

Basic Information

Region (Check Region):

North East

Category:

27. Independent PR Practitioner of the Year

Entry Information

Entrant company name:

Jule Wilson Communication

Entry title:

Jule Wilson Communication Independent PR practitioner 2021

Entry

An overview of your experience, your commitment to professional development and how you contribute to the industry:

I was among the first five practitioners in the region to become chartered in 2016, a long-held goal I realised as soon as I was eligible to attempt it. This gave me the impetus to become an independent practitioner as part of a portfolio career, and I'm proud to be part of this community.

Initially a journalist, I moved into PR 13 years ago, and have been an active CIPR member since 2011, when I began its professional diploma, gained with merit the following year. I quickly got involved with the organisation, first in the North East, where I was Communications Editor and Acting Group Secretary, then on the national Diversity and Inclusion Group committee. I'm also an active PRCA member, having contributed last year to a North East and Borderlands Group event on mental health in the industry post-Covid. I've volunteered as a PRide awards judge more than once, and was the Head Judge for Outstanding Young Communicator 2018.

I regularly raise awareness of PR as a career, having represented the profession at career fairs and through voluntary positions as a school and university mentor, a STEM Learning Ambassador, through which I highlight PR's digital elements, and guest lecturer at Sunderland and Northumbria Universities over the last five years. I've represented independent practitioners at PR careers events and was a recent panellist at a Durham University event looking at routes into the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, a community that includes many clients.

Until recently, I served as a charity trustee for The Josephine and Jack Project, a role that involved acting as marketing lead to grow the organisation and professionalise its PR

activities.

Outline your work-related achievements over the last 2 years, including your business objectives and/or plan:

Building on the foundation I created in my first two years in business, my recent goal has been to find a balance that, as well as operating at the highest standard of professional excellence and integrity in work, involves leading a rich and rewarding non-working life that ultimately adds to my broader knowledge and experience, making me a better practitioner.

With a number of commitments to juggle, not least my dedication to CPD, I have clear boundaries and my services are now being sought out without any paid promotion. Having built an agile and resilient business, I collaborate with other practitioners on specific projects and campaigns, augment agency teams, and work with my own clients on an exclusive basis.

During the period, I've experienced no fallow spells, and all 10 clients I've worked with have either retained my services on an ongoing basis, or offered repeat business based on my results.

Despite the pandemic, last year was my most profitable to date; having been recommended, I won National Poetry Day, a national account that's historically used London PR agencies. Although I reluctantly decided not to accept for capacity reasons to do with a family health matter, I was exceptionally proud to be asked to return for the 2021 campaign.

I set myself an ambitious goal in terms of net annual profits, which I exceeded by 9%, and worked in sectors including education, property and construction, arts, culture, and charity. Notably, having crafted the entry on their behalf, my client Kids Kabin was named North East Small Charity of the Year 2019, and with my support, is expanding for the benefit of local people and communities.

Chief Executive Will Benson said: "Jule Wilson has really helped Kids Kabin develop its understanding of PR and marketing – bringing us along from occasional and sporadic social media and website updates to a coordinated approach to sharing our Kids Kabin story."

Provide an outline of a work-related challenge you have faced in the last 2 years, including details of what happened, how you overcame it and what you learnt from it:

I joined partners providing branding, website support and design on a joint full-service communications retainer for a Multi-Academy Trust. But it became clear it had carried out no internal consultation or communication with members, so I was met with significant resistance from leaders within schools, where the trust had nominated 'communications champions' to be first port of call in day to day operations, some of whom resented this as an 'extra' ask on top of core duties.

I advised an internal communications need, as well as the need for a long-term approach to build fruitful relationships. However, I found the trust reluctant to take a long-term view, or agree to activities without knowing for certain how many new pupil applications would

result.

Despite this, progress was made and around 50 pieces of media coverage were secured in six months, but because a direct line couldn't easily be drawn between this and school applications, the PR element of the collaboration wasn't renewed, leaving me disillusioned about the value placed upon PR compared to my partners' disciplines.

I maintain great relationships with those I collaborated with, and still work with them on other projects. But before working with new clients, I have deeper conversations to determine buy-in, and caution against drawing unrealistic conclusions from results.

Provide an outline of a piece of work you have delivered in the last 2 years that you are particularly proud of, including details of the brief, objectives, strategy, tactics, outputs, outcomes and budget:

National Poetry Day 2020 took place during a global pandemic with a heavy death toll and societal disruption. Messaging acknowledged the situation's seriousness while demonstrating the powerful positive difference poetry can make, inspiring people to get involved.

An integrated campaign encouraged and celebrated community and neighbourhood-based engagement, and a central call to action across all channels was to #ShareAPoem, driven by engaging and inclusive content to inspire, inform, and encourage the discovery of, and participation in poetry.

A social media thunderclap launched the campaign, and a crescendo of content built up to the day. There was an overall 6% growth in social media audience over the course of the campaign, more than 150 organisations added content to their websites, and more than 220 events were added to the official interactive map, all of which exceeded campaign targets and 2019's results.

Site visitors spent an average 1.13% more time on page, the bounce rate was reduced by 15%+ and the exit rate by more than 40%. Unique website visits were 2.4% above target and 30% above the same period in 2019. This was achieved with an all-inclusive budget of £7,500.

Supporting Information

Additional supporting information (images, artwork, clippings and other media):

Provided
