



Category: Outstanding Small Public Relations Consultancy

Company: Barefoot Media

Date of incorporation, number of employees - including executive / support staff - and annual fee income:

Barefoot Media was founded by Jim Michell as a sole trader in 2002, becoming a partnership three years later. Barefoot Public Relations Ltd incorporated as a limited company in January 2015.

The business employs six people: two directors, two Account Directors, and two Account Executives. We also work with a former employee on a freelance basis.

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

Running a business in Cornwall, one of the country's most remote and economically poorest areas, comes with a unique set of challenges. We are 260 miles and four hours by train from London; superfast broadband is yet to reach the most rural parts of the county; and the average income is only 70% of the national average.

We also have a fantastic set of opportunities, not least our beautiful coastline and countryside, and business support schemes funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

Our overarching objective has been to steer the business on a course of sustainable growth, while maintaining a healthy work/life balance for both business owners and our team. Our business is our staff, and the directors strongly believe that success comes from a happy, motivated and enthusiastic team.

A brief overview of business / team strategy:

One way we have grown the business is through offering an integrated range of services - alongside PR we also work on social media, email marketing and content creation. We provide better value for clients through efficiency and consistency, and can work with smaller businesses as we earn a larger proportion of their marketing budget.

Our strategy for business growth has three strands:

1. Develop clients in a new sector: property and interiors (five new clients).
2. Win business outside Cornwall (three new clients).
3. Expand our range of services within content-led marketing (added photography, video and SEO).

We invest in our team through training, team building and providing opportunities for growth and promotion internally. We are committed to equality and have no gender pay gap.

Staff benefits include:

- Supported flexible/remote working to assist with return to work following maternity leave
- Early finish on Fridays (3pm)
- Soup kitchen: team lunch provided on Fridays
- Charity support for People & Gardens, a community interest company supporting people with disabilities and special needs, through staff volunteering at the project, and pro bono marketing work
- 30 days paid leave annually for all staff.

We treat our own marketing as if Barefoot is one of our clients, with one team member taking overall responsibility for the work. In addition to regular activity on PR and social media, our website is regularly updated with case studies and blog posts.

Winning awards has been highly effective in demonstrating the quality and effectiveness of our work to our current clients and attracting new business.

A summary of commitment to CPD and professionalism:

We pay for CIPR membership for all executive staff and encourage them to participate in the CPD scheme and work towards Accredited Practitioner status. There is a 100% uptake on this, with all team members either holding or working towards this status.

One of our Account Directors holds a CIPR Diploma.

Senior members of the team provide mentoring and coaching to junior staff.

We provide training support for staff through a dedicated training budget, and accessing Unlocking Potential (ERDF) mentoring tailored to individual needs.

The directors take part in a business coaching scheme delivered by Oxford Innovation (ERDF): the Transform Cornwall scheme for high growth businesses.

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

Client growth

- We have won six new clients in the past 12 months. We now have five property interiors clients on our books, and work with three businesses outside Cornwall - two in Devon and one in London.

Client retention

- We have worked with 68% of our current clients for two or more years, and 32% for more than five years.

Team

- Grown to six full-time team members in January 2018
- Promotions and salary increases for three staff in the past 12 months reflecting increased skills and responsibility.

Awards

Shortlisted for 25 industry awards since 2010, 10 in the past three years.

- 3 x PRCA Dare Awards (winners announced 14 June 2018)
- 3 x Gold CIPR Pride Awards (2015 and 2017)
- 1 x Silver CIPR Pride Award (2017)
- 3 x Finalist CIPR Pride Awards (2017)

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

In 2016 we were appointed to deliver an integrated six-month campaign for Padstow Christmas Festival, a free four-day event that has become one of the most popular food and drink festivals in the South West.

We were tasked with encouraging attendance at the event; generating national and regional media coverage; increasing website traffic to padstowchristmasfestival.co.uk; and stimulating engagement with the festival's audiences.

Our strategy was to get people excited about experiencing the festival's programme of family fun, fireworks, chef demonstrations and the Christmas market.

We created content which could be used across multiple media channels, and managed the festival's social media accounts and website. We distributed four press releases, made dozens of targeted pitches for features to a well-researched media list, and planned, wrote and edited content for a 68-page event programme. We also managed the festival's email marketing campaign.

Achievements included:

- Record visitor numbers of 55,000 (50,000 in 2015);
- 173 pieces of coverage across print, online and broadcast, with a cumulative reach of more than 416 million OTV;

- A 31% increase in website traffic between 1 July and 31 December 2016 compared to 2015;
- An 83% increase in traffic from social media compared to 2015.

The campaign won a gold and a silver award at the 2017 CIPR Pride Awards.