

The logo for the CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2019 Gold Winner. It features the text 'CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2019' in white on a black background, followed by 'GOLD WINNER' in large, multi-colored letters (pink, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple).

**Category:** Best Use of Media Relations

**Company:** Holyrood PR

**Entry title:** Skyrora: Rocketing into the Headlines

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**Brief and objectives:**

As the UK's only rocket to successfully place a satellite into orbit, Black Arrow can lay claim to being the most important artefact in our nation's space history.

Skyrora wanted to use its decision to bring home Black Arrow - 50 years after it landed in the Australian outback - as a high profile initiative to showcase its own ambitions to play a leading role in UK's fast-growing commercial space race sector.

The following objectives were set:

- Deliver high quality coverage in UK media - at least 100 items - to raise awareness of Skyrora and drive traffic to its website
- Attract at least three new, qualified business enquiries for payload space
- Attract the attention of key stakeholders including at least one MSP and at least one prominent industry figure.

**The idea, research and planning:**

The importance of Black Arrow to Skyrora is inescapable; the rockets the firm will use to become the go-to company for a wave of UK-based satellite launches, uses the same technology as the first missile.

We agreed it was crucial – at a time when the UK is strengthening its position as a space nation – that Skyrora builds confidence in its credentials by exploiting all opportunities to link it with Black Arrow and its longstanding heritage in rocket technology.

As Skyrora continued to implement a programme of test launches to advance its plans to win the lion's share of the launch market, which in turn aims to create new employment opportunities and to inspire the next generation of STEM talent, the association with Black Arrow was seen as vital to potentially open up new investment.

### **Strategy, tactics, creativity and innovation:**

The strategy was to capitalise on the buzz on the UK's revived space industry, fuelled by the UK Space Agency's £2.5million funding for a proposed spaceport in Sutherland.

Crucial to any success would be our ability to breakdown complex stories – particularly with the media, who were the conduit to potential investors - and to allow an understanding on why Black Arrow was being brought home – but cleverly linked to showcase Skyrora.

We convinced Skyrora to drop its initial plan to have a low-key unveiling of Black Arrow at its HQ and instead plan a fully-coordinated 'return of a piece of history' launch event maximised across all channels.

Our approach involved:

- Crafting campaign and key messaging/targets with Skyrora
- Utilising our in-house video team to create an engaging video to illustrate the Black Arrow journey, creating high quality content for media outlets as well as for exhibitions, presentations, social media/website
- Engaging with key media targets to set up high quality media opportunities and coverage
- Targeting relevant influencers to attend the unveiling event and maintain momentum throughout launch week
- Successfully secured footage for national broadcaster STV - which (as a result) broadcasted the launch story nationally despite being unable to provide a reporter
- Unearthing an original engineer involved in the Black Arrow project to secure high impact comment
- Sourcing a Black Arrow 'celebrity' backer in Helen Sharman, Britain's first astronaut
- A competition with local school children to design their interpretation of space with the best displayed alongside Black Arrow.

### **Delivery:**

Our approach was based around three key stages:

#### 1. Pre unveiling

Arranging a four-minute slot on BBC's The One Show to showcase Black Arrow, featuring an interview with Skyrora's Lead Engineer.

We supplemented this coverage with an initial media release to alert the desks to the unveiling event as well as a media release about the local school children 'designing space', alongside strong imagery.

## 2. Unveiling

Planning/executing the media launch, attended by TV and print reporters, MSPs, original Black Arrow engineers and space influencers. We also produced a news video of the event.

The social reach of the attendees and those who shared their experience of the event totalled 507,040.

## 3. Follow up comment/influencer support

After the event it was crucial the momentum didn't drop so we ensured the video was shared widely across Skyrora's social channels and utilised Helen Sharman, to lend her favourable opinion to follow up releases.

We also devised a prime photocall event to have Black Arrow positioned outside the Scottish Parliament during a debate on space sector budgets.

### **Measurement and evaluation:**

#### **TARGET:**

Secure at least three qualified, new business opportunities directly attributed to the PR profile.

#### **ACTUAL:**

Six approaches from customers interested in taking payload space – (doubling target) worth an estimated £40-£50million.

#### **TARGET:**

Increase contact with key influencers – specifically to secure at least one visit to HQ.

#### **ACTUAL:**

Four MSPs and two MPs have asked to visit Skyrora's offices – smashing the target of one.

Influencer engagement - Robin Ince, of BBC radio show The Infinite Monkey Cage with Professor Brian Cox, contacted Skyrora after seeing coverage. Likewise, Dallas Campbell, from The Gadget Show and Bang Goes the Theory.

#### **TARGET:**

Boost awareness on social channels – by recording a minimum 20% increase in engagement.

#### **ACTUAL:**

45% increase in LinkedIn followers following Black Arrow PR.

21,400 hits on Skyrora website following Black Arrow coverage – spike of 500% the day after Black Arrow event.

44% increase in followers on Facebook following Black Arrow PR.

**TARGET:**

Deliver at least 100 items of media coverage.

**ACTUAL:**

Achieved 534 pieces of national, local and trade coverage. This included 43 influencer posts.

Highlights included:

- A total reach of nearly 40 million
- TV coverage on BBC The One Show to five million viewers
- 13 print and online cuttings in key target Scottish media – The Scotsman, The Herald, The Times and The National – reaching over 200,000 people and including the country's business leaders and government policy influencers
- Further UK national coverage in The Times, The Metro, The I, The Daily Mail, The Daily Mirror and ITV – ensuring the story was firmly on the news agenda
- Widespread coverage across the UK – with more than 100 articles in regional UK titles, as well as reaching worldwide news outlets in Australia and Germany
- Further broadcast coverage, with prime-time mentions on STV News at Six, Forces TV, Radio Scotland's Good Morning Scotland, TALKRadio and Isle of Wight Radio
- Key trade coverage in titles such as The Register and Space News.

**Budget and campaign impact:**

The PR budget apportioned from standard fees for the Black Arrow project was £4526.

The 39,790,914 OTS represented 8791 OTS per £1 spent.

Skyrora reported increased awareness of its business in valuable venture capital circles.

1:3 contacts at key influencer trade conferences state Skyrora awareness stems from Black Arrow's PR.

Contacted to be part of the 2019 Royal International Air Tattoo this year; the show's first space exhibition.