

PRIDE AWARDS 2017

Category: Public Sector Team of the Year

Company: University of Bath

Number of staff employed - including executive / support staff - and annual public relations budget, showing areas directly under the control of the team:

We are a PR team of six people and (in HR language) 5.2 full time equivalents, comprising a Head of Communications and five Media and PR officers. We support the whole University including four Faculties with 1,248 academics. The non-pay budget for the team is £24,000.

Business objectives and analysis of team performance against budget over the past 12 months:

Team objectives flow directly from the corporate strategy. The top three are:

1. To enhance the University's reputation for world-class research by securing strategic media coverage and social media engagement, in particular establishing baselines and increasing coverage in key national titles.

We have succeeded in gaining coverage in national media weekly rather than monthly, targeting decision makers, funders and industry with stories about our innovative research. We focussed efforts on the most relevant audiences and channels, changing our media monitoring to better evaluate success.

Our newly introduced media insight report for Q4 2016 showed a total of 4,541 items mentioning the University of Bath. The 600 pieces of evaluated research coverage reached almost 306 million people and were 85% positive. In line with our objective, the most prominent driver of coverage was Professor Toby Jenkins' research developing bandages that glow if a wound becomes infected.

Research highlights in 2017 include securing three slots on BBC Breakfast and two Today Programme interviews.

We have innovated on social media by setting up Reddit Ask Me Anything and Facebook Lives and increased reach and engagement on Facebook and Twitter.

2. To enhance the University's reputation for exceptional teaching and student employment prospects, amplifying messages about our rankings successes.

We gained positive coverage in The Guardian and Bath Chronicle when ranked 5th by the former's University Guide in May 2017. We reached 221,401 people on Facebook with 1,700 reactions and 358 shares. We secured good coverage from the Business Exchange and Bath Chronicle on rankings highlighting us as one of two UK 'tech challenger' universities.

3. Community engagement: To support positive relationships with the local community, in particular supporting our 50th anniversary and Festival.

In addition to our 50th anniversary campaign (outlined below), we generated positive PR around our Community Festival in May 2017. We secured coverage reaching an audience of 775,471, including three live broadcast interviews on BBC Radio Bristol and Somerset, television news coverage on BBC Points West and a double page feature in our local paper.

Social engagement exceeded KPIs by more than 50% with Facebook posts reaching more than 200,000, generating 1,327 engagements and our Snapchat story retention rate was 90% with 749 uses of our Festival geofilter. We gained 117 new Facebook followers and 98 subscribers to our community eNewsletter, extending our local network.

A brief overview of business / team strategy:

Prioritising key research and organisational success, the team has revolutionised its planning, instigating a comprehensive news grid and standing meetings which help us focus.

We take evaluation seriously, spending most of our budget on monitoring and insight. We have established baselines and analyse reach, sentiment, spokespeople and message content. We have wash up meetings from each project, capturing lessons for the future.

A summary of commitment to CPD and professionalism:

Since June 2016, three of the five media officers have completed, started or continued CIPR Diplomas in Crisis Communications, PR and Public Affairs.

We attend relevant conferences and share learning. We held two team away days to plan and evaluate, based on the Barcelona Principles.

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

We broke all previous media records for a story in September 2016, having to redraw our media volume charts! New research showed that viable mouse offspring can be made from non-egg cells fertilised with sperm, the first time this had been done. We worked with the Science Media Centre to arrange a press conference explaining the complex science in a balanced way. We generated 775 articles globally including the front page of the Telegraph and two live Sky News broadcast from campus (see supporting information).

In May 2017, for the first time in two years, the Today Programme broadcast with a live audience, and it was from the University of Bath. We worked with the BBC to make this happen, enabling 100 local people, students and staff to engage in General Election issues and arranged an interview with one of our politics professors.

We collaborated with Royal Institution on the 2016 Christmas lectures, presented on BBC Four by one of our Professors, Saiful Islam. In addition to the 1m audience figures, we helped generate 146 media articles and reached more than 200,000 people on our social media channels with over 3,000 watching videos we created.

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

The 25 October 2016 marked the University of Bath's 50th anniversary, a major milestone in our history.

This was an important opportunity to celebrate our achievements and discuss our future aims with the local community, partners, students and staff. Our budget was £2,000 and our PR objectives were:

1. To secure strong local media coverage in at least one TV and one print outlet, including key messages.
2. To engage using compelling, shareable content on social media with at least 400 shares and reactions on Facebook and 50 mentions on Twitter.

Our strategy and tactics involved working with BBC Points West to develop a pre-recorded package. We enabled media to capture the day's iconic elements such as the Bath Abbey procession and worked with the Palace to arrange an interview with our Chancellor, HRH The Earl of Wessex.

Our team created visually rich photo opportunities including organising more than 100 students and staff to form a giant '50' which we captured with drone footage.

We generated 108 pieces of media coverage, almost all containing our key messages, reaching a potential audience of 1.8 million people. Particular highlights included BBC Points West coverage throughout the day, including interviews with our Vice-Chancellor, BBC Radio Bristol, Wiltshire and Somerset segments and the Bath Chronicle front page and double page spread.

All social media KPIs were met or exceeded. On Facebook, we reached 112,965 people and gained 147 followers, 1,000 likes for our photo gallery and 1,600 likes for the Queen's message. On Twitter, we generated 122,225 impressions, 300 mentions and we had more than 15,000 views on Snapchat.