



**Category:** Outstanding Young Communicator

**Entrant name:** Rebecca Jackson

**Company:** Acceleris

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

Since moving into PR from my role as a journalist at the Daily Telegraph, I've been keen to expand my skills in the sector. I'm a non-voting member of the regional CIPR Committee helping to promote PR in the region. In the past two years, I've completed training courses both internally and externally to further my development, including:

- Account Profitability
- Public Affairs and Lobbying
- Social Media for PR
- Effective Networking
- Advanced Copywriting
- SEO for PR
- Presenting with Confidence
- Pitching to Win New Business

Alongside my client work, I also manage the agency's induction process for new recruits, delivering training and establishing a standardised handbook to ensure all staff are working to the same standards. Following my promotion to Account Director I've taken the lead on training and development, spanning the agency's UK offices. This includes mentoring numerous sixth-form and undergraduate work experience candidates through the Acceleris Academy, providing guidance on how to enter the industry and teaching valuable transferable skills, as well as running talks for students at Universities.

I'm also the agency's Social Secretary.

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

- Part of the team who won the 2016 European Excellence Award for Issues and Reputation Management for disability organisation Purple, defeating competition including BASF, the Catholic Church and Unilever
- Key team member on accounts that led to the agency being awarded UK Public Sector Agency of the Year twice in two years
- Promoted four times in less than five years to become Account Director in June 2018 after joining as Account Executive
- Leading accounts, including two of the agency's largest clients
- Directing the agency's biggest client, Utilita Energy, reporting directly to the Senior Management Team, including the CEO
- In 2018, I've led new business proposals generating income in new business

**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:**

Upon joining Acceleris in 2013, I worked closely with an Account Director to develop the agency's specialist social housing team, working on campaigns for suppliers, contractors and developers in the sector, which generated a large income for the agency. In 2016, Government contracts and cuts to the sector meant many housing providers scaled back or removed their PR support and this impacted greatly on our accounts and agency revenue.

The agency lost a number of clients and a sector I was passionate about. To rebuild this, I focused on building on the agency's health and wellness specialism, using many of the skills I'd developed in the social housing sector to develop a proposition to appeal not only to care providers but suppliers and developers too.

Under my leadership, the health division is growing quickly, counting care providers, property developers and suppliers to the sector amongst my client base. The approach I learnt whilst working in social housing has allowed me to apply it to the care sector and the process has helped me better understand the importance of new business pipelines, the balance of clients within the agency and the importance of working with both public and private businesses to ensure a change within the sector at Government level doesn't always have an overriding negative reaction for clients and potential leads.

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

As a relatively new Account Manager, I led a team delivered an internal communications programme for Utilita Energy to define, refine and launch the company's Vision, Mission and Values to its 1250+ workforce - in just six months. I reported directly into the Senior

Management Team, including CEO and Board Members, and worked without an Account Director on the project.

KPIs:

- Speak to 10 per cent of the workforce to understand their views on the company
- Interview at least six key partners to the business including BP
- To develop and launch the new mission, vision and values to every member of the workforce
- To achieve positive engagement and tangible returns

Implementation of tactics:

We devised and managed a series of in-depth focus groups, speaking to ten per cent of Utilita's workforce, with attendees across different age groups, gender, ethnicity, responsibilities and departments within the company.

- Ran the sessions with guaranteed anonymity for staff to ensure they were free to speak openly
- Management were not allowed into the groups as further reassurance
- Surveyed the Senior Management Team, engineers and sales agents working in the field
- Spoke to six key suppliers to the business to understand across the board the values they each believed the company to have
- Used the final results to devise the company's new Vision, Mission and Values, which informed the redesign of Utilita's strapline and rebrand across the company and its sites around the UK

The findings were unveiled to Utilita staff at 19 events across the country, giving the Management Board the opportunity to talk directly about the company's future. I project managed them all.

Measurement:

We achieved all our campaign KPIs. The new values act as a benchmark for future corporate and individual behaviours and a means of assessing staff engagement.

We are now leading a company-wide programme of embedding the values within the organisation.

"Rebecca is an absolute joy to work with and has been invaluable to me and my wider team. She understands our story, she is ingrained in our culture and – importantly - provides wise counsel well beyond her years.

"One of her greatest qualities is her ability to anticipate hurdles well in advance – an incredibly important attribute. Rebecca is straight talking, honest and does what she says

she will do. She consistently delivers above and beyond – even when I move the goalposts at the last minute!

“She is a credit to both herself and Acceleris, and has been at the heart of so many of our successes over the last few years. Definitely one to watch.” - Jem Maidment – Director of Marketing and Communications, Utilita Energy

“Since joining Acceleris at entry level in 2013, Rebecca has progressed rapidly in a little over four years to Account Director, responsible for driving and delivering the growth of Acceleris’ largest client account Utilita.

“She has driven the growth of the agency’s niche Health & Wellness division and has been instrumental in securing five industry awards for her campaigns across the UK and Europe. Her commitment, drive and proactivity runs through every element of her work, from the delivery of exceptional campaign results and client counsel to her role as the agency’s social secretary. She is an inspiration to her peers, a confidant to her colleagues and a true asset to the industry.” - Louise Vaughan – Managing Director, Acceleris