

Basic Information

Region (Check Region):

Northern Ireland

Category:

26. Outstanding Young Communicator

Entry Information

Entrant company name:

Turley

Entry title:

Jessica Fok, Outstanding Young Communicator of the Year

Entry

Demonstrate your commitment to professional development and your career growth:

I have been a member of CIPR since 2012, progressing from a student member to now an accredited member. While studying BSc Public Relations at Ulster University I took an active interest in the PR industry and undertook a number of voluntary communications internships while studying with NSPCC, Shelter NI, and Queen's Film Theatre. I secured a placement year in the Marketing department of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's Theatre at the Mill and received my Diploma in Professional Practice. At graduation I was awarded the Weber Shandwick Award for coming joint-top of my class.

Outside of my '9-to-5', I have used my skills to deliver PR support for not-for-profit and start-up organisations including Belfast Design Week and the Hill Street Hatch. This has enabled me to hone my ability to work independently, manage campaigns on shoe-string budgets, and network with other creatives in Northern Ireland.

In 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic I joined the PR Working Group for The Great Reset Ireland, a steering group set-up to support sustainable practices in the PR industry. I have co-authored a toolkit to support a greener Irish communications industry and am currently in the process of designing research to benchmark existing sustainable behaviours in PR.

This year I joined the CIPR NI Committee to facilitate greater peer-to-peer learning and support the growth of the industry at a local level.

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

Since joining Turley's Strategic Communications unit in July 2019, I have utilised integrated communications to shape the delivery of c. 30 pre-application community consultations across residential, commercial, infrastructure, and tourism projects, and secure planning permission for a number of exciting new NI projects including the reefLIVE Aquarium, 158 much-needed social homes in Strabane, and plans for the new Eastern Access Road in Titanic Quarter.

In March 2020, at the outbreak of the pandemic I led an internal taskforce to develop a robust and accessible digital-led consultation that allowed community consultation to continue, even during a public health crisis. The Infrastructure Minister amended the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (NI) 2015, temporarily suspending the requirement to hold a face-to-face public event and enabling Councils to require alternative forms of consultation to be undertaken for Major developments. I managed a digital transformation strategy to meet the new communications requirements with "digital-first" and "remote" consultation services. This was implemented for projects including Yorkgate Train Station, the redevelopment of the Park Avenue Hotel, and residential development, The Loft Lines.

The second achievement that I am proud of is supporting ~~the~~ Turley's entry into the Ireland market. Over the past 24 months we established a new office in Dublin and I have used my previous experience of the Irish media and stakeholder engagement to deliver projects such as the feasibility study for the Liberties Creative Campus for Dublin City Council, early consultation for the delivery of a masterplan in Loughanaskin, Athlone, and the development of new Kilkenny County Council's town plans for six settlements.

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:

My relocation from a Dublin-based reputation management agency to join national planning consultancy, Turley, at its Belfast office, presented a fundamental challenge and need to self-educate and independently train for the new role. Turley Strategic Communications' core offer to provide communications programmes designed to secure successful planning outcomes and therefore a baseline understanding of the local planning system was required to carry out the role.

At my former agency, ReputationInc, I serviced a diverse range of Dublin-based blue-chip clients across pharmaceutical, finance, telecommunications, and hospitality sectors. I grew my skills in media relations with the Irish press, C-Suite capability training, crisis management, employer brand, talent acquisition communications, digital communications and much more.

This experience provided me with a bedrock to deliver strategic programmes at Turley and to provide creative new ideas to grow our existing offering. However, there was a requirement for accelerated training in understanding the NI planning system as well as upskilling in public affairs/political lobbying for Major planning applications in NI and placemaking consultations in the Republic of Ireland.

I undertook self-study and on-the-job training to understand the basics of the planning system. This involved familiarisation with regulations, Local Development Plans, and attending planning committees. At a practical level I followed key elected representatives on social media to keep up-to-date with individual and party agendas, signed up to local

political think tank newsletters and attended thought leadership events to better understand the political system in the context of the built environment. On projects, I welcomed the tasks of undertaking stakeholder audits and developing briefings documents as key opportunities to develop my public affairs experience.

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:

I am most proud of the delivery of the pre-application community consultation campaign for the approved reefLIVE Aquarium in Titanic Quarter.

Working alongside my team, I undertook stakeholder engagement, political lobbying, social media advertising, event management, and media engagement to establish a positive reputation for reefLIVE's first aquarium in Ireland.

At a statutory level, I managed the public consultation and this involved the organisation of a public exhibition at the Titanic Hotel as well as the development and distribution of leaflets across East Belfast to promote the consultation and encourage feedback. I coordinated a number of stakeholder briefings and letters of support for the project from key stakeholders including Tourism NI and Retail NI.

In light of the significance of this tourism project, I also delivered a digital-led engagement strategy for the proposals in order to magnify response rates and this included the development of a high-spec, multipage consultation website and implementation of a targeted social media campaign.

I managed the media relations for the new tourist attraction and secured coverage at a regional and national level with stories appearing in the Belfast Telegraph, Irish Independent, and BBC.

This integrated campaign resulted in the approval of the aquarium by the Belfast City Council's Planning Committee in winter 2020. In total it also delivered: more than 50 pieces of high quality coverage; 2,004 page views on the consultation website, and reached 151,310 users via the social media campaign.

Supporting Information

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

Provided
