



**Category:** Outstanding Young Communicator

**Entrant:** Sarah Robertson ACIPR

**Company:** Orbit Communications

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**Demonstrate your commitment to professional development and your career growth :**

In the past two years I have gone from a recent graduate with no experience of the communications profession to achieving fast-tracked promotion to Account Manager.

I joined Orbit Communications as a Junior Account Executive in December 2015 after securing un-paid work experience for five weeks with two Edinburgh PR agencies. I progressed to Account Executive after six months and since April 2017, as a result of my performance and the responsibilities I have taken on, I have been working towards a set of stretch targets to gain accelerated promotion to Account Manager at the end of September.

Professional development:

- Joined CIPR in December 2015 and participate in CIPR's Continuing Professional Development programme (CPD):
    - o Completed CPD by February 2016, including E-learning activities on ethics, social media and the law, and crisis planning.
    - o Completed CPD for 2016/2017, including attending CIPR Scotland events (communicating for Scotland: an evening with John Booth and Ethics in PR) Google analytics and social media training with Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, and Scottish Politics Explained training with Holyrood magazine.
    - o Currently working towards 2017/2018 CPD, have set targets of Account Management skills, social media analysis, devising communications strategies and have already attended full day Mackay Hannah training on communicating with government. I am booked in for CIPR Account Management training – 22nd June 2017 (London).
- In December 2015, I set the target of being an Account Manager within three years and have well exceeded this, as I will reach that level in less than two. My new target is to reach Account Director level and achieve CIPR Chartered PR Practitioner status within three years; by the time I am 28.

**Outline your work-related achievements over the last two years and how they contribute to the wider industry:**

Since joining Orbit I have created and led numerous successful campaigns on behalf of a variety of clients achieving an array of positive, good quality coverage in national, regional, and local print and online media, as well as broadcast on BBC News, BBC Radio Scotland, and STV News.

Highlights:

- Responsible for a portfolio of between seven and nine clients worth approximately 1/6 of company turnover;
- Positioned myself as Orbit's social media expert, developed a social media audit and activity planner which I now use to run two clients' social media (this was a service previously not offered by Orbit);
- Identified a need within the company to develop a more robust way of evaluating activity and devised a new model to analyse coverage ranking it in terms of prominence, target publication, and key messages – this has now been adopted across the company;
- Led and executed the Saltire Society's 80th Anniversary programme communications, generating 215 pieces of coverage with a reach of approximately 16 million between January and November 2016, including broadcast on BBC News;
- Led and executed a campaign to promote Arts & Business Scotland's New Arts Sponsorship Grants Programme and launched their new Culture & Business Fund Scotland with Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism, and External Affairs Fiona Hyslop, achieving 50 pieces of coverage with a print circulation of over 350,000 plus widespread online reach;
- Selected to lead on the communications of a visit by the First Minister to one of our client's housing developments this July;
- Brought in and mentored a work place intern who is now following a career in PR and has secured further work experience in London;
- Pitched for and won new business, bringing in revenue of £8,000 over an initial three month period and resulting in a further contract with an approximate yearly revenue of £21,000;
- Worked with journalists to set up a number of interviews and case studies to complement a client's campaign for better access to child and adolescent mental health services, generating extensive coverage including on STV News and BBC News, and resulting in the issue being discussed on a number of occasions during First Minister's Questions;
- Self taught Photoshop skills to offer clients a better service and now do design work on behalf of clients to complement communications activities, such as for social media, newsletters, and blogs.

My passion for PR runs deep and when someone asks “but, what actually is PR” I ask them “why does X company/product have a good reputation?” It is this strategic crafting of a story that people who don't work in PR don't seem to understand, and whenever I have the opportunity, such as at networking events or when speaking to friends, I happily explain how and why PR is integral to the success of any business/organisation/product/service.

**Outline the biggest work-related challenge you've faced in the past two years, including details of what happened, how you overcame it and what you learnt from it:**

Since I began my career in PR I have found it challenging to differentiate myself and offer the best service to clients in a rapidly evolving and competitive sector. Initially, as my role is fast-paced, I found it difficult and time consuming being unable to do certain tasks myself, such as editing a website, and wanted to offer my clients more in terms of social media. To overcome this I have actively sought training opportunities (Google analytics, social media marketing) and taught myself new skills (Photoshop, WordPress) to provide an integrated PR, social, digital and marketing service to clients.

This has enabled me to fast-track my career and I have learned just how important it is to continually develop and learn new skills while staying on top of industry developments to provide the best possible service to clients.

**A summary of a campaign you are particularly proud of, including details of the brief, objectives, strategy, tactics, outputs, outcomes and budget:**

Saltire Society's 80th Anniversary: maximise opportunity for the Saltire Society to successfully deliver its 80th anniversary programme during 2016.

**Objectives**

- Increase profile and reach of the Saltire Society and its work during its 80th Anniversary Year;
- Maximise engagement and coverage of activities.

**Rationale/research/planning**

- Reviewed media activity for 2015: 121 clippings, reach 2.5 million, no broadcast;
- Specific events/awards to be used as media opportunities;

**Strategy & tactics**

- Launch event announcing 'Inspiring Scotland' investment of £50,000;
- Issued news releases, sold in opinion pieces to media;
- Stakeholder engagement to ensure participation of high profile individuals in various events, helping to broker high value media opportunities;
- Use of quality photography and audio to drive media and public engagement;

**Results**

- 215 clippings, reach of over 16 million;
- Broadcast coverage on BBC Reporting Scotland, BBC Radio Scotland, BBC Radio Shetland;
- 21 events delivered and promoted, over 1,500 people attended plus 3.2 million engaging online;
- Motion in Scottish Parliament recognising Saltire Society's Housing Design Awards, put forward by Tavish Scott MSP;

**Budget**

- Consultancy fee: £9,636 (monthly retainer £730 + VAT January to November 2016).