

## Basic Information

*Region (Check Region):*

Midlands

*Category:*

30. PR Consultancy of the Year

## Entry Information

*Entrant company name:*

Stone Junction

*Entry title:*

Company culture first

## Entry

*Number of employees and annual fee income:*

Team of 35, fee income £1,612,695 in 2020

*Business objectives and analysis of performance against budget over the last two years:*

Stone Junction, founded 2006, is a company culture first business, dedicated to STEM PR. Our fee income has grown at an average rate of 42.3% P/A since 2012, reaching £1,612,695, despite COVID.

### MISSION STATEMENT

1. To be the biggest independent agency outside London
2. To be the best PR agency in the world to work for
3. To change the way businesses market themselves

Stone Junction typically overachieves against its targets every year. However, in 2020, this thing called COVID-19 got in the way. Despite that, we still grew 10.5%.

### OBJECTIVES MARCH 2020 TO FEBRUARY 2021:

1. Turn over £2,000,500 (achieved £1,612,695 despite COVID)
2. Make profit of £600,000 (achieved £353,278, despite COVID)
3. Win six PR/business awards (achieved – six, including PRCA Midlands Outstanding Consultancy, for the third consecutive year)

### OBJECTIVES MARCH 2019 TO FEBRUARY 2020:

1. Turn over £1,326,250 (smashed - £1,459,028 – 10.9% ahead)
2. Make pre-tax profit of £325,000 (Achieved £338,698 – 4.2% ahead)

3. Win six PR/business awards (destroyed – 11, including CIPR and PRCA Midlands Outstanding Consultancy, again!)

#### SUMMARY OF 2012 TO 2021:

1. Increased turnover: 1,261%
2. Increased staff: One to 35
3. Increased profit: 205%

#### BY 2023 WE WILL:

- Increase turnover to £3,295,944
  - Increase profit to £550,000
  - Increase headcount from 35 to 44
  - Add seven new languages to our team – including Arabic, Japanese and Swedish
  - Open additional offices in Chicago
  - Create an accountant's estimated company value of £2,895,000
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#### *A brief overview of business / team strategy:*

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We are technical, international and specialist. We change minds.

We are at the heart of the way communication and persuasion is changing. As PR consultants we've always been expert storytellers. But the way we tell stories has been at the centre of a digital revolution since the company was born.

We hire science and technology qualified staff to deliver technical credibility and multilingual staff to provide international reach, complimented by technical PR and journalism specialists. We have a specialist Asia Pacific team and two specialist US teams.

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#### *A summary of commitment to CPD and professionalism:*

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#### OUR PEOPLE

- Eleven CIPR members, six accredited, two chartered, all funded by Stone Junction
- Richard Stone, was chair of the CIPR Midlands committee from 2017-2019
- Stone Junction is CIPR corporate affiliate, ISO 9001 certified and a member of the PRCA

Four training sessions per month:

- Two internal PR training sessions: 36 modules of hour-long interactive training to develop PR and marketing skills
- One STEM Mayhem session: Technical training to allow non-STEM qualified staff to develop knowledge of everything from robotics and cyber security to fog computing and bio-informatics
- One coffee and case studies: Outdoor coffee, croissants and PR case study analysis and discussion

We measure progress against CPD in monthly one-to-ones and quarterly appraisals. We measure performance using numerical SMART objectives attached to clear salary increases. Anyone can trigger a salary increase or promotion by achieving their objectives, without line manager approval. This is reinforced by a market leading benefits package

(see supporting documents).

We devote over 750 hours per year to training every year. In our most recent quarterly team survey, our team rated our training programme at 8.04/10. This reflects the additional emphasis put on training during the pandemic to address the challenges of remote working, up from 7.23/10 in July 2019.

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*A summary of recent outstanding achievements, including client list growth / retention:*

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## COMPANY CULTURE FIRST

- Work per head is 20% lower than industry average (measured using PR Week league tables), for exceptional work/life balance and improved client retention
- Launched permanent Work from Anywhere scheme
- Grinding Down into Sand, our management training scheme, provides one-to-one coaching with our business coach and funded CIPR chartership assessments
- £23K by 2023: We are working to raise our graduate starting salary to £23K per year by 2023. In 2021, every single salary will increase by £1500 as a result, irrespective of performance. We have already implemented £1000 per person of these increases.
- Despite COVID, ZERO job losses, ZERO pay cuts, one, childcare-enforced, furlough and we reduced our hours to 35P/W on the same pay! All bonuses paid, 12 promotions, £103K of salary increases. No Government grants.

## CLIENTS

In 2021, Stone Junction launched its Joined-Up-Content offering, making it uniquely positioned to deliver campaigns for companies in the STEM sectors.

The core argument of Joined-Up-Content is that, despite the traditional PESO (Paid, Earned, Shared, Owned) mix positing that owned content is predictable and manageable but difficult to ramp up, the combination of content tactics Stone Junction offers make it rapidly scalable.

Since January 2020, Stone Junction has won £440,378 P/A of retained business because of this new approach.

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

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Stone Junction began working with Sandvik in January 2020. Previously, much of its PR efforts focused on product press releases. Thought leadership was considered too difficult to manage across a global brand, but Stone Junction felt differently.

Sandvik Coromant bases its marketing activity around four core content pillars: sustainability, innovation, digitalisation and people. Communicating these pillars globally was key, but naturally, each region has very different stances, opinions and environments for these themes. To align with these focuses, we conducted research into the how manufacturers are navigating these themes in each region. Research included reports and surveys from Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC), McKinsey and Company and the World Economic Forum.

We created content on Sandvik Coromant's core pillars throughout the year, ensuring we regularly switched focus to avoid saturating the media with a particular topic. Each piece of content was strategically placed with relevant target media, spanning the manufacturing, metalworking, automotive and materials sectors.

We targeted 26 countries as part of our media relations campaign, in 23 languages.

## RESULTS

Increase Sandvik Coromant's global media footprint:

- o 1,215 clippings in 26 countries reaching 1.23 billion online and 1.25 million people in print
- o 1,059 clippings in Europe (exceeding target by 76.5%)
- o 69 clippings in America (exceeding target by 38%)
- o 87 clippings in Asia (exceeding target by 74%)

Position Sandvik Coromant as an industry thought leader:

- o 48 clippings referencing sustainability in machining (exceeding target by 60%)
- o 60 clippings referencing female leadership in STEM (exceeding target by 100%)
- o 86 clippings referencing digital manufacturing and Industry 4.0 (exceeding target by 186.6%)

Promote Sandvik Coromant's annual product launches:

- o 49 clippings for March's product release, the CoroDrill 860-GM (exceeding target by 22.5%)
- o 62 clippings for October's product release, the GC4415 and GC4425 steel turning grades (exceeding target by 55%)

For 2021/2, we've taken this a step further, creating a relationship with one of the world's leading artists who is using Sandvik's tools and metals to create the world's first virtual art installation. No headsets, no glasses, just a virtual only installation, open to the public and only viewable on site in a mobile VR room.

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## Supporting Information

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

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Provided

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