

Region: Yorkshire & Lincolnshire

Category: Outstanding Young Communicator

Name: Ellie Smith

Position: Senior Account Manager, Acceleris

Why I should win:

I am a dedicated, enthusiastic communications professional and have devised and delivered multi award winning campaigns incorporating media, events, crisis comms and social client campaigns to a complex client base including charities, national trade bodies and corporate clients.

In the past two years, I have been promoted three times, travelled to Munich, Germany to collect an international PR award for one of the campaigns I manage and helped numerous team members to develop and achieve their own goals.

I was once described as a 'safe pair of hands' and I pride myself on my ability to remain calm under pressure. I am approachable, friendly and people often comment on my calming presence within the office. At the same time however, I am fiercely ambitious and always strive for the best for my clients, whether this be strong press coverage or using innovative new media to deliver the best possible results.

What I've delivered for my clients:

- I managed the successful PR campaign to retain heart surgery at Leeds General Infirmary on behalf of client Children's Heart Surgery Fund securing regular national coverage and 600,000 signatures of support,
- I managed the crisis and reputation management campaign for the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) worth more than £100,000 to the agency to date. Positioning the client as the go to authority on industry issues. Coverage includes every national title and major broadcast outlets including Newsnight and BBC Breakfast,
- I managed the annual awards programme for the National Federation of ALMOs in 2013. The programme was entirely self-funded through Acceleris' sponsorship generation and therefore delivered at zero cost to the client,

- I devised and managed a strategic communications campaign to promote Acceleris as one of the leading agencies in Yorkshire. This included award entries, profile opportunities and a planned schedule of press releases. This ongoing programme and raised profile has led to numerous referrals and new business enquiries.

What I've delivered for the agency:

- I am currently managing a client portfolio worth £275,000 per annum including three of the agency's four biggest accounts,
- I manage the agency's biggest client, Kier Services delivering six figure annual fees,
- In 2014 alone, I have drafted successful new business proposals which have secured fees of over £40,000 for Acceleris with a further £20,000 to confirm over the summer,
- I closely monitor service delivery across my client portfolio addressing over servicing with clients. This close monitoring has allowed me to negotiate additional or increased fees on a number of my accounts.

My personal highlights:

- I managed the team which won Gold in the 'Issues and Reputation Management' category at the European Excellence Awards in Munich for my campaign for client NFFO, one of only a handful of winners from the UK,
- Since June 2012, I have received three promotions from account executive to senior account manager recognising my increasing responsibility for client accounts as well as junior members of the team,
- Two of the campaigns I managed (the European award and the successful campaign for the Children's Heart Surgery campaign) have been recognised directly with positive feedback from the agency's local MP, Andrew Jones.

Developing the team and the PRs of tomorrow:

- I manage the monthly Acceleris Academy's 'Food for Thought' programme designed to facilitate the sharing of best practice,

- I have develop junior members of the team including mentoring two account executives to take the step up to senior account executive and one to take the further step up to account manager,
- As the agency's social secretary, I arrange regular team nights out, team quizzes and team lunches,
- Through the Acceleris Academy's work placement scheme, I have been responsible for mentoring numerous sixth-form and undergraduate work experience candidates, providing guidance on how to enter the industry and teaching valuable transferable skills,
- I am a member of the Leeds University Alumni 'Leeds Network'. Through this role I provide regular advice and guidance to students considering a career in PR.

Continuous Professional Development:

Having completed a CIPR Advanced certificate in 2010, I have since been keen to continue to develop both my academic and working knowledge of all elements of the PR industry. In the past two years I have completed a number of training courses, both with professional bodies and through the 'Acceleris Academy'. These include:

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| • CIPR Creating a PR Strategy | • Public Affairs and Lobbying |
| • CIPR Account Management | • Social Media for PR |
| • PRCA Pitching to Win New Business | • Effective Networking |
| • Coaching Skills for Managers | • Advanced Copywriting |
| • Presenting with Confidence | • SEO for PR |
| • Account Profitability using Synergist | • Using LinkedIn for Business |

What people say about me:

"Ellie has demonstrated a level of commitment, insight and communications talent that belies her youth. We have repeatedly been impressed and delighted by the results she's delivered, as our messages have made it to the higher reaches of the national media. Ellie has been central to turning the tide of hostile commentary on our industry."

Barrie Deas, Chief Executive, The National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations

“Ellie possesses excellent skills across the entire communications mix and provides us with great knowledge and advice on delivering effective PR. Nothing is ever too much trouble for Ellie, especially when we need some ‘last minute’ help! She is great to work with, very approachable, consistently finds solutions and manages our account both professionally and effectively.”

Helena Royle, Partnership Communications Manager, Kier Services

“The only surprise I had on being asked to support this submission is that Ellie should be entering the ‘Young Communicator of the Year’ category. That is solely because on a daily basis she displays all the maturity, insight, intelligence, commitment and calm professionalism alongside an admirable dedication to client service that I would normally expect to see in a much older and more time-served individual. These impressive elements of Ellie’s client activities are complemented perfectly by the supportive and nurturing way in which she undertakes her responsibilities for mentoring younger members of staff within the agency.”

Peter Davenport, Managing Director, Acceleris

Recent Campaign – Turning the Tide for UK Fishing

Acceleris was appointed by The National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations (NFFO) to challenge the negative perceptions of UK fishermen and communicate a more balanced and informed view of this vital and much misunderstood industry in the mainstream media.

I managed an integrated communications campaign based on ‘fishing facts not fishing fiction’ which incorporated a 24 hour press office function, a high profile crisis communications project and a number of creative stunts utilising both new and traditional media.

The highly successful campaign has resulted in the NFFO achieving almost 650 press cuttings (equating to 1.75 pieces of coverage every day) reaching a potential audience of more than 197 million. The NFFO is now regularly approached for comment on fishing issues including by its once harshest critic, The Times and BBC Newsnight. NFFO membership fee income has increased by 8% since the campaign began.

The campaign, which delivered 3,865 OTS for every pound spent, has won a number of industry crisis, issues and reputation management awards including a European Excellence Award, CIPR PRide Award, PRCA Dare Award and PRCA Golden Hedgehog Award.