

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: Outstanding Young Communicator

Entrant name: Ruth Edmundson

Company: Gardiner Richardson

Demonstrate your commitment to professional development and your career growth:

My relationship with Gardiner Richardson started in 2014 when I did two weeks of work experience. I'm told I made a great impression, so much so, in 2017 following experience in a demanding public sector press office Gardiner Richardson invited me back when there was an opportunity to join the team permanently.

Within 12 months I was promoted from an Executive to a Senior Executive in recognition of the results I achieved and my initiative to seek new skills to develop, help the team and develop Gardiner Richardson's offer. With a keen interest in digital, video and social media, colleagues and clients frequently call upon my knowledge and innovative ideas to develop compelling, award winning campaigns.

I have cultivated regional, national and international media and influencer contacts enabling me to identify opportunities for clients and gain industry insights, particularly in the changing landscape of journalism and communications.

Since graduating with a First Class BA (Hons) in Magazine Journalism I have continued my development with training courses including Google Analytics, emergency communications, CIPR's broadcast PR 'how to nail a pitch', resilience and powerful communications. I also attend insight sessions with regional media, including Reach PLC and BBC Newcastle.

Every day I ask questions and seek new challenges. I read extensively (Digital PR by Danny Whatmough), follow blogs (Social Media Examiner) and podcasts (#FuturePProof).

"Ruth is a brilliant support to the PR team - a real star. She focuses relentlessly on her clients, keeping in mind the results she ultimately needs to produce for them. She then marries this with relevant, timely and creative ideas which show originality, understanding and consistently produce outstanding results." - Rachel McBryde, Associate Director, Gardiner Richardson.

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

I lead on the team's strategic approach to video: advising on best practice, equipment and trends – resulting in £10,000 of additional income via video creation – and social media through research, testing trends and platforms.

Working with Balance to drive social media growth via video between 2018/19 I achieved:

- +83% Facebook engagements
- +83.5% Facebook followers
- +93% 3 second Facebook video views
- +91% impressions per tweet.

I take great pride in mentoring work experience students, including my colleague Ellie Lyall, who is now a PR Executive. Mentoring allows me to pass on as well as learn new skills, best practice and advice helping students to progress their PR careers.

60% of Gardiner Richardson's clients trade outside the North East, many internationally. An example of my contribution to the agency's global approach is my work with mynewhair.

The pioneering charity, founded by celebrity hairdresser Trevor Sorbie MBE, supports people with medical hair loss. I led on promoting the charity's launch events in Dubai (2018) and Canada (2019) which enabled the charity to meet its key objectives:

- 100% attendance at international launch events
- Target of training 1,000 stylists
- International expansion
- On track to make wig personalisation a global service.

"It's been a real pleasure to work with Ruth. We really appreciate the brilliant work she does in helping us to raise awareness of mynewhair across the UK and internationally – her support is invaluable!" - Trevor Sorbie MBE, Founder, mynewhair.

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:

The Grand Build was an event, for my client rail operator Grand Central, to create a 4-metre long replica of an Adelante train out of LEGO®, to promote the refurbished fleet and engage with employees and customers.

Midway through the campaign there was a change of brief and client contact. A test of my organisational and communication skills, I quickly evaluated the knock on impact on the project and worked with PR, Project Management and Design teams in-house to ensure all necessary work was actioned within the original timescales and budget.

I developed my confidence and client servicing skills. While initially daunting, I remained calm and handled the situation with guidance from Account Directors. I learnt how best to overcome obstacles to ensure the delivery of a campaign, as well as the importance of agile communication when working with a large scale, multifaceted company.

The event was successfully delivered in October 2018. It received recognition from Grand Central, and the wider Arriva group, for reaching its key objectives and has led to further projects.

“The success of this project was down to Ruth’s excellent organisational and communications skills. She worked closely with us and the LEGO® Architect to ensure the build was on time. Ruth also managed the first Grand Build session, which ran like clockwork, and helped secure some fantastic media coverage and engagement with employees and customers. The Grand Build has also attracted fabulous feedback from across the Arriva group.” - Noreen Allen, Head of Marketing, Grand Central.

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

While posing a challenge, I am extremely proud of The Grand Build. I volunteered to lead the campaign with support from Account Directors and further solidified my skills and experience to deliver an impactful campaign.

Brief and objectives:

Raise awareness of Grand Central’s £9million Adelante refurbishment, enhance customer relations and brand reputation as well as strengthen relationships with staff and partners.

Strategy:

Following a period of disruption Grand Central was keen to engage with communities on its West Riding Route. I came up with The Grand Build, an event at visitor attraction Eureka! in Halifax, where local children helped a LEGO® Architect build a 4-meter replica Adelante train.

Tactics:

Media relations, social media activity, competitions, creative copywriting, video/photography, design and branded merchandise.

Innovative tactics to maximise coverage:

Teaser progress videos of the LEGO® model, competitions, #TheGrandBuild, social media countdown, event photography/video, key milestones e.g. launch/new tickets and interesting facts to bring the campaign to life.

Outputs:

- 23 print, online and broadcast articles
- 1,335,000 opportunities to see

- Coverage across all local media including BBC Look North, BBC Radio Leeds and ITV Yorkshire.

Outcomes:

- 100% free Eventbrite tickets issued (124 in total)
- 67 young Master Builders engaged
- 96 Eureka! Family passes issued
- “My children had an amazing time at #TheGrandBuild thank you so much. The appearance of the Grand Central train was perfect!”
- The Grand Build was recognised as ‘best practice’ community engagement by parent company Arriva.

Budget: £25,283.86.