

Entrant company name: **Viva**

Category: **Small PR Consultancy of the Year**

Business Overview & Financial Performance

Employees: 12

Fee income: £858,447 (2023/24)

In 2020, Viva was at a crossroads. Reasonably successful, yet treading water. We realised we'd spent 18 years focused on delivering results for clients, but relatively little time applying our craft to ourselves. In short, we were a firm in need of strategy.

That changed when we developed our guiding philosophy: From Insights to Impact. It's not a slogan, it's the strategy. It drives every decision: hires, structure, success measures, who we work with.

Our objectives over the last two years: deliver 20% YOY growth, transition to Employee Ownership, and strengthen profitability. Targets achieved, with turnover rising to £896,514 and profits up 126% by 2023.

In 2024, our values-led approach was tested in a difficult economic environment. We also walked away from a client over ethical misalignment. Despite the short-term dip (£858,447 turnover; £51,883 profit), we stayed true to our principles, setting us up for sustainable growth.

In December 2023, we underwent the biggest change in our history transitioning to an Employee Ownership Trust (EOT). Underscoring our belief in people-first leadership, the EOT has re-energised the business, embedding a shared commitment to excellence. Six months into 2024-25, we are firmly back on track and heading for our best financial year ever, with revenue, profit, and new business pipelines ahead of target.

In 2024 we also launched a PR podcast, achieved Good Business Charter and Cyber Essentials Plus Accreditations, further reflecting how responsibility, welfare, ethics and security are embedded across every part of Viva.

Leadership, People & Culture

From Insights to Impact starts with our team. Following our EOT transition, we appointed two females to Board-level leadership plus an employee on the board. Viva Employee Voice ensures every colleague helps shape the strategy.

We believe long-term impact means investing in our people as in clients.

The impact:

- 7+ years average tenure.
- 70% staff retention over 3 years.
- 90%+ staff satisfaction.
- Transparent salary bands & clear Career Development Reviews.
- 73% female, 12% neurodiverse, cross-generational talent. 66% female on Board.

Our wellbeing offer is shaped around Mind's Five Ways to Wellbeing:

- Hybrid working (2 days in office, reducing unnecessary travel vs industry standard 3+)
- 20-minute Walk Out breaks
- Spill therapy sessions & 2 Mental Health First Aiders
- £40/month wellbeing allowance via Juno
- 16 hours volunteering annually, with ongoing support for charities like Friends of Serenity and Nightsafe

All underpinned by Viva's five values: Do it with Impact; Endless Curiosity; Proper People People; Make it Simple; Viva Together.

Professional Development: Curious Minds Framework

Professional development is powered by our value of Endless Curiosity. Dubbed the Curious Minds Framework — a structured yet flexible approach designed to empower every colleague to grow, experiment, and lead.

Everyone has a transparent Career Development Review (CDR) process and can see how it fits into the agency framework. Objectives are clear, tailored, and reviewed, with bespoke training and leadership opportunities. A personal CPD budget of £1,000+, means there's no ceiling to development at Viva.

The Curious Minds Framework also include structured group learning. In 2024:

- Steph Bridgeman of Experienced Media Analysts delivered 8 tailored workshops on embedding the AMEC Measurement Framework for evaluation excellence.
- We co-created with Edge Hill University our proprietary Creative Impact Model
- We carried out weekly mentoring, learning sessions and had regular guest sessions from industry experts from journalists and PR leaders.
- Monthly celebrations of colleagues' Impact through a peer-nominated scheme.

Every colleague is a CIPR member, upholding the highest professional standards and adhering to the CIPR Code of Conduct.

Client Retention, Growth & Impact

Every client relationship reflects our insight-driven, impact-delivering approach.

Equipped with sharper insights, we applied the same lens to redefine client relationships. We sought meaningful, purposeful partnerships, rejecting short-term wins in favour of long-term trust and measurable outcomes. 85% of revenue is from monthly fee clients.

Every new relationship goes through our 6-Step Client Audit, including a values check, ensuring alignment.

Key Clients:

1. BAE Systems (13 years): Awarded UK's Next Generation Combat Air Programme. Our Typhoon to Front campaign: 20% improvement in stakeholder engagement.
2. Eurofighter Typhoon (11 years): Secured our biggest contract to date, rooted in insight-led innovation. Our "The Fighter Show" YouTube campaign delivered 2.5 million+ views, 120% subscriber growth, with 42% of viewers aged 18-35 (double previous rate)

Major Client wins in 2024

1. AWE: Employee engagement/EVC comms win, insight-led EVP strategy leading to multiple new projects.
2. VEKA: New manufacturing client strengthening our specialist portfolio.

Campaign Excellence: Turning Insights into Action

Our campaigns embody the Insights to Impact approach: creative, data-informed, and outcomes-focused.

Bolton Food & Drink Festival (Budget £12,000): Faced with post-pandemic uncertainty, we repositioned the festival as "UK's Biggest Festival, Bigger Than Glastonbury" — tapping local pride, influencer reach, and resilience messaging. Storm Lilian hit just days before opening, threatening to derail. Our crisis comms flipped the narrative, driving community support.

Results:

- 73 media pieces
- 1.67m reach
- BBC & ITV coverage
- Regional influencer-led engagement

Thought Leadership: Raising Regional Voices

One of the clearest manifestations of our purpose is the ‘PR in the Real World’ podcast. We launched it in October 24 not as a vanity project, but as an intentional platform:

- Elevating regional, diverse PR voices
- Spotlighting topics from AI to inclusion to professional standards
- Offering a real-world lens often missing in national comms discussions

Results:

- 5,000+ downloads per episode
- #18 UK Apple Business Charts
- Used as CIPR CPD resource.

It doesn't stop there. It fuels business growth, nurturing relationships with potential clients. We're extending it into a Thought Leader Network — creating white papers, events and deeper collaboration. We're not just joining the conversation; we're shaping it.

Sustainability & Ethics: Impact Beyond Business

Responsibility runs through everything, backed with action:

- Hybrid working cutting emissions (2 office days, below industry average)
- Local tree planting partnerships
- Replacing plastic bottles with cans
- "Check Before You Chuck" internal campaign
- Pro bono support for Friends of Serenity, Nightsafe, Rossendale Rays
- 16 hours volunteering per employee, ensuring our community benefits.

Closing: The Viva Difference

In 2020, we chose to rewrite our story. Every decision since has been insight-driven, with purpose baked in — from leadership and client selection to a people-first culture. Insights to Impact isn't a slogan. It's our strategy.

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.