

Entrant company name: **Rod Cartwright, Rod Cartwright Consulting**

Category: **Independent PR Practitioner of the Year**

Experience, commitment to professional development and industry contribution

My 30-year career began in public affairs, working in Labour Party HQ during the 1997 election, for leading PA firms and as chair of the PRCA's PA Committee for 10 years (including as a Parliamentary witness and sitting on the Professional Practices Panel for the Bell Pottinger Affair).

After five years as a UK Board Director at Hill + Knowlton, I spent a decade at Ketchum – including as a Global Partner and Director of the Global Corporate Practice – before two years on Text100's global leadership team, as EMEA Regional Director.

Clients have included Nissan, IBM, Bridgestone, Sanofi, Toyota, KFC, Dell, Accenture, DHL, Oracle, Western Union, the British Council and ActionAid. I also advised the CEO, Chair and Board of Malaysia Airlines following the disappearance of Flight MH370 in 2014 and then its sovereign owner, on the airline's subsequent restructuring.

In 2019, I set up a successful independent advisory business – Rod Cartwright Consulting – counselling clients on human preparedness, organisational resilience and business performance. I'm also a Senior Associate at the PR Network, Blurred and Polpeo.

I've pursued a career-long commitment to serving our industry and supporting the 'baton pass' to the next generation, and in the past five years alone, I have (all pro bono):

1. Been Special Advisor to CIPR's Crisis Communications Network (ongoing)
2. Launched the 'Independent Impact 50' awards (ongoing)
3. Served as a Visiting Fellow at Cardiff University's Centre for Media & Public Communication (ongoing)
4. Been Deputy Chair of the PRCA's 'Global Covid-19 Communications Taskforce'
5. Been a highly active in the ICCO/PRCA 'Ukraine Communications Support Network'

Work-related achievements over the last 12 months, including business objectives and/or plan

Rod Cartwright Consulting has enjoyed another bumper year, with FY 2023-2024 the fourth consecutive year of six figure revenues and 60% – 72% EBITDA margin. My strategic objectives for 2023-2024 were:

1. To run a successful, profitable business, doing important, enjoyable work for interesting, decent clients
2. To continue balancing my portfolio across three core pillars: issue/crisis preparedness, live issues/crisis handling and training/L&D
3. To continue to 'pass the baton' through volunteering, coaching, mentoring and support other independent practitioners
4. To evolve the 'Reputation, Risk and Resilience' report, which I first delivered in 2023

Notable 2024 highlights were:

1. 2024 client work included:
 - a. Advising the interim leader of a key UK public institution, in the face of considerable flux and controversy
 - b. Advising a global leader in plant-based food in dealing with complex, high-impact EU and member state litigation
 - c. Providing speechwriting and speaker training to the leaders of a multi-billion Euro listed company, for a crucial capital markets day
 - d. Delivering training to clients including the Cabinet Office, the British Council, Nomad Foods, and the PRCA (multiple courses)
2. Support for other independents: In December 2024, Nigel Sarbutts of the PR Cavalry and I co-founded and launched the new Independent Impact 50 to celebrate and showcase the impact, contribution and commitment of independent PR practitioners. With a diverse panel of big-hitting judges, we attracted almost 100 entries, with the final 50 revealed at an event at the Globe Theatre's Swan Restaurant in London on 1 May.
3. Volunteering, mentoring and coaching: Alongside running an annual crisis day for The XeC and sessions on life as an independent for Socially Mobile, I continued in my role as

a Visiting Fellow at Cardiff University and as Special Advisor to the CIPR's Crisis Communications Network.

4. Thought leadership: as a cornerstone of my listing in PRovoke Media's 2023 EMEA Innovator25 list, my 2024 'Reputation, Risk and Resilience' report was a centrepiece of my ongoing success and was recently awarded a Certificate Excellence for Agency Thought Leadership at the 2025 PRovoke Media IN2 Sabre Awards (alongside two campaigns from Weber Shandwick).

A piece of work from the last 12 months I'm particularly proud of: brief, objectives, strategy, tactics, outputs, outcomes and budget

With a hard cost budget of under £1,000, the 2024 Edition of my 'Reputation, Risk and Resilience' report summarised and analysed eight major global risk reports from the previous 12 months. Its objectives were to:

1. Provide a free, practical resource, helping elevate fellow practitioners' capabilities and confidence
2. Develop a memorable calling card for my consulting brand, to raise awareness, enhance relationships and drive opportunities
3. Deliver insights, ideas and practical tools to enhance my consulting services and training content.

A LinkedIn launch post that generated just under 20,000 impressions and an engagement rate of nearly 3% was followed by a stream of guest blogs, podcast appearances, webinars, conference speeches and media articles around the world. As well as featuring in the CIPR's quarterly Engage podcast, a CIPR CCN event I chaired on the report was the Network's best-attended webinar in 2024, the year's top CIPR event and one of the highest-attendance CIPR events ever.

The text in this case study is presented as submitted in the original award entry. Where necessary, entrants have removed or redacted information considered sensitive or confidential.