



**Category:** Outstanding Young Communicator

**Entrant:** Kayleigh Hepburn MCIPR

**Company:** O

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**Demonstrate your commitment to professional development and your career growth :**

After a postgraduate internship at Northumberland County Council, I decided I wanted to work in an agency environment and joined O in 2015 as PR account executive. Within two years, I had climbed the ranks to senior account executive then account manager – my current position.

During this time I have embraced the PR industry and established myself as a valued member of a leading agency in the region, which has been recognised with my rapid promotions. I have worked closely with the agency's senior team on my CPD and have taken on extra responsibility in mentoring our junior team using my own experience.

A member of the CIPR, I have shown a keenness to develop my skills to aid my career growth via attending training events, including a Crisis Communications session in 2016 valuable skills needed as part of one of my key accounts.

I have always taken an interest in travel and tourism, and am now PR account manager for one of the UK's biggest holiday companies and a wide range of hotel and hospitality clients; a sector I have studied and networked in to ensure I understand my client marketplace inside and out.

**Outline your work-related achievements over the last two years and how they contribute to the wider industry:**

I am passionate about encouraging talent into the PR industry and especially the importance of health and staff wellbeing in our workplace.

As a Sunderland University Public Relations BA (Hons) alumna, I have made an effort to positively contribute to this course as an example of a graduate who has made a successful transition into the industry. I was invited to the university's 'Meet the Practitioner' career development event in March 2017 where I took part in interviews and a Q&A with students. I have also volunteered to get involved in future events and support by offering advice to students who want to find out more about life in PR and accepting CVs for potential work placements.

At O I volunteered to become a Better Health At Work (BHAW) ambassador, working closely with Newcastle City Council and NHS England. By organising fun and interactive sessions

for the team, arranging educational expert visits and distributing information to colleagues, I have been instrumental in promoting health & wellbeing at work.

Recent examples include organising a NHS alcohol awareness event and holding a posture session to help us avoid back pain while sitting at a computer. I organise weekly lunchtime runs and encourage the team to get up from their desks regularly; with walks or light exercise. I also circulate healthy recipes and organise a weekly 'Fresh Friday' healthy team lunch.

BHAW recognises the efforts of employers in the North East in addressing health issues within the workplace. I attended the 2017 prize-giving ceremony in March this year where we were awarded a Gold certificate, after achieving Silver (2016) and Bronze (2015). As an agency we sponsored the event this year. I am now working us towards 'Continuing Excellence', organising a calendar of activities and initiatives in line with the official objectives and recommendations of the awarding body.

I have also mentored our 'O'pprentice this year, working closely with a third year student to help them understand all aspects of a career in PR and helping them over the course of six months whilst they gain live work experience in our office.

In addition, I have a good relationship with the Sunshine Fund charity for whom I have organised bake sales and 'Wear Yellow' days at O, often partnering our clients up with the charity to help raise money and I did the Sunshine 5k Run.

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

In February 2016 when I was senior account executive, my account manager went on maternity leave, which I saw as a challenge and opportunity.

This required me to develop client relationships quickly, a particular example being housebuilder Miller Homes, where I became the client's main day-to-day contact. The client had been with the agency for over 5 years, working with the account manager, so was accustomed to excellent service, therefore it was important I proved myself quickly and maintained results.

To do this I turned to the senior management team for mentoring and was able to secure an uplift in media coverage from the previous year for the client who is still retained.

I learned quickly how to develop my confidence in client meetings and was promoted to account manager based on client and staff feedback and my outstanding results.

Meanwhile I still contributed to agency life and kept up the extracurricular activities such as Better Health At Work and my mentoring of trainees.

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

'Hidden Treasures' was a campaign to launch Parkdean Resorts' 2016 season, positioning its park locations and surrounding areas by highlighting the UK's best kept secrets.

I played a key role in creating and developing the campaign theme, researching a list of 'Hidden Treasures' across every region, from tucked away beaches to TV show settings and places to spot wildlife to ensure we reached all audiences from families to outdoors enthusiasts.

We targeted key media with branded press packs; a set of binoculars, selfie stick, notebook, pencil and gold chocolate coins, and created an infographic and branded landing page on the company website.

I led on widespread national media relations and we re-nosed the releases for every local UK area to draw out the unknown gems in their patch.

The campaign was integrated across Parkdean's social channels, blog and customer emails. Holidaymakers were also encouraged to submit their own 'hidden treasures' for the chance to win a family break.

Coverage achieved a massive total reach of over 4,656,623 across national, regional and local media from Daily Mirror to Cornish Guardian and South Wales Argus. The Scottish Sun "loved the press pack and thought it really made O stand out from the masses of emails and campaign pitches it gets daily".