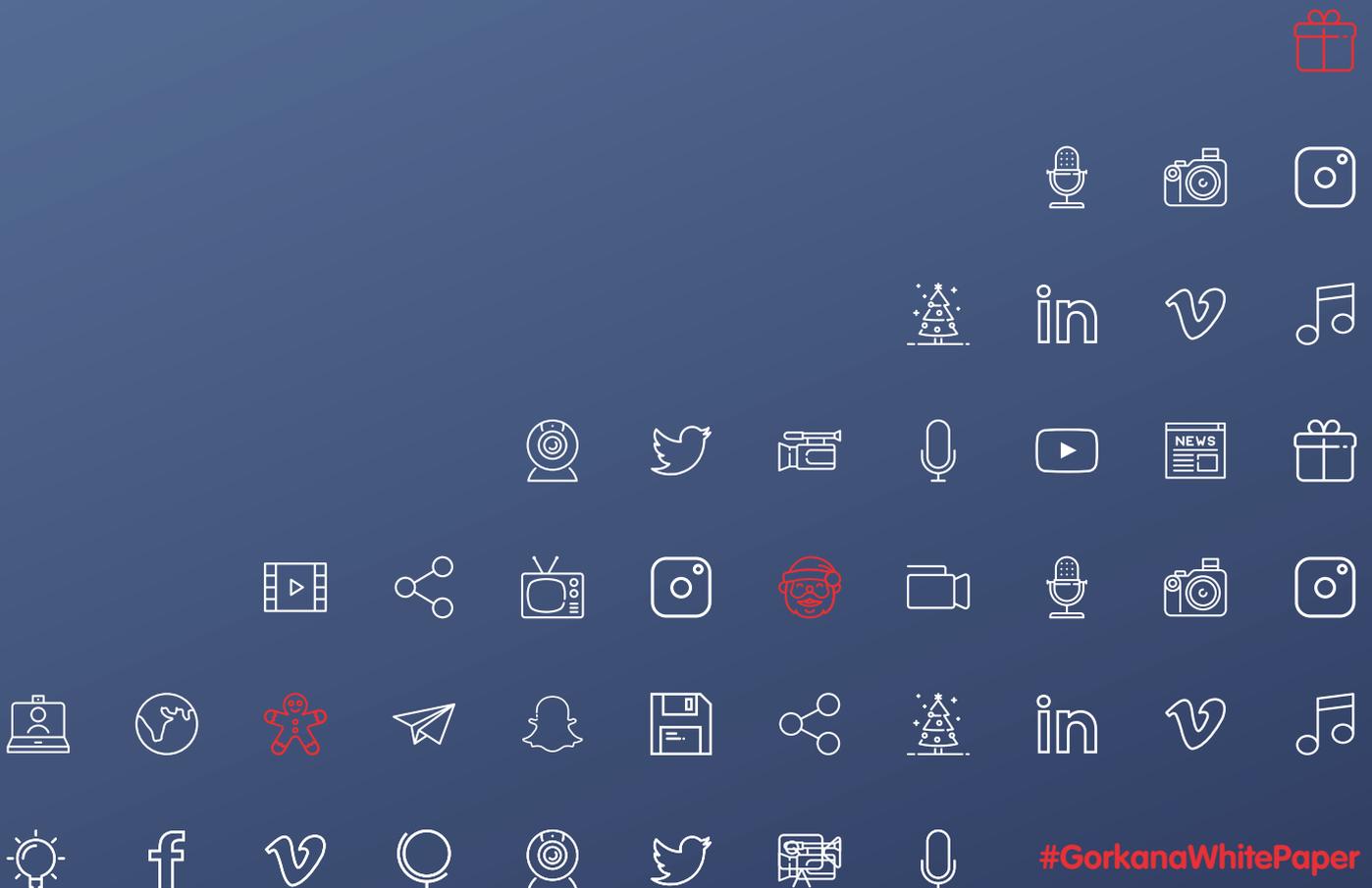


THE 2016 PR ROUND-UP

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR AND KEY
TRENDS FOR 2017





Summary



In a year that has seen an end to any form of dead-cert predictions, whether it be the EU referendum result or Trump's shock victory in the US presidential election, Gorkana's annual end-of-year PR round-up attempts to break forecasting's bad-luck spell, identify key learnings from the past 12 months, and reveal top tips for PR campaign success in 2017.



Covering everything from Gorkana News' most read in-house and agency news stories, media events, campaign highlights, analysis and top industry tips of the year, some of the most talked about industry figures of 2016 offer their thoughts on PR throughout the year and identify the trends that will have the most impact as we head into 2017.



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PR in 2016 - "disparate and defiant"

We asked some of this year's top industry performers to reveal their thoughts on what happened in PR this year.



Nik Govier
co-founder
Unity

Biggest Agency Winner
PRWeek Awards



Claire Foster
deputy head of news
Direct Line Group

In-house Pro of the Year
PRCA Awards



Damon Statt
creative director
Mischief

Agency Winner
Creative Shootout



Henry Playfoot
strategy director
Claremont

Winner
Suzy Spirit Award

In five words, describe the state of the PR industry in 2016:

"Disparate, desperate, disappointing, daring, defiant."
Nik Govier

"Evolving, exciting, challenging, integrating, influencing"
Claire Foster

"Evolving and positively embracing change"
Damon Statt

"In a state of flux."
Henry Playfoot



Damon Statt identified two of the biggest challenges that arose for the comms industry this year:
"Brexite" is an obvious one. Anything that destabilises our economy causes headaches for communications. The knock on effect through every comms line (investor relations, board comms, internal comms, corporate and consumer) is palpable. There's also the ongoing challenge of **demonstrating the effectiveness of PR** in meeting a brand's commercial objectives. This is why creative ideas need to be backed up by data-driven insight, and robust evaluation is vital to prove a campaign's success beyond pure coverage."



Gorkana identified Stunts, Visuals, Engagement and Data as four key PR trends going into 2016. Claire Foster looked into which proved right and which proved wrong:
"I think all of these have been proved right, and are all interlinked. The **Stunts** that worked well have been intrinsically related to the brand and comms objective. The ones that haven't are usually a stunt for stunts sake. **Visuals** really help with **Engagement** on social. We have found that the more videos and pictures we have on Twitter and Facebook, the better the engagement. Using **Data** for insights and evaluation have been paramount this year. It makes planning easier, campaigns more effective and you can demonstrate impact."



Henry Playfoot gave his thoughts on which brand won the comms battle for 2016:
"I think **Netflix** has done really well. It's made the move from technology platform to creative producer without a huge song and dance, and in the process become part of the lexicon. Its service, culture and comms are seamlessly integrated, which means I feel the brand on every level. That's where it's at for me."



Nik Govier was asked which brand she thought ran the best Christmas campaign for 2016:
"The lad that parodied the **John Lewis** ad before it even aired. Genius. He stole Christmas before it had even begin."

PR News highlights of 2016

The year was filled with the usual mix of people news, new start-ups, mergers, buyouts and expansions. Here are some of the highlights from Gorkana News over the last 12 months:

10 most read stories of the year

01.

Journalists revealed most irritating PR jargon

Journalists across the UK and US revealed the top 10 most annoying pieces of jargon they found in emails and press releases from PRs, with "reach out" and "growthhacking" topping the list, according to a poll conducted by **Houston PR**.



02.

Did Trump create the perfect PR campaign?

Back in July, Lord Sugar's former publicist, David Fraser, said Trump's campaign for the US presidency was arguably one of the greatest PR campaigns in recent years. Fraser, now MD of PR and SEO agency **Ready10**, said that when it came to communications, Trump's campaign was "poetry in motion".



03.

Former Hotwire and Deloitte duo launched tech start-up PR firm

Former Hotwire employee Amelia-Eve Warden (21) partnered with senior Deloitte associate Bethany Simpson (23) to launch London-based PR agency **P&C PR**, which, they claimed, made them the UK's youngest PR agency owners to date.



04.

Lord Bell resigned as chairman of Bell Pottinger

Lord Tim Bell stepped down as chairman of **Bell Pottinger**, 30 years after founding the agency, with plans to set up a strategic consultancy called Sans Frontières in 2017.



05.

The Cult directors opened a virtual reality agency

Charli Morgan and Matt Glass, directors of London PR agency The Cult PR launched a new virtual reality company, **Cultural Reality Co.**, to offer consultancy to journalists, media, PR and marketing businesses.



06.

Golin UK introduced unlimited staff holidays

Golin UK launched a "Life Time" scheme for its employees, featuring unlimited holidays, flexible working and enhanced paternity pay and maternity leave, which it said would help tackle diversity and the gender pay gap in PR.



07.

CNBC's Arjun Kharpal revealed why he wanted more Snapchat pitches from PRs

Since July, **CNBC's** international tech reporter Arjun Kharpal has been requesting pitches from PRs via Snapchat, which he said has had two key benefits: its cut email traffic down and he's received easier to understand pitches, as PRs have stuck to the key facts.



08.

Paul Charles launched The PC Agency and bought Angel Publicity

Richard Branson's former comms director launched a new travel PR agency, **The PC Agency**, and bought travel consultancy Angel Publicity, with its founder, Emma Cripwell, taking the helm as MD.



09.

How ABBA can guide you through Brexit's comms challenge

Bill Penn, chairman at **Aspectus**, claimed that ABBA's enduring pop hit, Knowing Me, Knowing You, perfectly describes how comms experts should communicate around Brexit. "Silence ever after" is, apparently, not the answer.



10.

FSB appointed BBC's Louise Stewart

The **Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)** brought in BBC political journalist Louise Stewart as head of comms and media.



In-house people news



Ryanair promoted Shane O'Toole (pictured) to head of investor relations from his role as an accountant on the airline's finance team, while **Monarch** appointed David Page to group head of comms. **Virgin Holidays** also named M&C Saatchi PR's Kelly Grindle as its PR lead.

Trainline appointed MSLGROUP London's Victoria Biggs as European director of comms. **London City Airport** brought in the Department for Transport's Andrew Scott as PR Manager.

Channel 4 has enhanced its press and publicity team with the internal appointments of Donna Mathews to group PR lead for content and programmes and Victoria Wawman to group PR lead for corporate and commercial.



Sky hired Gap's Catherine Hicks (pictured) to lead its corporate, consumer and internal comms, and the **FT** named Sacha Bunatyan as global B2C marketing director.

Goldman Sachs' Fiona Laffan joined **Lloyds Banking Group** as group corporate comms director, Teneo's UK's Richard Beck was appointed director of strategic planning and external relations at **Nationwide**, and Edinburgh City Council's Lesley McPherson became director of comms at **The Co-operative Bank**.

HSBC's former co-head of global comms, Charles Naylor, joined the **Confederation of British Industry** as corporate comms director.

Scottish Widows brought in Standard Life's Claire Burston as head of comms, **KPMG** appointed Zoe Sheppard as head of its press office, and **Colliers International** hired Hannah Zitren as UK PR manager.



Lastminute.com's Amanda Cumine (pictured) joined **First Utility** as corporate comms director, while Energy provider **OVO** brought in Dyson's Adam Rostom as chief marketing officer and named the Guardian's Katie Thompson as its new comms director. Abbie Sampson, head of news at Which?, is to join **Energy UK** as a director of external affairs at the start of the new year.

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company chose Harrods' Alistair Scott as its European PR lead, while fashion brand **Bally** brought in Michael Kors' Hannah Thomas as global PR manager. Online fashion site **Lyst** brought in Paddy Power's former head of PR, Rory Scott, as VP of comms.



Merlin Entertainments appointed Diageo's James Crampton (pictured) to the newly created position of corporate affairs director.

Debenhams promoted Hayley Betts to head of product PR. The department store chain also brought its PR activity in-house, with director of PR Christine Morgan heading up an expanded PR team.

QVC UK brought in Gant UK's Jayne Bristow as brand and comms director, and **UKTV** promoted its comms director, Zoë Clapp, to chief marketing and comms officer.



Just Eat chose Joanna de Koning (pictured) from McDonald's to take on a new role as global head of corporate comms. **Pernod Ricard** promoted its head of corporate comms, Aurélie Kane, to comms and corporate affairs director, while **Heineken** brought in Sainsbury's' Sophie Goodall as head of public affairs.

Crystal Palace Football Club appointed the FA's head of media operations, Joanne Budd, as head of PR and media relations.

TalkTalk named Sky's Coralie Frost as media relations manager and Nickelodeon UK's Maxine Sackey as consumer PR manager.



Online dating platform **eHarmony.co.uk** appointed LighterLife UK's Rachael Lloyd (pictured) as senior PR and comms manager.

BMG, the world's fourth biggest music publisher, hired music industry veteran Steve Redmond to run its worldwide comms activity. Former news journalist Anthony Barnes was appointed director of comms for lobby group **UK Music**.

The **Theo Paphitis Retail Group** brought in LIVING TV's (now SKYLIVING) former senior PR manager, Jess Littlewood, as head of PR.

Agency people news

Chime Communications named Diageo's former chief executive, Paul Walsh, as its new chairman, following the acquisition of Chime by WPP and US-based private equity group Providence Equity last year.



ITV's head of press, Tracey O'Connor (pictured), returned to **Pumpkin PR** as the agency's first MD. Prior to her three years at ITV, O'Connor was a director at Pumpkin.

Weber Shandwick promoted Emma Thompson and Lucie Harper to the newly-created roles of MD London operations and consumer, and MD London client experience and health, respectively.



DeVries Global enhanced the leadership team of its UK operation, **DeVries SLAM**, with the promotions of MD Helena Bloomer (pictured) to regional MD, Europe, and brand strategy lead Gemma Chaldecott to deputy UK MD.

WPP agency **Cohn & Wolfe** promoted its UK consumer marketing MD, Rebecca Grant, to head up the London-based WPP-owned agency as UK MD.

Blue Rubicon promoted Peter Fitch to MD, replacing Chris Norton, who joined **Facebook** as EMEA director of comms.



CNC appointed Tulchan's Tom Buchanan as joint managing partner, while **Lansons** promoted its director and head of change and employee engagement, Scott McKenzie (pictured), to joint MD. **Tulchan** hired David Cameron's former press secretary, Graeme Wilson, as a partner.

Barri Rafferty was named president of **Ketchum**, taking over from president and CEO Rob Flaherty, who became chairman and CEO. The agency's European CFO, Mark Hume was also named COO of Europe. David Gallagher, who was named partner and CEO, Europe, in 2011, adopted the title of president, growth and development, international at **Omnicom Public Relations Group**.

Hotwire's deputy MD, Matt Cross, was promoted to MD of the UK business, four years after joining the agency as a director.



Threepipe named FleishmanHillard Fishburn's former board director, Tracey Carey (pictured), as its first MD.

Triple S Group, the management group for Wayne Rooney, named the FA's former head of media, Mark Whittle, as MD of its newly-formed PR company, **Triple S Communications**.

Porta Communications appointed Steffan Williams, former partner at Finsbury and co-founder of Capital MSL, as group MD. Williams was also named the new chairman of the **PRCA**.



Cogent Elliott brought in Conservative politician Francis Maude (pictured) as non-executive chairman, and Bray Leino's former group CE, Bruce Hutton, as group chief executive.

Frankie Oliver, co-founder and former joint-MD of consumer agency Fever, joined **Nexus Communications** as MD.

From press to PR



Chris Blackhurst (pictured), former editor of The Independent, joined election strategist Lynton Crosby's political consultancy **Crosby Textor Fullbrook** as a senior executive.

Burson-Marsteller UK appointed The Times' former deputy business editor, Andrew Clark, as a director in its public affairs team.

The Sun's former associate editor, Chris Pharo, joined **72Point**, the PR arm of independent news agency group **SWNS**, as COO. James Clench, former head of news at The Sun, joined **PHA Media** as a senior consultant.



The Sun's former royal editor, Duncan Larcombe (pictured), was brought into **Zest** as a director.

London Luton Airport appointed BBC correspondent Neil Bradford as stakeholder comms manager.

Rebecca Smith, former medical editor at the Daily Telegraph, joined the **National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)** as head of media.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) appointed Bloomberg's European healthcare reporter, Makiko Kitamura, as comms officer for its Health Data Collaborative.



Pelican Communications hired Trinity Mirror's Jessica Beckett and former Blackpool Gazette senior reporter Joe Robinson (pictured) to drive the business and play a role in winning new accounts.

CNC brought in former BBC Breakfast presenter Dominic Laurie as a senior consultant within its London office.

Motor Sport editor Damien Smith left the magazine to take up an associate director role at automotive PR specialist **Influence Associates**.

Viva hired Alan Simpson, the former deputy editor of the Lancashire Telegraph, as a business development executive.



ITV News' former deputy editor, Richard Zackheim (pictured), was appointed as a media director at **Porter Novelli London**.

Former BBC journalist Jack Baine joined **Good Relations'** broadcast arm, Good Broadcast, as a consultant.

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby appointed the Mail on Sunday's religion and education correspondent, Jonathan Petre, to the newly-created position of head of media at Lambeth Palace.

The Morning Advertiser's managing editor, Mike Berry, joined **Fleet Street Communications** to take on the newly-created role of head of content.

Senior ITN broadcast journalist Tim Singleton was appointed director of comms for the **Department for International Development (DfID)**.

New agencies

Andy Coulson, ex-News of the World editor and a former Downing Street director of comms, joined forces with Pitch's chief executive, Henry Chappell, to launch corporate comms consultancy **Coulson Chappell**.



Brands2Life's Katie Buckett and Alex Pearmain (pictured) launched a new social and digital marketing consultancy, **OneFifty**, with backing from consumer brand agency **Hope&Glory PR**.

Bernard Ginns, business editor of The Yorkshire Post, set up **Branksome Partners** to provide comms advice to individuals, companies and organisations.

Former Claremont director Simon Francis launched **Campaign Collective**, a social enterprise to provide charities and not-for-profit organisations with affordable comms support.



M&C Saatchi PR's former global MD, Gary Wheeldon, and global executive creative director, Steve Strickland (pictured), launched a new London-based creative comms agency, **Talker Tailor Trouble Maker**.

Andy Giles Associates partner and former tech journalist Murdo Mathewson launched a new Hove-based consumer and B2B comms agency called **Ginger Dog Comms**, specialising in tech PR.

Handpicked Media founder Krista Madden joined forces with editor and journalist Emily Seares to launch a creative SEO agency called **We Elevate**.



David Fraser (pictured), former deputy MD of Frank PR and publicist for Lord Sugar, launched a London-based PR and SEO agency called **Ready10**.

Hanover Group launched **The Playbook**, a new creative comms agency led by Threepipe co-founder and former MD Eddie May.

Peter Ross, former MD and EVP of Weber Shandwick's EMEA tech practice, launched a content writing business **Ross Content Writing & Consulting**.

Former RMS PR director Pete Davies launched a new Manchester-based PR agency called **Sugar**.



Lisa Hunt (pictured), a former PR manager at Debenhams, opened a new PR and social media agency called **TWENTYTHREE PR**.

M&As



Next 15 acquired **Publitek**, as well as B2B creative technology marketing agency **Twogether** and tech PR agency **Pinnacle** (pictured: Next 15 CEO Tim Dyson), while Interpublic Group agency **Golin** bought creative agency **The Brooklyn Brothers**.

Digital marketing specialist **Attercopia Group** made its first foray into the PR market with the acquisition of Manchester-based **Label PR**.

Teneo integrated its entire UK strategic comms businesses, including Blue Rubicon, under the new name **Teneo Blue Rubicon**.

US PR firm **The Brandman Agency** launched a new UK office by merging with its London-based sister agency Beth Cooper PR, while **FWD Group** was acquired by two of its existing directors, Gug Kyriacou and Elliot Lane.



Zeno Group, sister agency of Edelman, acquired **3 Monkeys Communications** for an undisclosed figure (pictured: 3 Monkeys founder Angie Moxham), and The Academy merged with Shine Communications to form a new group called **The Academy**, with Shine becoming its consumer PR arm.

Healthcare comms specialist **Pegasus** was acquired by **UDG Healthcare** for £16.8 million, while **Four Communications Group** acquired healthcare comms consultancy **Packer Forbes** and retail specialist **Rain Communications**.

Threepipe bought performance marketing agency Spot Digital to enhance its natural search and SEO capability.

Speed Communications acquired PR and comms agency **The Splash Partnership** to expand its offer into the foodservice and hospitality sectors.



Food, drink and hospitality agency **William Murray Communications** changed hands after a management buy-out led by CEO **Anita Murray** (pictured).

Manifest London's co-founder, Alex Myers, took full control of the agency, as well as Manifest New York, following a deal that saw minority shareholders Nev Ridley and Shaun Beaumont sell their stake in the business for an undisclosed sum. Sister agency Manifest Communications, owned equally by Ridley and Beaumont, was renamed **ilk**.

Scottish PR agency **Clark Communications** acquired **Golley Slater Scotland** from parent company Golley Slater Group.

Weber Shandwick acquired **Flipside**, a specialised mobile and digital agency.

Accenture acquired **Kaper** owner **Karmarama**, one of the UK's largest independent creative agencies, for an undisclosed sum.

Campaign highlights of 2016

Rich Leigh, founder and director at Rich Leigh & Company, and creator of PRexamples.com, revealed six PR campaigns, both home and abroad, which really stood out for him this year:



Missing Type 2016

Client: NHS Blood & Transplant

PR Team: MHP/Engine

The wildly popular Missing Type campaign returned in 2016 with an international twist. In order to encourage more people to donate blood, As, Bs and Os disappeared from locations, brand names and media titles around the world.

As a result, more than 25,000 people across England registered to become new blood donors, and partner nations also saw huge spikes in year-on-year registrations.

Monopoly at the Square

Client: London Games Festival

PR Team: Indigo Pearl Group

In order to promote the London Games Festival, as well as the city as a game development hub, the festival organisers and a team of agencies launched a two-day event in Trafalgar Square.

A giant Monopoly board combined traditional and digital playing methods to represent the changing face of the gaming industry and London's role in that development.



Don't Look the Other Way

Client: Family Matters

PR Team: BBDO Group Russia

BBDO Group Russia and psychological aid centre Family Matters used YouTube's 360° video in a non-gimmicky and effective way to highlight the domestic violence challenge in Russia. In a culture that can encourage people to stay out of each other's business, the video implored viewers not to 'look the other way'.

Real Life HITMAN

Client: IO Interactive

PR Team: **Realm Pictures (film company)**

Video game producer IO and video film company Realm Pictures created a real life, interactive version of the latest instalment of the Hitman video game.

Through voice commands, players controlled a real life 'Agent 47' in a huge mansion filled with actors, items and objects, making strategic choices in order to reach, and kill, a fictional target, without being detected.



Nivea SunSlide

Client: Nivea

PR Team: **FCB Cape Town (advertising agency)**

The SunSlide, in South Africa's Cape Town, sprayed Nivea sun cream onto kids as they slid down. The campaign was a response to findings that South Africa has some of the highest skin cancer rates in the world.

Mike Barnwell, executive creative director at FCB Cape Town, said in a statement: "The Nivea SunSlide was a huge success, covering over 100 kids an hour."

LEGO Presents: A Gift for Imagination

Client: LEGO

PR Team: **iris Singapore**

In Taipei, Taiwan, LEGO handed all of its air time over to a little boy named Hsiao Feng, who felt that his hard-working father wasn't able to spend enough time with him. A video of Feng talking about his LEGO creation was broadcast from a huge screen on his father's commute home.

Kevin Hagino, senior regional brand manager, Southeast Asia at LEGO, said in a statement: "Our kids are all creative geniuses and we want parents and the world to see how amazing they are."



The best PR industry tips of the year

Throughout the year, leaders in the Gorkana community shared their top tips on how the PR industry could deal with a variety of issues affecting them – here are some of our favourites:

Inspiring creativity: How not to lose your “creative mojo” when setting out on a new PR campaign



Sophie Chadwick, account director

Peppermint Soda

- 01.** Have smaller sessions: Research by consultancy firm QSM found that smaller teams worked much more effectively than larger teams (up to five times faster). Having smaller sessions means that people feel less inclined to talk over each other and will listen more, therefore increasing the likelihood of a good creative session.
- 02.** Collaboration is the key to creativity: Bring influencers into your ideas generation sessions and you'll find that with new thought processes, you'll have more perspectives at your disposal. You never know, these perspectives may bring something to the table that nobody else had managed to think of.
- 03.** Put yourself in the mind of the audience: In any campaign, it's essential that you take the time to really consider who the intended target audiences are. What will they be watching, listening to and reading? This is where you need to focus your energy.
- 04.** Have fun when it comes to the campaign: It doesn't have to be a massive commitment, but having a more fun and positive working environment will really help to boost how hard your team works. Occasional games and fun activities, or even regular social events, will help people to bond with one another and will also have a huge impact on creative ideas.

Getting your team up to scratch on digital



Andrew Laxton, EVP and MD (Europe and Asia)

Racepoint Global

- 01.** Work with your HR Department(s) to develop structured L&D programmes that teach the fundamental building blocks of digital engagement such as wireframe architecture, SEO and WordPress.
- 02.** Study the behavioural patterns of conventional and non-conventional influencers, their psychology, how they consume information and the impact they have on your client's audience.
- 03.** Broaden your approach to creative ideation and re-purpose engaging content to map with your influencers on the channels they engage verbally, visually and emotionally.
- 04.** Never stop learning. Increase your own brand value and the value you provide your clients by understanding the fundamentals of managing digital projects, graphics design, video production and editing, web design, SEO and SEM.

The essential ingredients for a good CEO / comms director relationship



Kate McFerran, partner

Westbourne Communications

- 01.** Have regular meetings – ideally daily and no less than once a week – to provide formal and informal updates on the major issues of the day along with management priorities on big picture issues.
- 02.** Be accessible for unscheduled conversations, no matter how inconvenient. However don't rush in with offers to 'fix' problems – offer an opinion and talk through the options as a source of good advice.
- 03.** We all enjoy praise when we do well, and providing positive reinforcement is key when the CEO does something that contributes to, say, improvement to the corporate reputation or increased employee engagement.
- 04.** When disagreeing with your CEO, discuss the pros and cons of alternative approaches and make your best recommendation. You may both still disagree, but demonstrating you want to identify a winning solution shows you are loyal to the achievement of the CEO's priorities.

Ethics in the PR industry: four top tips to ensure that high standards are met and upheld



Claire Walker, CEO

Firefly Communications

- 01.** Trust your instincts for what seems right and wrong: PRs usually have finely-honed gut instincts and when it comes to ethics, your first reaction is usually right.
- 02.** Once you have checked your internal barometer: Think carefully about the repercussions of your actions. Remember that while you represent the client, you also represent the PR agency itself, the industry and future client relationships.
- 03.** Ensure that your team is also aware of the code of ethics: Challenge them with dilemmas and carry out 'pre-mortems' on client situations to be fully prepared. This is also great for team building and mutual understanding.
- 04.** Keep learning: We talk daily about how PR is an ever-changing industry and one in which you'll never be bored. But this also means that we have a responsibility to respect PR industry standards and adhere to them consistently.

Three reasons why PR is performing so strongly



Scott Wilson, EMEA MD and UK CEO

Cohn & Wolfe

- 01.** The co-existence of two core business drivers. Engaging stakeholders and the increasing need to protect brand reputation. Cohn & Wolfe refers to this as 'promote and protect' and says it is a strength of its business.
- 02.** Brands and businesses increasingly recognise the importance of authentic and engaging content, whether it is delivered via paid, owned or earned channels. An earned-first mind-set is fundamental to our DNA and our success has persuaded marketers to look at modern PR in a fresh light.
- 03.** Clients are increasingly demanding digital content and creative technology solutions. The best PR agencies are comfortable with integrated work, have invested in the new skills and capabilities, and are able to play a leading role within integrated agency and client groups.

The 2017 Suzy Spirit Award

The awards, now in their fourth year, have been developed in memory of one of the PR and communications industry's brightest young stars.

HONOUR SOMEONE EXCEPTIONAL

We are looking to honour two trailblazers who display the same qualities as Suzy did - integrity, strength of character and leadership.

Nominate now in one of our two new categories for 2017:

- **THE SUZY SPIRIT INSPIRATION AWARD**
- **THE SUZY SPIRIT RISING STAR AWARD**



The awards are **easy** and **free** to enter. Just visit the website suzyspiritaward.gorkana.com for more information about award criteria and to nominate someone you admire.

The ceremony will take place in London in March 2017, and all nominees will be invited with their nominator to the event.

Entry deadline is **23 December, 2016**

Nicola Green, Director of Communications and Reputation, O2, winner 2015

Rosie Warin, CEO, Kin&Co, winner 2014

Henry Playfoot, Strategy Director, Claremont Comms, winner 2016

NOMINATE SOMEONE YOU ADMIRE TODAY

suzyspiritaward.gorkana.com
[@suzyspiritaward](https://twitter.com/suzyspiritaward)

suzyspiritaward@gorkana.com

Insight & Analysis

2016 saw the Gorkana community speak out on what has driven the biggest changes in PR this year, from trends in social media, to how the modern newsroom has sculpted the PR/journo relationship, to the impact of Brexit and the US elections. Here are some highlights of Gorkana's News Analysis and Opinion over 2016.

Politics, politics, politics

Brexit and the US election led to an uncertain year and an even more uncertain global future. In response, a selection of PRs revealed their strategy for dealing with new beginnings. Kitty Perry, CEO at financial PR consultancy **Templars Communications**, advised that comms professionals would need to align messaging, manage external comms and remember that internal comms would be equally important.

Bill Penn, chairman at **Aspectus**, drew on ABBA's pop hit, Knowing Me, Knowing You, to describe how comms pros should approach an

uncertain future post-Brexit. He said 'silence ever after' would not be the answer, and customers and staff would want to know what businesses thought about Brexit.

Lord Sugar's former publicist David Fraser (now MD of **Ready10**), forewarned readers that Trump may have created 'the perfect PR campaign' as early as July, due to his consistency of message, use of simple language and ability to generate talking points across publications worldwide.

Nina Sawetz, head of editorial at **BOTTLE**, described how Trump's success revealed that "influencers" no longer had the ability to influence. Celebrities,

from Beyonce to Elton John, took part to promote presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, but in the end she didn't win the race.



The PR / journalist relationship

Titles including The Times, Quartz and Business Insider claimed they all introduced a more fluid way of working, with traditional aspects of the newsroom, such as fixed editorial meetings, publication times and beats, taking on a more dynamic nature. So when it came to pitching to the modern newsroom, comms professionals from **Ketchum**, **Mischief** and **LEWIS** advised that PRs should think across platforms, lean on established relationships with journalists and add creativity to their pitches.

'Robot' reporters were big news, as the Press Association, The Washington Post and Bloomberg all turned to automation for covering financial results and sports events. Comms professionals from **Hill+Knowlton**, **PrettyGreen** and **Red Lorry Yellow Lorry** described how this would give PRs the opportunity to pitch more creative, intricate and data-led stories.

'Good news' was said to be on the rise across titles from the Guardian to The Huffington Post, as editors agreed that positive spin created more engagement from readers. **BOTTLE**, **Polygon PR** and **PHA Media** reported that the trend had created new opportunities for clients, particularly in the charity sector. The agencies said case studies with a 'happy ending' were increasingly sought after.

Social media

While live video has taken the world by storm, through apps such as Snapchat and Facebook Live, comms professionals from **Golin**, **TVC** and make-up brand **Benefit** described the complex dynamic this creates for PR. All three agreed that live video can add brand value for clients by giving their audiences a 'front row seat' that is grittier and less polished. But, this naturally takes some balancing when it comes to media relations.



Choosing which social media tools are right for clients can be a difficult task, but **Hotwire PR** challenged 'the myth that Facebook isn't a channel for B2B comms'. The agency showed that out of 1000 business decision makers, 24% said Facebook was their preferred social channel when seeking information on a purchasing decision.

PRs responded to a host of changes on Twitter – one of the industry's favourite comms tools. From the platform's latest campaigns to platform tweaks, comms professionals gave a verdict on how this would impact their work. PRs particularly welcomed Twitter's new 140 rules, which now allows users more space for interaction, with pictures and '@names' are no longer considered a part of the word count.

Big events

PRs from **Four Communications**, **Ketchum**, **Instinctif**, **Calacus PR** and **Stripe Communications** put in their favourite PR moments, including Olympics 2016, which featured Big David Katoatau's celebratory dance to draw attention to climate change impacts on Kiribati, as well as Nikki Hamblin helping Abbey D'Agostino up after they collided in the 5,000 metres race.

While news of the Great British Bake Off facing new challenges in the hands of Channel 4 was high on the news agenda, the anticipated series brought a host of branding opportunities for clients. Chris Baldwin, director of consumer programmes at **Protravel**, suggested five ways PRs could take part, including joining the #GBBO conversation on Twitter and partnering with well-known contestants.

Closer to home, the **PRCA's** DG, Francis Ingham discussed why Cannes 2016 would not be remembered with pride after only five of 84 PR Lions were awarded to PR agencies. For better future performance, Ingham suggested that PRs would need to improve submissions, redefine the perception of PR and embrace proper evaluation methods.



Growth and Challenges

According to the **PRCA**, the industry was estimated to be worth 34% more compared to 2013. While PR has grown by 10% every year since then, challenges remain for equal pay among men and women, diversity and salary intake.

Firefly Communication's CEO, Claire Walker, remarked that PR is moving from its 'most hated' professional image. But, to embed this view she urged the industry to adhere to a code of ethics for the future health of the business.



Oskar Yasar, managing partner at **Broome Yasar Partnership**, described how communication skills were increasingly becoming valuable among chief executives. According to a report by the consultancy, one third of a chief executive's time is spent communicating, and a growing proportion of future leaders will learn these skills from periods of employment in corporate affairs or communications.

Top media relations tips from the best of this year's Gorkana media briefings

Every year, Gorkana's exclusive media briefings offer PR and comms professionals the opportunity to network with editors and journalists, who provide an insight into how major titles work and what PRs can do to build relationships with their editorial teams. With more than 30 briefings under our belts this year, we've drawn out eight easy-to-remember tips on how best you can pitch to the press in 2017.



Keep your pitch simple

"If I don't understand what the story is about in three seconds, it's straight in the bin", says **The Sun's** deputy travel editor, Matt Hampton. "Don't try and be clever. We know you're clever – don't try and be smart with wordplay. We'll sort all that out later."

"If you have something to pitch, make your email really simple. Don't make it gimmicky, and be sure to send it to the person who is covering the issues you're trying to hit," says **BuzzFeed's** head of buzz, Tabatha Leggett.

Make sure your pitch is useful

"Be confident when pitching," recommends the **Huffington Post's** UK editor-in-chief, Stephen Hull. "Know that you've got something useful for us, keep respect and don't plead for our help. We need you as much as you need us."

CNBC International's news editor, Katrina Bishop, says: "If, for whatever reason, you won't give us the first interview, then unfortunately we will have to turn you down. There's no sense of animosity there, and we usually use that as a springboard to when we can next speak, but if you want the person on CNBC that day, it has to be a first."



Know when to pitch

At **What Car?**, there is a daily 9:30am news meeting, where the team works out what's being worked on that day and the next, says editorial director Jim Holder. There is also a daily newsletter that reaches 150,000 readers each day. It goes out early in the morning on weekends so people can read it when they wake up. During the week it will be published at around 4pm to catch commuters on their way home.

One advantage of being a digital native, says the **International Business Times UK's** editor-in-chief, John Crowley, is that deadlines, in the traditional sense, are almost defunct. News distribution on IBT UK happens in real time. Therefore, PR professionals need not feel limited by narrow windows of opportunity when pitching stories or ideas.



Don't neglect the human element

The **Daily Telegraph's** group business editors, James Quinn and Ben Wright, say that a story always has to be told, "through people", because, "people relate to people".

Don't send generic or irrelevant press releases to the team, says **talkSPORT's** national radio controller, Liam Fisher. "It's a sports station with an 80% male audience - your press release about National Menopause Awareness Day isn't going to be of interest."

Make your pitch stand-out

As a one-man team, **The Sun's** City page editor, Rhodri Phillips, is stretched for time. But, he said: "I do read the first four or five words of every email." Just like the paper, Phillips asks that PR professionals tell a complicated story in a simple way, and get the message across in the subject line of an email if possible.

Sport editor Tony Hodson is after stories with added value - they will always spark interest. This could be an interview with a big football star and offering a competition to readers to go and meet the team.



Demand for video content is growing

The team at **Huffington Post** is creating "more video content than ever", and currently gets 16 million video views a week on Facebook. It's an important format, but has to be used tactically, says editor-in-chief Stephen Hull.

The team at **International Business Times** would rather receive unedited film than film that is overproduced. "We don't mind if it's unvarnished and in the form of rushes, we can build something out of that."

Bring value through access

"If you can bring the CEO of an interesting firm to meet us for coffee or lunch, then that's going to be very valuable," said the **Wall Street Journal Europe's** EMEA editor, Thorold Barker.

The team at **NME** says it couldn't survive without PRs. "We rely on PRs to let us know about exciting new things", says editor-in-chief Mike Williams. But the most important thing to remember is access.

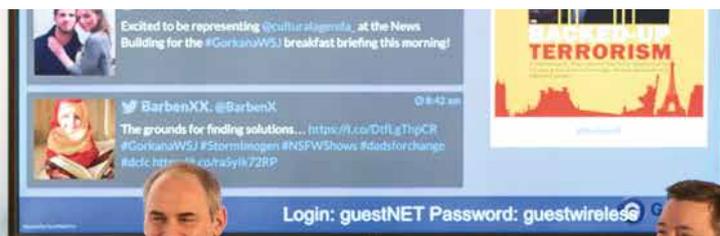
Media brands are increasingly open to branded content

City A.M. has launched a third party content platform, City Talk, which allows brands to produce content and publish it directly onto the newspaper's CMS. The paper's editor, Christian May, says: "It's not news, but it is expertise, and it is insight." He argues that this approach actually encourages transparency because the commercial content does not, in any way, purport to be editorial.

Much of **The Economist's** video content is prepared in advance, and, according to The Economist Films president, Nicholas Minter-Green, there will be an opportunity for brands to be involved in sponsored video content.



Wall Street Journal Europe



A man with a beard, wearing a dark jacket, is leaning over a table and looking at a tablet. In the background, other people are seated at the table, and a woman is standing. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an office or meeting room at night.

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PR trends for 2017

In a bid to break forecasting's habit of getting it wrong in 2016, we asked some of the top industry performers of the year to identify trends they think PRs should be aware of going into 2017:

"The **search for meaning** in all the madness (fuelled by the Brexit fall out and a potential mad man in the oval office), **continued tech** and **real world convergence**."



Nik Govier · co-founder · Unity

"Consumers' interest in purpose-driven brands could lead to more **brand-led movement making** – people coalescing around big issues to drive social change on a local, national and even international scale. This means brands have to think even more carefully about creating campaigns that **connect deeply with people's humanity** rather than just their functional needs. And **personal data** – our right to control the data we generate through search, social and consumption – will emerge as a fundamental issue for the whole communications industry."



Henry Playfoot · strategy director · Claremont Communications

"Technology – not just VR and AR (with the former finally appearing in a less gimmicky form), but the **development of AI** is very exciting for our industry. The ability to digest and manage big data will lead to greater insights and understanding, and ultimately better campaigns and ideas.

While media, news and reputation will always be at our core, our ability to **drive behaviour change** through connecting communities has seen a new type of brief coming into PR agencies.

Digital natives are increasingly bypassing traditional outlets altogether. Consumers are increasingly accessing their news and information through social media, with bloggers, vloggers and online personalities influencing their purchasing decision ahead of traditional reviews and the like. This shift will only increase in the next few years."



Damon Statt · creative director · Mischief

"I think **diversity** will play a big part in business. It's been talked about enough, we now need to walk the walk. There are some big changes on the horizon with gender pay gap reporting and diversity in the boardroom.

"I think it's been fascinating to see brands such as the FT and Economist use channels such as Instagram. It will be interesting to see how this develops next year. **Visuals**, whether video or stills, are a must.

Technology will play a big part in our campaigns next year. From Connected Homes and driverless cars to virtual reality. We are pushing the boundaries of creativity with campaigns such as #FleetLights, whilst remaining true to our brand and business objectives."



Claire Foster · deputy head of news · Direct Line Group



Conclusion



If 2016 has taught us anything, it's that we now live in an unpredictable environment. Yet, throughout this tumultuous year, PR has revealed its steadiness on many occasions suggesting a bright future for the industry.



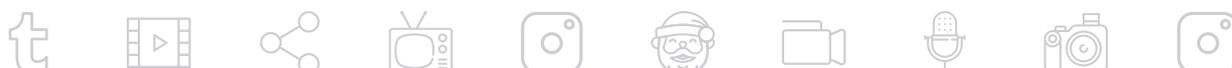
PR has seen growth and is said to be worth 34% more compared to 2013, according the PRCA. Marketing leaders, such as WPP, have highlighted that public affairs and PR are the strongest performers for revenue in their businesses, and M&A deals in the global PR sector have risen.



There is no doubt that there are some big challenges yet to arrive, but when it comes to the impact of Brexit, the imminent Trump presidency or rapidly advancing tech, the basic rules remain the same; keep calm, stay authentic and keep your message consistent.



Besides, there is plenty to look forward to. This year's most successful comms leaders have noted that new ways of managing big data, increased use of visuals and connected technologies will be particularly exciting developments for their campaigns and beyond in 2017.



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www.gorkana.com/news

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