



Category: Outstanding Independent Practitioner

Entrant name: Nicola Jenkins MCIPR

Company: Create Communication

An overview of your experience, your commitment to professional development and how you contribute to the industry:

I started my career whilst in University, having had my heart set on a career in PR from a fairly young age. Having the third year in industry we found competition for jobs was fierce – particularly in the marketing sector. After successfully completing a gruelling process I was offered a position in Compaq Computer Ltd UK headquarters as a PR Executive. As part of an in-house team of two, I worked closely with the retained agency – Firefly Communications – to manage UK sponsorships; BMW Williams F1 and BT Global Challenge.

Obtaining a 2:1 BA (Hons) in Business Studies I left university having secured a job with Firefly, but moved to Cardiff to temp during the summer and haven't looked back.

Realising I wanted to remain in Cardiff, I went into agency life in 2002 and have spent the past 16 years in consultancy, specialising in media relations, stakeholder engagement, internal communications, change communications and crisis communications across both private and public sector clients. My work covers portfolios including social housing, aviation, government, utilities, IT services and construction. During the earlier part of my career I won the CIPR Pride Young Communicator of the Year Award, beating off stiff competition.

I left to set up my own consultancy, Create Communication, during 2016 to improve my work-life balance, as I had two small children. I'm now working with some of the world's most well-known organisations to provide strategic counsel, whilst also efficiently delivering strategic PR and media relations programmes to enhance client brands.

Throughout my career I've fostered a drive to enhance the reputation of clients by capitalising on their CSR activities and story-telling through effective media relations, with huge success.

I'm a long standing and active member of the CIPR and have a huge amount of enthusiasm, pride and passion for the profession. I am committed to my CPD and have provided informal mentoring to a number of CIPR members. I am an ambassador for the industry, sharing my learning and expertise with others. Outside of work I am active member of the PTA at our local school.

Outline your work-related achievements over the last three years, including your business objectives and/or plan:

In a relatively short period of time (less than two years) I have succeeded in building a solid client portfolio working on a retained and project basis, with well-known clients including NHS Wales, Wales & West Utilities, Tarmac, GE Aviation, Circle IT, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and Pennant Walters.

I have developed a strong reputation for delivering results and all my work has come from recommendation – something that I am incredibly proud of.

My business objective is simple: To deliver for clients whilst allowing me time which meets my family's needs.

With this in mind I have recently started working with associates to deliver smaller time-restricted projects and this will continue to be my business growth strategy – bringing in trusted experts to deliver results for clients.

Create Communication will continue to develop a PR consultancy offering whilst remaining an employer of one and building a strong team of associates to deliver for clients across the UK. Business objectives over the next period will see me developing an active presence on social platforms to increase awareness of the business.

On a personal level I am enjoying being my own boss, accepting and delivering challenges, whilst achieving a vitally important home-life balance. The motivation to set up my own business was, after all, to work around my children.

Highlights during this time include:

- Securing additional large project work from existing clients
- Winning a competitive tender process to lead communications for the NHS Wales Health Collaborative – an umbrella organisation for all Health Boards and Trusts across Wales
- Leading a project to launch Wales' first NHS Imaging Academy – a project which has included branding, web development, internal communications and media relations

Outline the biggest work-related challenge you've faced in the past three years, including details of what happened, how you overcame it and what you learnt from it:

My biggest work-related challenge is coupled with personal challenges. Setting up the business to meet the needs of my two young children, whilst my husband's job takes him away from home a lot of the time, I have had to learn to adapt accordingly to meet the needs of my family and my business.

During the past year I was recommended for a year-long contract with a major international business. Jumping at the chance to work with such a client which took work in a slightly different direction (internal communications) I quickly realised the time commitment would not be sustainable long-term for my family, nor existing clients.

It was at this point that I started to explore working with associates and since November 2017 I have been successfully working with a highly experienced associate to deliver change management communications for the client. Taking this leap was initially hard but careful planning and regular communication enables us both to benefit.

I have built Create Communication from nothing and have managed a strong turnover and profit, whilst successfully supporting my family and maintaining a high quality of health and wellbeing.

A summary of a campaign you are particularly proud of, including details of the brief, objectives, strategy, tactics, outputs, outcomes and budget:

Brief and objectives

Wales & West Utilities (WWU) is the gas emergency and pipeline service that keeps 7.5m people safe and warm.

CO poisoning causes an average of 40 reported deaths every year in the UK, along with 200 people hospitalised and 4,000 visiting A&E. WWU works with the CO-Gas Safety Society to increase awareness of CO safety to reduce accidents and deaths, whilst engaging schools and pupils in a creative competition.

In 2015/16 entry numbers from across WWU's patch were at their lowest.

Objective:

- Highlight the competition directly to schools to increase entry numbers.

Strategy & tactics

We devised a campaign that:

- Utilised an ambassador in the public eye
- Used eye-catching artwork
- Was clearly targeted
- Utilised a number of platforms
- Was simple & easy to understand
- Gave competition applicants gas safety knowledge
- Created a sense of competition amongst schools

Outputs

We employed a mix of tactics designed to cover off all audiences and create a conversation.

- Secured support of well-known Wales and British Lions capped rugby player, Tom Shanklin.

- Created a specific web page (www.wwutilities.co.uk/GetCreativeBeSafe)
- Created an attractive marketing flyer
- Drip-feed of press activity
- Targeted social campaign
- Utilised WWU's own workforce

Outcomes & evaluation

Since the campaign was launched we have recorded:

- Web page views running into thousands
- 2,500+ schools directly communicated with
- 163,000+ people saw Facebook promotional post, leading to 321 comments, 421 likes & 884 shares
- The highest number of entries out of all gas distribution networks
- An increase of 446% in entries received compared to the previous year
- National winner was chosen from our entries
- Positive feedback from target audiences

Fees: £4000