



CIPR PRIDE
AWARDS 2019 **GOLD WINNER**

Category: STEM Campaign

Company: Stone Junction

Entry title: Busting graphene myths

Brief and objectives:

The Graphene Flagship is the EU's biggest research initiative. With a budget of €1 billion, the project's objective is to take graphene from laboratories into manufacturing. Now entering the second half of a 10-year funding period, the Graphene Flagship must accelerate the uptake of graphene for industrial applications.

Communicating messages from the world of academia, however, can be challenging.

Campaign objectives:

1. Raise the profile of graphene by generating 100 clippings in five-months, targeting UK, Spain, Italy, France and Germany (one clipping per £100 media relations spend)
2. Increase consumer interest in graphene by generating 10 consumer-facing national clippings. Measure this using searches for 'graphene' in Google Trends, hoping to increase the score by 25% in worldwide science searches
3. Align the Graphene Flagship with graphene as a material using SEO/PR, generating 60 backlinks to Graphene Flagship website, improving domain authority and search visibility by 10%.

The idea, research and planning:

To raise the profile of graphene, we needed a technology journalist hotbed.

Held in Barcelona, Mobile World Congress (MWC) attracts 3,640 media outlets — the perfect place to exhibit and conduct face-to-face media interviews.

With the Graphene Flagship's exhibition space reserved, our first phase of research identified outlets to invite:

- Priority publication list created, identifying 103 media outlets in our target countries:
 - National newspapers (science/technology editors)

- Trade media publications, e.g. The Engineer, SciTech Europa (FR), Spektrum der Wissenschaft (DE), Pour La Science (FR), Sinc (ES)
- Consumer-facing titles with technology features i.e Forbes, TechRadar, Metro, Focus Italia (IT), Muy Interesante (ES)
- Freelance science/technology journalists.
- Secondary publication list created, identifying further 954 global outlets writing about technology, science and engineering.

Our media research allowed us to create large database — not only to arrange MWC meetings, but for future PR. Following this, we determined messaging.

Graphene has a diverse range of applications and consolidating this into one message is tricky. To determine newsworthy areas of graphene development, we conducted interviews with materials scientists across Europe:

- Prof. Mar Garcia Hernandez, Instituto de Ciencia de Materiales de Madrid
- Prof. Frank Koppens, Graphene Flagship partner and group leader at research centre IFCO
- Prof. Jose Antonio Garrido, Catalan Institute of Nanoscience and leader of ICN2 Advanced Electronic Materials and Devices Group
- Prof. Sarah Haigh, University of Manchester
- Prof. Emanuel Kymakis, Graphene Flagship work package leader for energy generation.

Combined with data from search engine tools (Google Trends/AnswerThePublic.com), we recognised three areas of interest — graphene for mobile, home and wearable technologies.

Strategy, tactics, creativity and innovation:

- Week 1-2: Media research
- Week 3: Scientist interviews
- Week 4: Media pack creation, initial press release distribution.

Following our research, the second campaign phase was focussed on journalist meetings at MWC. We made invitation calls in the journalist's native language, increasing likelihood of establishing positive relationships.

Key sell-in points included:

- Press conference with Graphene Flagship director, Jari Kinaret
- European Commissioner to visit, providing interview opportunities

- Prof. Konstantin Novoselov, the Nobel prize winning scientist who developed graphene, creating a graphene-based art installation.

When we couldn't contact a journalist by phone, we used Twitter automation software to connect with people using the #MWC2019 hashtag, and extracting journalist handles to contact via direct message.

- Week 5-8: International journalist calls, Twitter outreach
- Week 9: Attending MWC, hosting meetings.

However, we didn't want to limit our coverage to only those publications that attended.

After the show, we continued momentum by pitching feature articles to a secondary list.

- Week 10: Writing feature articles
- Week 11: Follow-up calls to chase MWC coverage
- Week 12+: Pitching feature articles internationally, commissioning interviews.

Delivery:

Delivery was split into three areas, beginning with journalist meetings:

- 19 face-to-face meetings conducted over four days at MWC:
 - Media pack provided for each journalist
 - Relevant scientists present according to journalist's interest
 - Stone Junction present to maintain 'Graphene Flagship' brand alignment.
- Press conference held with Graphene Flagship director at MWC:
 - Invitation sent via e-mail to priority and MWC media list.

We co-ordinated this face to face activity alongside the creation and distribution of three press releases:

- 'Graphene Flagship exhibits at MWC 2019'
- 'Nobel Prize-winning laureate and discoverer of graphene to create graphene-embedded art at MWC 2019'
- 'European Commission visits Graphene Pavilion at MWC 19'
 - Press releases issued with media pack including pre-approved quotes from Graphene Flagship researchers

To continue momentum following MWC:

- Three feature articles written as evergreen content, based on scientist interviews, each one by-lined to a Graphene Flagship representative:
 - ‘Phones of the future’
 - ‘Wearables of the future’
 - ‘Homes of the future’
- Articles pitched by phone in international media, leading to several commissioned articles, interview requests and additional coverage

Measurement and evaluation:

1. Raise media profile of graphene:

149 clippings: five print, 144 online (149% of target):

- 114 clippings in target regions; United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, France, Germany
- 35 further clippings in USA, Australia, New Zealand, Columbia, Mexico, Cuba, Israel, Estonia, Poland, Korea, Iran, Singapore
- 2.27 million combined circulation
- million combined online views
- 26,200 social shares.

One clipping per every £70.30 spent, exceeding target by 29%.

2. Raise consumer interest in graphene

15 pieces of national media coverage in 9 countries (150% of target)

- Coverage included national newspapers in target regions:
 - Metro, Forbes (UK)
 - De Bild (DE)
 - Corriere Della Sera, Il Fatto Quotidiano (IT)
 - El Pais, El Independiente (ES)
 - L'Équipe (FR)
 - Additional national news media coverage in Poland, Brazil, Mexico, Portugal
- 1.96 million combined circulation
- 911,000 combined online views

- 21,400 social shares.

Google Trends data helps quantify the impact of national coverage, monitoring the popularity of searches such as 'graphene':

- 111% increased Google Trends score following MWC, from 43 (Dec-19), peaking at 91 (Mar-19)
- 51% average increased Google Trends score during campaign, averaging 75 (Dec-18 to May-19), exceeding target by 26%.

3. Align the Graphene Flagship project with the material

93 backlinks generated to Graphene Flagship website (155% of target):

- Average domain authority of 55, creating valuable backlinks
- Graphene Flagship domain authority increased by 18%, from 49 (Dec-18) to 58 (May-19), exceeding target by 8%
- Increased search visibility by 41.3% following MWC, from 75 (Dec-18), peaking at 106 (Mar-19)
- Increased average search visibility during campaign by 10.7%, averaging 83.1 (Dec-18 to May-19), exceeding target by 0.7%.

Budget and campaign impact

- £2,095 per month
- Every £70.30 spent generated one clipping (exceeding target of one clipping per £100)
- MWC stand paid for by Graphene Flagship in addition to budget.

“Stone Junction allowed us to bring our story to a whole new set of audiences in Europe and worldwide. Moreover, their fresh, fun and creative approach to STEM PR led us to engaging ideas that connect wonderfully with the general public.” - Dr. Fernando Gomollón-Bel, Graphene Flagship Press and Communications Coordinator.