout sessions. All right, we can pull those."

Those kinds of things.

Brandt Krueger:

And so, I really think it pays for itself. Now, to get down to the nitty gritty, I always try to be really transparent about this stuff. I do a day rate for myself personally, and then I take that day rate and break ...

Will Curran:
Jargon jail. .

Brandt Krueger:

Okay, yeah, all right, no, I'll buy it. I got to stay out of jargon jail. Thanks, John. The day rate is just ... It's a flat rate for the day, and it usually covers a certain number of hours. Now, traditionally, that's 10. That has started to sneak down to eight, so that anything over eight is overtime. More and more and more, I'm actually seeing a breakdown at eight, where you start to go into overtime.

Brandt Krueger:

I'm still sticking at 10, but I'm starting to, if the rest of the world is going to go eight, okay, then I'm down with that. But I'm still playing with those ideas. So, day rate is a flat rate per day on a show site, right? So, traditionally, five hours for a half day, 10 hours for a full day. Beyond that point, you're going into overtime.

Will Curran:
I'll give you your...

Brandt Krueger:

So, I usually do a flat rate, and then I'll take that rate and kind of break it down into an hourly rate, and guesstimate. I'm getting pretty good at guessing how many hours of kind of prep time it's going to take to do a show, so if they want to do a flat rate, we can kind of estimate that out, and say, "This includes 20 hours of pre-show prep," which, by the way, goes very quickly.

Brandt Krueger:

That's a lot of phone calls and emails and going through bids, and like we were talking about, going through line by line on the bid, and saying, "What is this? Why is this? How expensive is this?" And then comparing that from three different AV companies. So that time can go by pretty quickly, but that seems to be about right for a mid-level show, is somewhere around 20 hours of prep time.

Brandt Krueger:

So we do an hourly rate for that, flat rate for the day shows, a flat rate for a site visit, or something along those lines, and I would say a show like the one that I was just doing, depending on the complexity of it, you're going to see day rates anywhere from 900 a day to \$1,500 a day, and then hourly rates based on that.

Brandt Krueger:

So if it's \$900 a day, you'd be looking at about 90 to \$100 an hour in the pre-show work. And then 1,200 would be 120, somewhere in those neighborhood, right? So, but, like everything, there's people that are going to be a lot more expensive, and there's probably people who are

going to be less expensive, but I think that's kind of the good middle ground range, where I think you're getting the best kind of value for your money. And obviously, that's where I try and price myself, so I'm partial in those kinds of...

Brandt Krueger:

So, let's be real about that. Are there people that will charge a lot more than that? Absolutely. Do you get as much out of it? I don't know. But it depends on the complexity of the show, right? If you've got a massive program with multiple moving parts, and it's, I don't know, like an E3 type thing, yeah. That person's probably going to be worth a lot more than that. Depends on the levels of responsibility.

Will Curran:

I think you bring up a really good point, too, as far as costs. Because I was going to jump in there and start throwing numbers at it, too, just so people can have an idea of what it looks like. But yeah, what we're usually finding on the technical side for pre-production is like \$100 an hour, and then yeah, on site, for a really good producer, is like \$100 an hour or so. So just kind of keep in mind.

Will Curran:

So, throw it in your budget. It's always one of those things you can budget towards, and if you find that something, other cost is [inaudible 00:33:46] into it, maybe AV is way more expensive this year, you can make that decision. Okay, am I going to just give this budget, now, to the AV company, or maybe I can try to bring in a technical producer, and see if they can save on those costs. But I think it ends up being a lot less expensive than most people think.

Brandt Krueger:

Let's take something in the mid-range, there, of that range, and say, again, 20 hours of prep time, and maybe five days on site, and maybe throw in a site visit in there. You're talking about maybe 15 to \$20,000, including expenses, and things like that, and again, just off the top of that last show, we went from 350 to 200 something, and there was a lot of six here, and five there, and three there, and that kind of stuff, that easily paid for my being there.

Brandt Krueger:

And then combine that with, again, judging my worth based on how little we actually saw the planners in the general session. Because they knew it was being handled. So imagine taking that load off of yourself as a planner. I would have a hard time putting a price tag on that.

Will Curran:

Totally. Do you think it's important for the technical producer to be able to, at the end, be able to give you the technical information, to say, "Here's how much I cost, and here's how I justify myself?"

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, yeah. I've kind of waffled on that. It's the kind of thing where it's like, do I want to type that all up and just say, "Here's an estimate?" I'm actually leaning more towards the white paper kind of thing, where I really kept track of a lot of that stuff on this last show, and I'm thinking about asking the planner, "Hey, do you mind if I do a white paper on this?" To show more the value of the position instead of my value, specifically.

Brandt Krueger:

I think, again, that's kind of why we're doing this show, right? Regardless of whether or not you hire someone to do it, the value of the position, I don't think can be overstated.

Will Curran:

Right. I definitely agree. I think that, more and more, that we need to be able to expand, I think, in general. This is maybe just a general event topic, but expand just our teams in general, so we don't have to worry about putting everything on one person's shoulder to make all the decisions. And I think that's the dream of every planner out there, is to say, "I don't want it to be just me. I want to delegate, I want to get this off my plate," but I think, obviously, we're all working towards that.

Will Curran:

But the more we can maybe start with positions that help save money, I think the more you can expand your team on that end, versus things that cost money that don't necessarily save money.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, and it's amazing sometimes. So, this was a new show for me, and they had a show caller in that, and in the back of my head, I'm going, "I'm a show caller. I don't know, I don't know." And it's not an insignificant amount of money to have that in there. I was so glad we had that dude. He was really, really good, and again, it enabled me to concentrate on other things. It didn't lash me to the general session.

Brandt Krueger:

So making sure that you know when to cut and when to choose and when to say, "Okay," it can be almost as important, right? So saying, "Okay, that guy has called this show before, he knows what he's doing, he knows all the principles," how valuable is that? Pretty valuable, right? And so, yeah. I think that's an incredibly important part of it.

Will Curran:

Well, I think we did a whole episode on Event Icons all about, what is show calling, and kind of its purpose, and how it fulfills it. It's been a while. Maybe we need to do an updated one, as well, and I know we're producing. We just did a whiteboard Wednesday all on, what is a show flow, and everything like that.

Will Curran:

But this stuff can be really, really powerful. This is me getting a little bit off topic, but I think, sometimes, you don't know what it is until it's gone, and you've had it. So it's something to always consider as going along. Brandt, is there anything else that you kind of want to add to this technical producer role that you think that people need to know?

Brandt Krueger:

Not so much. I think we've covered most of the basics. I think, one of my favorite quotes from a client of mine, and she actually took one of my classes, and she said, "I'm smart enough to know this stuff. I'm smart enough to learn this stuff. I just don't want to."

Brandt Krueger:

And I thought that was really telling, right, is that planners didn't get into this job, or most planners didn't get into this job to deal with, "My PowerPoint doesn't work," or, "I've got a speaker in breakout session 3506 that, their clicker's not working." Right? So having someone who's dedicated to that, that's going to be able to track down the house and get someone over there quickly to deal with that, I think, again, can't be overvalued.

Brandt Krueger:

It's one of those things where taking that off of the planner's plate and putting it squarely on someone else's, I think, then, frees them up to do the stuff that they did, the reason they did get into this business. So they can deal with the stakeholders, they can deal with the attendees, they can deal with the attendee experience, and the sponsors, and the internal stakeholders, or the client, and free them up to handle all of that rather than dealing with the increasingly complicated role of technology in our events.

Brandt Krueger:

And so, regardless of whether or not you hire an external person, having someone assigned to this role, having someone assigned to the technical producer role is enormously important, and I think it's only going to continue to be increasingly important when it comes to our meetings and events.

Will Curran:

Boom. Preach. I think that's a great mic drop moment right there.

Brandt Krueger:

Well, obviously, I'm passionate about this stuff. We both are. We wouldn't be doing this if we weren't, and so, I think that's why I keep going back to, it's not about me. It's about making sure that this gets handled, one way or the other.

Will Curran:

Absolutely. Absolutely. Well, hopefully, to the end of this episode, if you didn't have some sort of role you're passionate about having, and even if you don't have it and you still disagree with us,

we'd love to hear your opinions on how you've potentially filled this role differently. But I think the important thing is that we're thinking about it, and that we...

Brandt Krueger:

And maybe you're the kind of planner that does like it, and you're into it. I've definitely run across those, that are like ... They're just into production. Right? And they love all the bits and bobs and details and getting, wading in there. But there's plenty that do not, so as long as somebody's handling it, that's great.

Will Curran:

I agree, I agree. All right, you want to take this puppy home?

Brandt Krueger:

Take it home. Yeah, like you said, we want to know what you think. Is this a role that you could see yourself implementing in your events? Is that person an internal person, do you have, "You know, you know, Johnny would be really good at this?" Or, or, I keep going ... I don't know why, Cindy's always my generic girl name. I don't know. I got to find some new generic girl names for people on staff. Maybe that's something that they can do.

Brandt Krueger:

So, finding those people. Is this a role that you think you can do? Let us know, #EventTechPodcast. Is this someone that you want to find externally? Let us know that as well. Happy to help in that instance. Or is this something that we're just dreamt up and we're just making up so that we can try and get more business? It's really not the case, but call us out on it. What did we tell you, what didn't we tell you? Let us all know, EventTechPodcast@helloendless.com.

Brandt Krueger:

It really isn't that way for me. When Will brought this up, I was a little hesitant, because I was like, "I don't want it to sound like a commercial," and I hope that we've achieved that. But let us know. EventTechPodcast@helloendless.com. Use #EventTechPodcast on Twitter and all the socials, and let us know how we're doing.

Brandt Krueger:

Let us know what topics you want us to talk about. We've talked about some interesting things already this year. I've been enjoying the heck out of it. We've got some great things planned as we move into the second half of the year, trying to get some awesome guests on in a variety of topics. But let us know what you're interested in, and what you want to hear about when it comes to event technology.

Brandt Krueger:

Be sure and check out eventtechpodcast.com. There, you're going to see all the show notes, the links to all the resources that our guests share, even the transcripts, the um's, the ah's,

they're all in there. That's right, folks. You can see the actual transcripts of Will and I talking on this show, which really got meta, if you're reading the transcript about the transcripts right now. Transcript.

Will Curran:
Transcript.

Brandt Krueger:
There, you're going to find the links to subscribe on all your favorite podcast apps, iTunes, Pocket Casts, Google Play. Still a big fan of Pocket Casts myself. Be sure and check it out if you're on the Android platform, though I think they do have iOS as well. But that's always one of my favorites out there, so give them a check out.

Brandt Krueger:
Again, thank you so much for joining us. We really appreciate it. I'm Brandt Krueger, Event Technology Consulting, or brandtkrueger.com. He is Will@helloendless, Will Curran. It's Will Curran on Twitter, right?

Will Curran:
It's Will Curran on the socials, and willcurran.com, at Helloendless.com.

Brandt Krueger:
Check out all the goodies on the Endless website, because they've got all the goodies there. Thank you so much for listening, really appreciate it. We'll see you next time on the Event Tech Podcast.

Thanks again for listening to the Event Tech Podcast. Be sure to rate and review us on your favorite podcasting app. Also, be sure to head to eventtechpodcast.com, and leave us a comment about this week's episode. We'll see you next week on the Event Tech Podcast.

Brandt Krueger:
Event Tech out.