



CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2019 GOLD WINNER

Category: Outstanding Public Relations Consultancy

Company: Stone Junction

Number of employees - including executive / support staff - and annual fee income:

Stone Junction, incorporated 2006, is the first PR agency for the fourth industrial revolution. Based in Stafford with 22 staff, our fee income has grown at an average rate of 46.7% P/A since 2012.

Business objectives and analysis of performance against budget over the past three years:

With an average growth rate of 46.7% P/A since 2012, Stone Junction has been overachieving against its targets every year. All our clients are in our core international science, technology and engineering sectors.

BUSINESS OBJECTIVES March 2019 to February 2020:

1. Win six PR/business awards
2. Double capacity in Stafford to 42.

MISSION STATEMENT:

1. To be the biggest independent agency outside London
2. To be the best PR agency in the world to work for
3. To change the way businesses market themselves.

OBJECTIVES March 2018 to February 2019:

1. To win four CIPR or PRCA awards (smashed five, including CIPR and PRCA Midlands Outstanding Consultancy).

OBJECTIVES March 2017 to February 2018 (all achieved):

1. To win three CIPR or PRCA awards (smashed - six).

SUMMARY OF 2015 AND 2016

1. Increased turnover: 113%

2. Increased staff: Eight to 16
3. Increased profit: 120%.

By 2021 we will:

- Increase turnover to 25% YoY
- Increase profit
- Increase headcount from 22 to 36
- Add seven new languages to our team – including Chinese, Dutch and Swedish
- Open additional offices in Stafford and Stuttgart or Munich
- Lay the groundwork for a US office in New York or Chicago to open in 2022

A brief overview of business / team strategy:

We are at the heart of the way communication and persuasion is changing. As PR consultants we've always been expert storytellers. But the way we tell stories has been at the centre of a digital revolution since the company was born.

We hire science and technology qualified staff to deliver technical credibility and multilingual staff to provide international reach, complemented by technical PR and journalism specialists. We have a specialist Asia Pacific team and a specialist US team.

We are technical, international and specialist. We change minds.

A summary of commitment to CPD and professionalism:

- Eleven CIPR members, six accredited, two chartered, all funded by Stone Junction. There are only 250 chartered practitioners in the world
- Richard Stone, our MD, is chair of the CIPR Midlands committee
- Stone Junction is CIPR corporate affiliate, ISO9001 certified and a member of the PRCA.

Four training sessions per month:

1. Internal PR training: 36 modules of hour-long training to develop PR skills
2. TARTY Tuesdays: Technical training sessions allow none-STEM qualified staff to develop knowledge
3. Margarita Fridays: Cocktails and PR case study analysis.

We measure performance using numerical SMART objectives attached to clear salary increases. Anyone can trigger a salary increase or promotion by achieving their objectives, without line manager approval.

We devote over 350 hours per year to training every year. In our most recent quarterly staff survey, our team rated our training programme at 7.67/10.

A summary of recent outstanding achievements, including client list growth / retention:

TO BE THE BIGGEST INDEPENDENT AGENCY OUTSIDE LONDON

- Increased turnover: 10.09%
- Increased staff: 17 to 21
- 2016-2019:
 - Increased turnover: 48.8%
 - Increased staff: Eight to 21
 - Increased profit: 125.07%
- Entered PR Week Top 50 Technology agencies at number 45
- One of only five agencies in the PR Week 'Ones to Watch' report 2018
- Two Gold PRide awards (Outstanding Consultancy and STEM), two silver PRide awards (STEM and healthcare) and one DARE award (Outstanding Consultancy)
- Shortlisted for CIPR Excellence STEM Campaign and Outstanding Small Consultancy awards, one of two agencies in the Midlands to make the shortlist
- Launched a studio, with in-house design, video and photography
- We still work with three launch clients from 2006.

TO BE THE BEST PR AGENCY IN THE WORLD TO WORK FOR

- Work per head is 20% lower than industry average (measured using PR Week league tables), for exceptional work/life balance and improved client retention
- Our buddy scheme has improved the settling in process for new staff
- Our management training scheme provides monthly one-to-one coaching with our business coach, funded CIPR membership and chartered assessments
- £23K by 2023: We are working to raise our graduate starting salary to £23K by 2023. It has already increased by £2,500 since 2015 and these increases has been applied retrospectively to existing staff members.
- Six internal promotions and 21 salary increases in twelve months as the result of passed SMART objectives, excluding our £23K by 2023 increases
- Launched mental health champion scheme, with funded mental health first aiders.

TO CHANGE THE WAY BUSINESSES MARKET THEMSELVES

Last year, Stone Junction created a bold digitalisation plan, called Stone Junction 4.0. Riffing off the Industry 4.0 tag, we have created a new level of service in the business. Now, every member of the team has completed at least two of Google Fundamentals, Facebook Blueprint and Twitter Flight School, every client receives a Google Analytics and Moz integrated report showing the impact of our digital offering on their SERPs results and we have switched our clippings analysis to the more evocative and visual, CoverageBook.

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

Stone Junction's launch of industry disrupting start-up Inspekto, generated more than €500 million of sales leads, created a new business category and attracted investment from the global business community.

Objectives:

1. Establish a new category in machine vision by achieving 60 clippings across the UK, US and Germany between August and December 2018
2. Launch Inspekto at the VISION show in Stuttgart, arranging 20 journalist interactions
3. Create a sales funnel to support growth and investment, targeting manufacturers with more than 40 facilities in Germany, the UK or the US.

Results:

1. 110 clippings across nine countries. Target exceeded by 83%
2. 27 journalists toured Inspekto's stand, 12 attended the press conference and we held seven one-to-ones, exceeding target by 130%
3. Inspekto received sales leads for over 450 facilities, extending the company's commercial footprint by over €500 million. Some leads have already led to POCs and sales to several top-ten global companies. We also generated investment requests from one top thirty global business and a leading hedge fund.

Harel Boren, Inspekto's CEO attributes 100% of success to the marketing and PR campaign and regards us as part of his leadership team.

Budget: £3269.70 PCM for six months (£25,510 pounds of leads generated for every pound spent on PR).