

**CIPR PRide Awards South of England & Channel Islands 2014
Outstanding Public Relations Consultancy - Liquid**

Executive summary

Liquid has offices in Jersey, Guernsey and the West Midlands. We began a season of sustained expansion in 2011, when Liquid established offices in the Channel Islands. The past three years have been the most successful in our ten-year history. During this time, we have won significant national accounts and conducted PR campaigns across the country, from the south coast to the north east of England. Our accolades in this period include:

- Winning both CIPR Excellence and CIPR PRide Awards (in both the (former) Wessex & Channel Islands region and in the Midlands);
- Winning more PRCA DARE Awards in 2013 than any other organisation;
- Winning regional consultancy of the year in the 2014 PRCA DARE Awards;
- Being the only agency outside of London to be shortlisted for the national PRCA Awards ‘Small Consultancy of the Year’ in 2013.

Our financial performance is the clearest indicator of our growth:

	2011/12	2013/14	Increase
Turnover	£880,842	£1,095,561	24.37%
PR fee income	£455,550	£791,632	73.77%
Profit	£21,408	£174,041	712.97%

To give context, Liquid’s PR fees rose by 28.5% year-on-year over the past year.

Corporate mission

“To serve our clients with integrity and build their brands through effective creative communications. To build a strong, reputable consultancy, staying loyal to our values and focusing on fulfilling our vision at all times.”

Date of incorporation, number of employees

Incorporated 19th April 2004 in the UK. Established Jersey/Guernsey offices in February 2011. 14 team members (10 FTE: 8.5 FTE fee earners). 3 of the 5 directors live in the Channel Islands.

Business objectives, performance against budget over the past three years

Our key financial metrics are to grow both fee income and profit by 30% year-on-year. *We are on course to achieve this in 2014/15.*

Liquid's focus is strong, sustainable growth and excellence in client services. We exceeded all financial goals over the past three years. Our priorities now are:

1. Building the team through recruitment/training/retention/motivation of talent.
2. Developing new business through client retention and acquisition.
3. Increasing profitability through excellent work and efficient processes.
4. Making a meaningful contribution to the wider PR industry.
5. Embodying and practising authentic CSR.

Our performance:

1. Strong commitment to training and remunerating at above-industry standards. Generous perks (e.g. our annual all-expenses-paid team weekend, this year on the beaches and in the bars of Jersey, with zip-wiring, sea kayaking and assault-coursing thrown in for good measure)! Membership of and commitment to both the CIPR and the PRCA.
2. Client retention levels (for PR retained clients) at 90%+ year-on-year. Almost half of our new clients come through word of mouth referral/endorsement.
3. Please see financials.
4. Our MD serves on the national CIPR Council and our CEO serves on the national PRCA management board. Our CEO was engaged by the Government Communications Service to conduct a *pro bono* review of regional communications in 2013 and is a trustee of the CIPR Benevolent Fund. Our MD is a visiting university lecturer, teaching both undergraduates and students of CIPR professional qualifications.

5. Our *pro bono* campaign for the redevelopment of Les Bourgs Hospice in Guernsey helped raise £4,000,000 and culminated in HRH Prince Charles becoming its Patron (his first Patronage in the island).

Recent achievements

Business wins in the past twelve months include:

- Six new clients in the Channel Islands in Q2 2014 alone;
- The national PR contract for Visit Birmingham and Meet Birmingham;
- The national PR contract for Bord Bia – The Irish Food Board;
- Being engaged as a partner for national PR work by one of the six agencies on the government's communications roster for work over £100,000 in value.

Our Jersey PR director, Lisa Downes, was the 2012/13 national CIPR Excellence Awards 'Outstanding Young Communicator' (after winning the same title in the Wessex & Channel Islands region the previous year).

Campaign example

Our campaign for private-equity backed Jersey-headquartered wealth structuring business, Hawksford, included the development of a 'thought paper' and its launch at the House of Commons. This was part of an integrated public relations and media relations plan which:

- Contributed to a 33% year-on-year increase in bottom line revenue;
- Resulted in Hawksford being named 'Trust Company of the Year' and winning five other international and national industry awards;
- Delivered a 275% increase in new business proposals logged;
- Won a CIPR PRide Gold in 2013 in the Wessex & Channel Islands region.

Total budget for the above:

- £20,000 for the thought paper (creation and launch);
- All PR activity carried out within a £5,000 a month retainer.

Client endorsements

"Liquid generates exceptional ideas and delivers against what it promises. The team share exciting, compelling concepts with us and contribute immeasurably to our sector exposure and differentiation, through their knowledge, contacts and creativity. Liquid is an extension of our team, having invested time in understanding our

business and its aims. They employ a focused approach, demonstrate excellent communications ability and always meet deadlines. They're a pleasure to work with."

Peter Murley, fmr. CEO, Hawksford

"Liquid has consistently offered wise counsel and provided superb PR consultancy on both strategic and tactical levels over the years. Their knowledge and experience of reputation management and crisis communications is second to none."

Canon David Bilton, CEO, Woodard Academies Trust

Overview of business strategy

Liquid's strategic goals before the end of the current financial year include:

- Growing fee income and profit as outlined above;
- Fostering the 'Liquid culture' based on our values, vision and mission. Staying true to our core values of integrity and authenticity;
- Strengthening regional offices and establishing a physical office in London.

What makes Liquid special as an employer?

We believe in cultivating an environment conducive to great work *and* fun. Liquid is committed to attracting, training, developing and retaining the best people. Five of the team hold equity in the business.

We pay for CIPR membership for all PR consultants and run a tailored CPD programme to encourage professionalism: team members are also working towards CIPR, PRCA and university postgraduate qualifications. Liquid aims to be a leader in flexible working, accommodating the working preferences of several mothers with young children, for example. We also provide frequent work experience opportunities and paid internships.

Liquid achieved a score of 96% in the PRCA Consultancy Management Standard, which rigorously assesses businesses against a range of criteria, including its strengths as an employer.

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