

Basic Information

Region (Check Region):

North East

Category:

26. Outstanding Young Communicator

Entry Information

Entrant company name:

Northumberland County Council

Entry title:

Jen Millard nominated by Ann Bridges

Entry

Demonstrate your commitment to professional development and your career growth:

Before joining us here at Northumberland County Council (NCC), it was clear Jen was committed to professional development and her passion has grown. Initially training as a graphic designer, she then completed a BA in Design Management to further her career and after a year in industry honing her skills, she undertook an MA in Creative and Cultural Industries Management before joining NCC.

She is great at making a small budget stretch, delivering fantastic ROI for the wide variety of teams she works with at the council, from tourism to sustainable transport and apprenticeships to internal communications. Working with such a diverse range of teams keeps her skills sharp and challenges her to grow professionally.

She has actively sought out mentors to inspire and challenge her and opportunities for professional development from within and outside of our organization. Last July, Jen applied for an internal promotion from level 3 to a level 5 position which we were delighted she achieved, and we can't wait to see her career grow further. Outside of our organization, Jen undertook the responsibility of becoming a trustee of a local arts charity guiding them in their marketing and communications strategy.

Since joining NCC Jen has continuously strived for self-improvement. She sets aside time every week for CPD, whether it's attending a webinar, a networking meeting or undertaking courses to make sure she is up to date with the most recent industry knowledge and enrolled in the CIPR membership programme.

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

Jen is very well thought of within the council and is seen as a reliable point of contact, with numerous colleagues coming to her for help and advice. She regularly mentors other members of staff in her speciality, social media and is very passionate about sharing her knowledge.

Although in a junior position, Jen is afforded a level of responsibility and trust that is well-earned. One of the biggest communications events for local government is elections, and since joining the council Jen has worked on three, one of which was the general election in December 2019 where she was directly responsible for media relations on the night, liaising with national media outlets, such as BBC Radio 4 and BBC Breakfast correspondent Naga Munchetty.

Since Jen joined the team in 2019, our team have been recognized for two internal and one external award directly related to the work she does. However, one of her biggest achievements is more nuanced, influencing the corporate tone of voice for Northumberland County Council by using audience research and empirical data she has shifted the conservative corporate tone of voice of our digital channels to a softer, approachable tone. This was invaluable during the Coronavirus pandemic where the council had to reach disenfranchised and vulnerable communities across the county to ensure they were safe and well.

Jen embodies the vision and values here at NCC with unscrupulous professional principles: Residents first; excellence and quality; respect; keeping our communities safe and well.

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

Since her promotion in June 2020, Jen has taken a hands-on role in project managing campaigns at the council, building relationships with stakeholders, colleagues and partners. Stepping into a new role during a global pandemic is not an easy feat but she also was one of the communications account managers for a newly established team within the Council, Northumberland Communities Together (the council's coordinated COVID response), most of whom had never worked with a marketing or communications team before.

Jen knows the value of working relationships so took this challenge in her stride, engaging with community groups, community-based influencers and local councillors), colleagues and our executive level management team. Through regular communication and reporting of relevant COVID related statistics these parties' should read stakeholders were informed and reassured. This level of integrity and professionalism is something she has carried into every project she manages.

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

Brief:

Promote Northumberland County Council as an apprenticeship provider during National

Apprenticeship Week 2021.

Budget:
£5,000

Objectives:
Drive traffic towards the virtual event
Raise the profile of NCC as an apprenticeship provider
Encourage apprenticeship applications

Strategy and tactics:
Integrated online-first strategy to drive traffic to an online event portal where potential applicants can find out more about apprenticeships at the council, speak to current apprentices and find roles to apply for.

Outputs paid for:
- Digital Ad van, for two days in key locations around Northumberland.
- Promotional article published on ChronicleLive website
- Boosted Facebook Post from the Official Partner Page (JPI media)
- Full page advert and editorial in the Journal newspaper

Outputs organic:
- Social media campaign focusing on 3 audience types, influencers (parents, grandparents and carers), school leavers and those seeking a second career
- Two Press releases, issued online by NCC and picked up by local media outlets
- Three internal news stories to NCC staff
- Two newsletters to schools.
- 7 videos of staff, current and former apprentices

Outcomes:
- Social media (organic across, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn)- Reach of the campaign: 1.5m, Impressions: 270K, Engagement: 3.1K, Link clicks: 1.7K, Average engagement rate: 2.04%
- 70,630 targeted native ads were directed back to the article
- Over 1,300 views on the online paid-for editorial with 1,200 unique article users
- The boosted Facebook post reached 69,272 users, had 915 engagements
- Over 600 individual customer profiles data captured
- Over 260 virtual event attendees
- 7,762 website impressions over the 10 days the job adverts were open with all positions filled
- Anecdotally the team said the applicants were of a high standard and the council teams who did get involved are likely to ask for more apprentices as a result

Supporting Information