

Individual Award: Category 21: Outstanding Young Communicator Award: North East
Katherine Shenton
Gardiner Richardson

Summary

Katherine has achieved incredible success since graduating with a First Class BA (Hons) in Public Relations just four years ago. This talented 26-year-old has worked with a number of high profile accounts including, Balance, the North East alcohol office, Dulux, Toni & Guy, MaxFactor, Gillette and Shell.

Following internships at Ketchum, Golley Slater, Citigate Smarts and two and half years at North East Ambulance Service she is now working as an account manager, at integrated communications agency, Gardiner Richardson. She manages a number of national accounts including The Pen Shop, Faber-Castell and Penn State Snacks.

Since graduating Katherine has continued her professional development through training courses, including social media, stakeholder engagement and mapping and broadcast media training.

Leadership

In her current role, Katherine is responsible for managing an account executive, who joined Gardiner Richardson straight from university. Katherine works with her to help develop her PR skills and knowledge and acts as a mentor.

Katherine planned and managed a staff of seven for a graduation ceremony on behalf the Learning and Skills Council.

The event was attended by over 150 people, including Olympians Jonathan Edwards, Tony Jefferies and Paralympic, Stephen Miller. The event received incredible feedback with 81% of the attendees rating the event excellent, with the remaining 19% rating it as good.

Knowledge and technical expertise

Katherine has a keen interest in digital and social media and her knowledge is frequently called upon by her colleagues and clients.

Her expertise within this sector has led to Gardiner Richardson being the only agency in the UK, employed by English Heritage to deliver social media communications, which includes blogger relations and Facebook.

Facebook statistics to date show:

- 536 members 'like' the page
- Facebook acts as third top referral page to the English Heritage website
- People visiting the English Heritage website through Facebook links, spending the longest time on the site

Katherine has worked with the project management team to support English Heritage's street artwork tour to pre-publicise contemporary arts exhibition,

Extraordinary Measures, which led to coverage being achieved in 92% of all regional print media titles.

Katherine contributed to the wider PR activity helping to gain:

- £1.3m worth of coverage
- 215 cuttings
- 32 million opportunities to see or hear about the exhibition
- ROI: 95
- Page two coverage in the Daily Mirror for the opening of the exhibition

Katherine achieved national coverage for the first time for private girls school Church High. Including:

- The Independent
- Metro
- Daily Mail

Teamwork

During her time at Gardiner Richardson, Katherine worked at senior account executive level on the largest public health survey held in the region, the North East Big Drink Debate.

The campaign:

- saw over 12,000 people respond the survey – 20% higher than anticipated
- achieved over £1 million worth of coverage
- won CIPR North East PRide Gold Best Use of Media Relations and Silver Best Use of Community Relations and FRESH awards Winner Best Use of Media Relations and Highly Commended Freshest Public Sector Campaign

Katherine worked as part of a team of six on the project from pitch stage to evaluation. Contributing to delivering media relations, organising two stakeholder events, engaging with MP's and businesses, creating two public launch events and creating a Facebook page and application, Katherine was an essential part of the team.

Planning and delivering work

Katherine organised, Business Boutique, an event for 300 people on behalf of South Tyneside Means Business, hosted by Ultimo boss Michelle Mone, 'where she took on the role of event manager in her capacity as senior account executive.

Business Boutique achieved its key objectives, as outlined in the event evaluation:

- 100% of attendees achieved their purpose of attending the event
- 77% felt that the event was excellent (23% felt that it was good)
- 100% felt that the speaker presentations were excellent
- 68% of attendees wanted to know more about STMB
- "I achieved my purpose tonight – motivation, inspiration and guidance. Perfect!"

Creativity and innovation

This Newcastle born PR professional is extremely interested in digital and social media and to further enhance her own and her colleagues knowledge she developed the company wide 'The Social.'

The quarterly after work get together has led to:

- the digital, design, PR and project management teams sharing articles and ideas on digital and social media both in and outside of the session
- further enhanced collaborative work across the business
- talks and discussions by guest speakers on a range of relevant topics
- the launch of the Gardiner Richardson Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts

Problem-solving and project management

Katherine has worked with a PR and project director to plan and implement an eye-catching, engaging and stylish experiential marketing campaign for the UK's leading pretzel brand, Penn State Snacks.

Katherine has worked with the team to create a pop-up garden party (which is currently touring the UK), she directly influenced the on-street activity with her PR ideas and plan, which focused heavily on the use of social media tools, including Facebook, Flickr and Foursquare – to ensure the campaign is fully integrated.

Relationship building

Katherine continues to build her contacts to suit the needs of her clients and has forged new relationships, with a number of luxury titles, for new client, prestigious international pen brand, Graf von Faber-Castell. Katherine has met with senior writers and editors at titles such as Vogue, Harpers Bazaar, The Sunday Time: Style, FT: How to Spend It and Wallpaper.

The PR team and other teams within Gardiner Richardson to ensure integrated campaigns are successful and clients receive real value for money.

Managing and using resources

Since her promotion to account manager in 2010, Katherine has been responsible for the budget management of large scale projects, including a £25,000 event and currently a £20,000 six-week PR campaign. Both projects have or are set to be within budget.

Future aspirations

Katherine has already achieved incredible experience and growth in her time as a PR professional, she has gained promotion in both her roles since graduating and is still as passionate as ever about building on her skills and experience and discovering new tools and techniques to benefit her clients.

A natural communicator, Katherine sees it as an integral part of her role to educate and suggest new social media channels to help clients reach their objectives and ultimately affect their bottom line.

Katherine's mission is to now play a significant role in attracting further high-profile national and international brands to the Gardiner Richardson roster and continue to dedicate her energy and enthusiasm to her colleagues and clients.

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