

# revolve

autumn 2011

*Strategic Future  
of PR*

Public Relations By Numbers

The Road Ahead

# MIPAA

Motor Industry Public Affairs Association Limited



mipaa.com



@mipaa



LinkedIn group

Company Number: 5612938

Registered in England

## PR = Professional Reputation?

There's a growing sense in the PR community that the digital revolution (including social media) is bringing our profession to centre stage in the boardroom, both in-house and with clients. But is that a good thing?

At the recent MIPAA PR Masterclass, Fiat's Richard Gadeselli suggested PR's role at the most senior level is more akin to court jester; where the ability to tell the truth without fear or favour is something other business functions cannot have because of their vested interests. Meanwhile the PRCA's CEO identified a need to focus more on business results than communications activity and attract the best talent. You can read more in the Masterclass report elsewhere in Revolve – with special thanks to Jon Zammett and the Audi team for hosting this key event in the MIPAA calendar.



Equally important are opportunities for MIPAA members to network and in 2011 we've held social events @Geneva and @Goodwood with @Frankfurt planned for September; kindly hosted by SEAT.

Another new initiative is our regular Hub email. Informal feedback suggests this has been an interesting and helpful addition. We welcome your input with suggestions of content you feel would be valuable.

Our training and development programme has been well attended this year with a 100% recommendation rating. As part of our Autumn-Winter schedule, we're planning an Olympic seminar giving you insight into this once in a lifetime opportunity, an evaluation clinic, a new Leadership Development programme and, not forgetting the popular Christmas lunch.

As well as details of forthcoming events, this edition of Revolve contains several features by MIPAA members and a Backseat Q&A with Top Gear's Paul Horrell, who shares his pet PR hates.

Finally, we report on the annual MIPAA members' survey and the first PR Census, revealing the value and challenges of working in the £7.5 billion PR industry.

I hope you've had a great Summer and on behalf of the MIPAA board we look forward to seeing you at one of our Autumn events.

**Al Clarke, Chairman, MIPAA Limited**  
al@alclarke.com

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**Editorial and advertising contact details:**  
**Heather Yaxley**, General Secretary, Motor Industry Public Affairs Association Limited, Registered Office: Little Grange, Church Street, West Grimstead, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 3RE. Email: hyaxley@supanet.com. Telephone/fax/messages: 01722 711295. Company Number: 5612938. Registered in England.

VAT Number: 883 9635 65

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**Designed by:** Mark Oliver Design  
01293 852525

**Published by**

newspress

www.newspress.co.uk

# MIPAA News

Update on events, plans, members



## Double MIPAA membership



MIPAA is launching a bid to double its membership for 2012 with an innovative 'buy-one-get-one-free' offer.

"The idea is that each of our existing members will be able to invite a contact to join MIPAA totally free of charge for the remainder of 2011," explains membership director, Mike Orford.

"This can be a friend, work colleague or other contact working in motor industry PR or communications. The only rule is that free membership is available exclusively to new joiners."

"It's a 'try before you buy' approach to enable new members to enjoy the benefits of MIPAA, with our aim being that they will renew for 2012."

Members should direct their chosen contact to complete the application form at: [www.mipaa.com/join-mipaa](http://www.mipaa.com/join-mipaa) - providing their name as sponsor.

*All membership applications are subject to approval by the Executive Committee under the company's terms and conditions.*

## Consultancy project

Consultancy and freelance members will be offered an opportunity to publicise their services on the MIPAA website under new plans being examined by MIPAA finance director, **Nick Perry**. Any thoughts on how the site could better support members in promoting their expertise in motor industry PR should be sent to [Nick.Perry@porsche.co.uk](mailto:Nick.Perry@porsche.co.uk)

## Hub goes live

Following the success of The Hub, MIPAA's digital PR enews – we're going live this Autumn with a new monthly Twitter #Hubchat session. Details of timing, topics and how to get involved will be announced shortly via @mipaa on Twitter.



## On the move

**SMMT** has moved to a new base at 71 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2BN (all telephone numbers and email addresses remain as before).

**PFPF Communications** has a new address – The Drying Loft, Turkey Mill, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 5PP – again all individual contacts remain the same, with the main line 01622 691361.

In Dubai, **James Thomas** is now responsible for GM Marketing and Corporate Communications at Arabian Automobiles, whilst Jason Simms has joined the Ketchum team there as Account Director.

**Members changing jobs, contact details, etc should inform the general secretary of their current information via [hyaxley@supanet.com](mailto:hyaxley@supanet.com)**

## Welcome to new members

**Alan Bishop**, industry relations director, HPI Ltd

**Julie Clare**, managing director, Clear Communications Ltd

**Carly Escritt**, press officer (press fleet) at Kia Motors

**Tim Gearey**, managing director, Golley Slater PR [@TimGearey]

**Phil Heighway**, joint managing director, Broadley Heighway Associates Ltd

**Georgina Keith**, press office assistant, Kia Motors

**Uygar Kilic**, Masters student

**Katy Pearce**, placement student at Nissan GB

**Ben Schofield**, communications manager, IAM

### Returning members

**Craig Carey-Clinch**, managing director, Rowan Public Affairs Ltd

**Terry Steeden**, Product and motorsport PR, Nissan GB

See [www.mipaa.com/wheelspin](http://www.mipaa.com/wheelspin) for details of the latest joiners and a link to the MIPAA LinkedIn group.

## Top of the class

Chairman, **Al Clarke**, is keen to boost MIPAA's relationships in the higher education sector this Autumn. He is establishing a working party to look at how MIPAA can:

- showcase careers in motor industry PR to those studying at University;
- endorse or develop credible, relevant academic qualifications for members;
- raise the profile of MIPAA's JobSearch service among graduates, advisors and recruiters;
- support undergraduate PR students choosing to base their final year dissertations on topics relating to motor industry communications;
- ensure all placement students working with MIPAA members are aware of the opportunity to enjoy two years free membership as an Associate member.

**Members interested in joining the working party should contact [al@alclarke.com](mailto:al@alclarke.com).**

**Placement students wishing to join MIPAA without charge should submit an application form at [www.mipaa.com/join-mipaa](http://www.mipaa.com/join-mipaa).**

## Bristol book launch



MIPAA director and general secretary, **Heather Yaxley**, becomes a first-time author with the publication of the 4th edition of The Public Relations Handbook edited by **Alison Theaker** and published by Routledge. She joins long-standing member, **Peter Brill**, who co-authored the chapter on Not for Profit Public Relations in the 3rd and 4th editions.

Heather has written chapters on Risk, Issues & Crisis Management and Digital PR in the new book which has a launch in Bristol on 1 September. She is now working on a chapter providing a PR perspective on Promotional culture in a convergence era and authoring The PR Toolkit, a new "how-to book with brains" with practitioner, author, academic and small-business coach, Theaker, both to be published in 2012.

# PUBLIC RELATIONS BY NUMBERS

## MIPAA members work harder but are better rewarded than the average PR practitioner

The 2011 MIPAA membership survey reveals some interesting findings, particularly when compared to the the inaugural, national PR census. The gender balance in MIPAA is the exact opposite to the wider industry; with motor industry PR practitioners roughly a decade older, meaning you've also worked in PR for longer.

MIPAA members average a higher salary and one in five received a year on year increase of more than 10 per cent. Three-quarters report feeling well rewarded with benefits outpacing those offered to other PR professionals.

You also clock up longer hours with 74% of MIPAA members working 30-50 hours, the rest spending even more time on the job – that includes working regularly during lunch breaks, evenings, holidays and weekends. No wonder time limitation is a big concern, along with budget issues, expanding media and the pressures of social media (SM). On the plus side, you rate working in a good team, for companies with a good reputation and undertaking challenging work.

The PR Census shows online communications are increasingly important and MIPAA members agree. Two-thirds of you use SM every day to monitor online coverage and post updates. Not only are you connecting with journalists and professional colleagues, but increasingly with the general public. Nearly three-quarters of you spend up to 10 hours a week with one in fifteen engaged for twice as long in SM

SM is viewed as enhancing PR practice by more members than last year (80% vs 66%); with 82% believing it should be your department's responsibility. More organizations are monitoring the effect of SM, although fewer members reported evaluation was being undertaken. One final point is that around 9 out of 10 of you recognise a need to improve your skills and knowledge of SM – something MIPAA is dedicated to supporting through the Business Academy training.



## National census data proves value of PR



*Francis Ingham, CEO of the PRCA, explains the importance of the first ever PR Census, undertaken in collaboration with PR Week:*

The 2011 PR Census provides answers to the most basic and fundamental questions about our industry – how much it is worth; how many people it employs; what those people do; their backgrounds, education and reward. It has always struck me as absurd that our industry, displaying such self-confidence and vibrancy, should also display such ignorance about itself. Until you know the composition of your industry after all, how can you possibly plan for the future or provide leadership?

That is why the PRCA and PR Week joined with market research company Harris to survey the industry; generating over 1,300 responses, and triangulating the insight gained against ONS

data and the PRCA Benchmarking Report 2010. The figures presented in the Census are robust, comprehensive and intelligent.

The big numbers are: UK PR generates £7.5 billion (a very large amount of money by anybody's standards), and employs 61,600 people, across agencies, in-house teams and freelancers. Roughly twice as many people work in-house as in agency or freelance roles.

Those people are well paid. The average salary is in excess of £48k, with a significant proportion of the industry earning six-figure sums. Broadly speaking, in-house employees earn the most and freelancers marginally the least.

Our industry is highly-educated; with only around one in ten lacking a degree. That is something of which we are mindful as the PRCA launches a partnership programme to create a formal relationship with a number of select of universities, the better to serve our industry and its future employees and leaders.

It is also a female industry – women comprising close on two thirds of participants. Women do tend to earn less with

a definite difference at the top of the ladder. That is an issue that we should examine and consider objectively and in-depth. There might be logical reasons for that discrepancy. There might not. But either way, it is one of the issues under consideration by the PRCA Access Commission.

It is also a white, normally white British industry. Over 90% of the workforce is white – close on 90% is British. Again, that is a statistic our Access Commission will reflect upon.

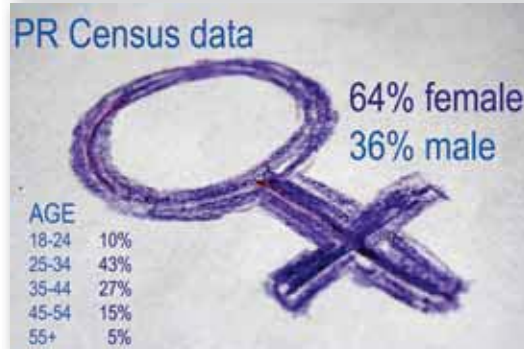
A few final statistics. Ours is a geographically unbalanced industry. London enjoys a massive predominance, perhaps reflecting its role as one of only two global hubs of PR excellence. But again, we will investigate these figures in detail, as we undertake our series of Regional PR Summits across the UK.

It is also a hard-working industry. The average PR professional works over 46 hours a week – despite being contracted for only 37. And broadly speaking, the more senior you are, the longer the hours you work.

Finally, the Census tells us a great deal about how the industry performed over the downturn, and how its practitioners expect it to perform as the economy recovers. Here we see good news. Despite the worst economic circumstances for a generation, our industry still grew – and in some areas of specialism grew markedly. And when asked how they expect the industry to perform going forward, an overwhelming sense of optimism pervades our industry.

So how to sum up? Well, knowing the make-up of our industry is an absolute prerequisite for leading it. And I am delighted that PR Week and the PRCA – of which MIPAA is, of course, a sectoral group – have taken on that leadership role. The Census provides a wealth of data that all practitioners should grab, examine, and deploy. Its headline figures are profiled in this piece, but the whole data can be obtained at: <http://www.prweek.com/go/prcensus/>

The results offer a fantastic overview of a British success story – highly paid, highly educated, set for strong growth going forward. That is something can justifiably take pride in.



**Karen Parry,**  
*Managing Director,*  
*PR and Media Works*

## Dashboard

### What is your general speed for life?

Top Gear, sports mode with occasional stops for refuelling.

### How do you relax?

Walking the dog, creating in the kitchen - my cupcakes are gaining a bit of a following. Reading on the iPad.

### What's your favourite journey and where do you like to travel?

Any journey when the phone is not ringing. Anywhere ... as above.

### What is on your in-car entertainment system?

R2 Chris Evans in the morning, R4 late afternoon / early

evening, Classic FM late night. Take That when I feel like singing!

### What are you passionate about?

My daughter Ellen and our pets. Keeping my clients happy. Green and Blacks dark chocolate and a large glass of chilled white.

### What makes you overheat?

Noise level at the o2 when Justin Bieber entered the stage - almost too much to bear. People that say they are bored. Litter. Drivers that can't drive straight on a motorway. My age ;)

### Where do you see motor industry PR going in the next year or so?

Obviously social media hugely important but have a feeling that face to face, back to basics relationship building with key influencers will make a return. The realisation that social media is not always social.

PR'ing ever greener, cleaner cars will be the norm for us all. I feel almost dinosaurs when I think about what I've pr'd in the past!

## Potted history of career on the clock

- Mar 2000 - Present Set up PR and Media Works
- Mar 1997 - Mar 2000 Media Relations Manager, Volvo
- Mar 1996 - Mar 1997 Press Officer, Mazda
- Jun 1995 - Mar 1996 Corporate Press Officer, Ford
- Sep 1988 - Jun 1995 Press Officer, SEAT
- 1987 - 1988 Toyota
- 1985 - 1987 Binnie & Partners, Consulting Engineers
- 1984 - 1985 Steel Brothers
- 1983 - 1984 BP Oil
- 1981 - 1983 Whitbread Brewery



# THE ROAD AHEAD

## with MIPAA

See: [www.mipaa.com](http://www.mipaa.com) for details

LinkedIn Join MIPAA LinkedIn group

twitter Follow on Twitter @mipaa

**Professional Practice Seminars**  
60 minutes with expert insight, tips, tools & techniques tackling topical issues

- Olympic Opportunities
- Ethical PR & journalism

**Social Networking**

Join MIPAA members, friends & guests at our social networking events

- @ Frankfurt Motor Show petite soirée
- @ Christmas lunch
- @ B2B media Leadership Forum

**the hub**

Regular email highlighting the most informative, relevant and sometimes plain amusing web content for your PR pleasure.

**NEW:**  
**The Hub Live**  
A MIPAA Leadership Forum initiative with monthly Twitter chat sessions engaging online influencers on motor industry and PR topics

**MIPAA Business Academy**  
Leadership Development

**Series of 4 executive workshops**

- Practical management skills
- Risk, issues & crisis management
- Strategic media management
- Brand & reputation management

**freewheel**

A new series of online white papers - quick reference manuals to help members save time and money by working smarter

# PR MASTERCLASS REPORT: The Strategic Future of PR



*One of the highlights of the MIPAA calendar is the annual PR Masterclass which this year was kindly hosted at the prestigious Audi quattro rooms in West London and once again proved a resounding success attracting a thought-provoking speaker line-up and senior members from in-house and consultancies.*

John Rawlings, VW CV Press & PR manager and MIPAA Deputy Chairman provides an overview of the proceedings:

The theme of the day was the Strategic Future of PR, which was addressed by a series of insightful presentations and an informative panel discussion. The opening address by Frances Ingham, CEO of the PRCA considered a number of strategic challenges facing PR:

“The PR industry has to achieve its seat at the boardroom table by focusing on strategic reputation management rather than tactical delivery; embracing robust evaluation standards; owning the digital space and attracting the best talent. If we are to be credible with senior executives, we need to be the one stop communications and marketing shop for clients and CEOs; and reach the best talent available to work in the industry.”

Professor David Phillips outlined the strategic value of PR in an internet mediated era, calling this an age of revolution where corporate content is increasing created and aggregated outside of organizations:



David Phillips

*“PR can make a unique strategic contribution by moving from monitoring to facilitating stakeholder relationships and planning value-driven responses to emerging issues. We are moving into an era of neo-radical transparency where online content is an asset that needs to be managed. PR is*

*able to offer clarity in a storm cloud of online influences where information is served up in human and non-human ways. Our job is to manage the virtual, add to the real, understand augmented reality, and engage in the internet of things. The world is digitally connected though a semantic web of data and it is the responsibility of PR to manage communication, relationships and reputation in this emerging environment.”*

Reporting on the 3rd European Summit on Measurement, which had taken place in Lisbon just days before the MIPAA PR Masterclass, Mike Daniels, AMEC chairman provocatively claimed: column inches and AVE are DEAD!



Mike Daniels

*“The real value of PR is in outcomes, such as which messages are successfully communicated to a target audience, or how many extra web hits or sales are achieved. PR-focused metrics should replace meaningless equivalent cost of advertising, which is an entirely different discipline. It is vital to determine the measurement methodology being used by any agency, although there is little agreement currently on standards for evaluating social media. This is an area*

*that should be owned by PR, but research in Lisbon found this was the case in very few organizations.”*

Moving the discussion specifically onto motor industry PR, Jon Zammet, Audi UK head of PR looked ‘Beyond the launch and loan car’. As well as advice on managing the media, summarised as “a very simple job done impeccably well”, Jon outlined the importance of optimising opportunities beyond the motor press on the basis of maximising the power of relationships:

“Strategy is vital as your brand should be evident in everything you do. This means focusing on the long-term, as short-termism creates small ambitions. PR is not only driven by the brand but strengthens it, particularly by reaching out beyond delivering a simple press service.”

A practical focus was provided by Paul Charles, founder of PCC and former communications director of Virgin Atlantic who looked at the impact of the changing media landscape and the importance of crisis planning:



Paul Charles

*“We live in an age of instant judgement where consumers use web channels to fire broadsides which can make or break brands and*

*organisations. Social media is less concerned with fact, with speed killing truth. We saw this in the case of BP - slow to apologise; and Eurostar – didn’t say sorry quickly enough through social media. Toyota eventually used online channels well unlike Vodafone which used a ‘copy and paste’ apology that failed to recognise control is so 20th century”.*

With a career that started in journalism to senior corporate roles within the Fiat Group, Richard Gadeselli (who also holds the distinction of being both a former MIPAA and Guild chairman) shared his experience of ‘strategic PR in the executive suite’.



Richard Gadeselli

*“In 2004, Fiat faced crisis headlines in business media; by 2011, the same publications were reporting a story of success. We had also achieved international awards and inclusion in the Dow Jones sustainability indexes; followed by positive product coverage. This all involved strategic PR. The challenges we faced include cultural differences in different markets, time and budget constraints. Overall, the key was for PR to provide strategic counsel outside the board, manage communications with*

## WORTH ATTENDING?

*key stakeholders and take a long look at the road ahead."*

Attendees gave the 2011 MIPAA PR Masterclass an approval rating of 100%; with 88% giving it a 4 or 5 out of 5 for meeting their expectations.

Vanessa Nalder, Mitsubishi manager of press and media relations, who attended with colleague Shona Smith, has no doubts about attending next year: "With the 'balance of power' shifting from traditional print media to on-line and social media, the day was relevant, interesting and informative. The speakers, venue and lunch were superb. We would definitely attend the Masterclass again."

Simon Hughes from Kantar Media welcomed the discussion around evaluation:



Simon Hughes

*"It was good to hear that 'AVES need to die' – but for that to happen PR practitioners need to stop asking for them."*

Tom Callow, account manager at Automotive PR reported his highlight was: "Jon Zammett's encouragement to us all that

we should never be afraid to ask for more budget in order to move our company (or our clients) beyond 'business as usual'. Budgets are important, but sometimes just getting that little bit more resource for a campaign or event can prove to be the difference between mediocrity and greatness."

Media and communications consultant, David Raeside got a lot out of the day: "For me, the key session was Prof David Phillips talking about the future of communications, followed by Richard Gadeselli who spoke candidly about where PR should sit in an organisation. We all have to consider the best use of our time, particularly with the plethora of offers to attend conferences. This Masterclass was a chance to step away from the day-to-day, and its answer to that all too frequently asked question, 'Will it be worth my while attending this?' was a simple: Yes."

"Finally, MIPAA itself impressed through its vibrant approach and the many new members I met during the day. Sessions were entertaining and informative, with an opportunity to squeeze in a little networking. Well done to all involved in bringing this day together."

## And Finally...

MIPAA chairman, Al Clarke concluded the PR Masterclass by chairing a panel discussion featuring Ray Massey, Daily Mail transport editor, Chas Hallett, What Car? editor-in-chief, and Jane Wilson, CIPR CEO.

Topics ranged from the detail of product launches to the value that strategic access provides to journalists at the sharp end. Jane Wilson confirmed that as the balance of power was shifting to consumers, PR has to be at the heart and top of an organization. Ray Massey emphasised the importance of ensuring motoring journalists are viewed as credible by their editors; where closeness to the industry can be viewed negatively. Chas Hallett used the term 'chicken or lamb PR' as a reminder to worry less about the venue and menu, and more about the value of the story and ensuring proper access to senior people and vehicles.



## Heather Yaxley,

MIPAA Ltd director and general secretary shares her enthusiasm for the history of public relations:



**"History is more or less bunk. It's tradition. We don't want tradition. We want to live in the present, and the only history that is worth a tinker's damn is the history that we make today. Henry Ford, Chicago Tribune 1916."**

It wasn't just history that fell foul of Henry Ford – the company didn't have a public relations department until the 1940s, well not in name anyway. Somewhat ironic given the current initiative celebrating Ford's centenary in Britain: "100 years in photos" is a magnificent record of PR as well as the company's history since 1911.

I recently presented a paper at the International History of Public Relations Conference on the topic of the Origins of Careers in PR (part of my PhD studies). This gave me an opportunity to highlight pioneers of early strategic PR in the British motor industry. Claude Johnson not only organised the magnificent 1,000 Mile Trial in 1900 to gain acceptance for the motor car, but helped build the reputation of Rolls Royce by producing innovative driving guide books with the editor of The Car magazine, establishing a school



for chauffeurs and owners, and commissioning the Spirit of Ecstasy "Silver Lady" mascot.

Sir Miles Thomas is another role model who rose from motoring reporter after the first world war to press officer for Morris Cars then into management and ultimately senior chairman roles.

There are other fascinating characters, such as Maurice Buckmaster whose career as director of public affairs with Ford Motor Company in Dagenham must have seemed easy after training French resistance agents as head of the Special Operations Executive during WW2.

MIPAA members frequently promote company anniversaries and the heritage of their vehicles. But rarely do we focus on the men, and women, who crafted the stories we continue to tell. I'm sure the development of PR within the motor industry would make a unique contribution to the emerging history of the occupation; so if you're up for the challenge, why not present a paper yourself at next year's IHPRC?

Visit: <http://blogs.bournemouth.ac.uk/historyofpr/>

# Spoke 'n' word

MIPAA is developing a new approach to celebrate the heritage of motor industry PR with a series of special social activities that will appeal to all members – of the vintage and modern specification! The aim is to shine a spotlight on particular historical moments and milestones. Watch out for the announcement of our first event soon.



## Hearing your inner rhythm

by Angie Voluti

We all have an inner 'rhythm'. You know, the one controlling how long it takes you to get dressed, work, eat, make decisions: in short, the speed at which you live.

I used to be a corporate animal, and loved the feeling of 'belonging'. The sheer nature of PR work detaches itself from the 9-5 pattern, but employees work office hours, and – whether working agency or client-side - your time belongs to someone else; one's inner rhythm defaults onto outside factors.

My inner rhythm is fast and furious; there are happy staccatos and growling crescendos. It demands 'fortissimo' energy to be spent.

Fear is a natural instinct, but can incite as well as hinder. One can freeze and brood over options but in the end jumping into the unknown can be exciting.

Qualifying 'unknown' is also important: I specialise in automotive PR and writing. It is what I do and what I know best. If you do something you love, freedom quickly overtakes fear: no more office hours, no 'start' or 'finish'. Work and life blur, one's palette of emotional colours painting another universe.

I only wrote one feature in my first month as

a 'solo' player. That grew to five the following month, and I asked, enquired, pitched, proposed and generally put my name out ruthlessly and continuously: personal PR is a job in its own rights.

Set-up expenses are inescapable costs: if you don't take your new-born business seriously, nobody will: a good website, letterhead, logo and ancillary systems, proper computers. By the third month I was managing international PR for three clients, had a small team of people, and my freelance writing had trebled. I was the first woman to get a business grant in my county on the strength of my rapid growth and sound plans.

I do not keep an eye on the clock. Not even a year on, I have five clients ranging from 'glamorabilia' and luxury goods to pre-war parts manufacturing and even a spot of hot-rodding; more is planned before the end of the year, and I am starting the biography of a very interesting individual who fought in the Dhofar war, raced military trucks in the deserts and still campaigns Lola and Elva racing cars. My latest novel, Clay Ghosts in Sicily, has been published in July.

Fear? Sometimes. But only 'pianissimo'...

**Email:** [angie@angievoluti.co.uk](mailto:angie@angievoluti.co.uk)  
**Twitter:** @angievoluti



## Listen very carefully...

by Simon Hughes

Nobody believes me when I say I get paid to read car magazines. It's not strictly true though I admit – sometimes it's car websites and blogs.

I also spend my time talking to people about what's been going on in the car industry. What we should consider more often though, is what could go on in the future. I've seen from over a decade of working closely with MIPAA members that having the right information to hand when disaster strikes can make the difference between a rapid return to form or a protracted uphill slog. Toyota's product coverage, for example, returned to normal just three months after the biggest recall story we've ever tracked, broke.

There's a lot more to be squeezed out of print evaluation, but social media listening is the new 'eat your greens' – you may not enjoy it but it'll help you grow big and strong.

In times of trouble, the public's immediate reaction to your crisis response can now be delivered straight to your desktop or Blackberry, which must be a somewhat daunting prospect, but will it provide you with all you need to know? There has been a lot of talk in the industry about social media and a lack of support from agencies. Some feel that agencies don't tell brands what

the data they supply actually means. That's not going to help you when big decisions need to be made.

There are literally hundreds of systems available to quantify social media comment but data in isolation does not offer insight into why these comments have been made. Dedication's (still) what you need, but genuine insight is more useful when the media smell blood and need a quote.

Whomever you use, your agency should be telling you why your trend line has turned red and whether an emerging issue should be a reason to break out the strong tea bags.

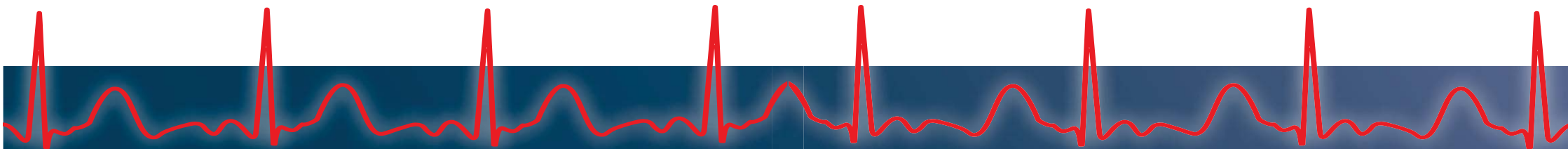
During a crisis, as in 'peacetime', listening to understand the whole story means focusing on the trends, the patterns of convergence and, most importantly, the reasons behind them. Only then will you be able to understand how the brand you protect on a daily basis has had its image dented or altered.

And that you can believe.

Simon Hughes is head of evaluation – automotive at Kantar Media Precise

**Email:** [simon.hughes@kantarmedia.com](mailto:simon.hughes@kantarmedia.com)

**Twitter:** @PrecisAuto



**You participate in a number of surveys seeking your views on PR each year; do you think these are helpful in improving practice?**

I repeat my views three times a year – to the Guild survey, to the MORI survey and to a European survey whose name I forget. My thoughts are straightforward, but I find I'm making the same points each time.

**What would you say is the worst sin committed by PR practitioners?**

Telling lies. Don't tell us it's an exclusive when it isn't. Don't tell us 'no more info will be released before such-and-such a date' when it will. We read the rival media, so we will find you out. Or, the most common, you say 'This is a very small trip' and then when we get to the airport we find we know half the people in the club lounge. All this means we won't believe you next time - there are several car companies I've learnt not to trust, so even when they try to tell me something is exclusive I am very wary of selling it to editors as a big splash.

**Should PR practitioners work more closely with journalists on exclusives?**

Yes – but don't take ideas from journalists and publications, and then give those ideas to all other outlets in the form of a press trip.

**What could be done to improve launches?**

The main thing is about managing time effectively. It is particularly important to give the photographers enough time to do their job. And,

## Paul Horrell

Consultant Editor at BBC Top Gear Magazine and European Car of the Year jury member



while we're on the subject of launches, don't lock us in a room and read us the press kit. We can actually read, honest.

**What about the thorny subject of press conferences?**

Don't have a Q&A when you've told the executives not to give straight answers to all the obvious questions. Don't hold it in a darkened room so we can't take notes. And if it's a launch, don't make claims about the subjective qualities of the car - that's for us to judge.

**Do you have any thoughts on embargoes?**

Give trusted long-lead media the info on embargo. Make them sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) with a huge fine if they break it. Or of they

break the embargo don't give it to them next time.

Otherwise if you don't have an embargo system, you'll be giving the teenager who runs a website out of his bedroom the same info at the same time as Top Gear or Autocar. Then you wonder why the proper media can't do proper analysis. D'oh - it's because you are forcing them to rush stuff out so as not to be beaten by the teenager in his bedroom. If you have an embargo, the professional media can publish a proper piece of analysis, and show your product in depth, in a timely manner.

**Any final thoughts?**

Understand the difference between PR and marketing.



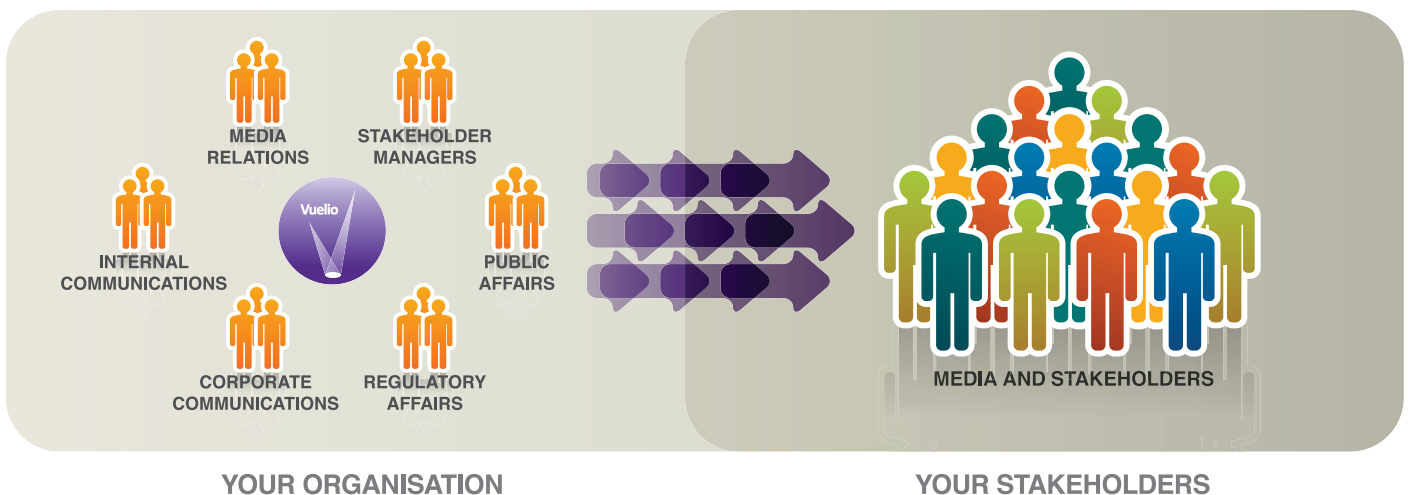
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## Transforming media & stakeholder interactions in the Motor Industry



Joined up communications teams enable more effective relationships with the media and other stakeholders

With over 300 clients across the UK and Europe, Vuelio is a market leading, web-based software suite for managing all media and stakeholder interactions. It enables your various communications teams - media relations, public affairs, internal communications - to work more efficiently with one voice, and empowers them to establish more effective relationships with the media and other stakeholder groups.



1 Bath Place, Rivington St. London EC2A 3DA | [www.twitter.com/aimediacomms](http://www.twitter.com/aimediacomms)  
t: 020 7690 8885 | e: [info@aimediacomms.com](mailto:info@aimediacomms.com) | [www.aimediacomms.com](http://www.aimediacomms.com)