

Tom Hawkins – WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff

I should win this award for making the idea of the press office in engineering firms a reality. The 'light bulb moment' for media relations arrived late in engineering, even compared to other built environment sectors. Through professionalism, determination and keeping our media objectives in line with the strategic goals of the wider business, I have made the case for a hitherto misunderstood function.

My professionalism has included setting up quarterly market reports for the business, revamping our social media communications and introducing public affairs to the business through consultation responses and communicating with politicians. This led to the press office being increasingly seen as a core arm of the business development model.

My determination and creativity has led to coverage on key projects (22 Bishopsgate), thought leadership (Housing White Paper on the BBC Ten O'Clock News), and national coverage for National Apprenticeships Week two years running. The business now comes to me proactively to secure coverage for their people and projects.

No greater complement can be paid to my work than the fact that following our merger a second press officer is being recruited and will follow the procedures that I have introduced.



Celebrating National Apprenticeship Week 2015

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10:24 AM - 9 Mar 2015



The Daily Telegraph

Inspiring Young People into STEM

The key to getting people to study science is capturing their imagination at primary school. Dan Matthews reports on the drive to develop a child's natural curiosity How to nurture essential STEM growth

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Shortage of engineers threaten UK growth, employers warn
By Brian Groom, Business and Employment Editor



Six out of 10 engineering employers fear that a growing shortage of engineers will threaten their business in the UK, research has found.

A study by the Institution of Engineering and Technology underlines concern that skills shortages could hold back the recovery in parts of the economy.



THE INDEPENDENT
Engineers' voices
'Solving problems on a daily basis is motivating'



Jane Richards is director in the building structures business of WSP.

"I head up a team that leads on the structural engineering work on projects ranging from high-rise towers to small refurbishments work. Some weeks I'm working on a residential project other weeks I work on commercial buildings. Either way, it involves a lot of liaising with architects and other engineering professionals who are all part of seeing the project through to completion. The variety is amazing and if you like applying physics and maths to something real, as well as working with exceptionally creative people, it is fantastic. Probably the best thing of all is seeing a tangible result, and because we specialise - although not exclusively - on skinny skyscrapers, those results can be outstanding. Some of the work is really challenging technically, but solving problems on a daily basis is a real motivator for me. I think one of the main reasons there is a shortage of women in engineering is that it's so diverse. Many areas of engineering wouldn't suit me at all, but others feel like they're made for me. I girls that out about areas that don't appeal to them, you've often lost them right there. Personally, I was lucky to have a lot of encouragement at school to find a career I'd enjoy. I got to spend a day watching engineers in practice where one particular female engineer - who I later saw lecture on her job - became a role model of sorts. I haven't looked back."

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WSP to develop new Old Oak Common station plans

8 May, 2014 | By Tom Fitzpatrick



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20 August 2014 Last updated at 04:09

HS2 and the new North-South divide

By Jenny Scott
BBC News



Residents of rural Northamptonshire have huge concerns about the plans for high speed rail, while Birmingham City Council is drawing up plans for a futuristic station

Tom Hawkins Biography

Tom is an award-winning communications professional currently working in the press office of WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff, the global professional services consultancy. Previously he worked as a lobbyist at the professional body for the public relations and public affairs industry and for the (then) transport minister Norman Baker. His responsibilities include dealing directly with the national and broadcast media, building relationships with journalists and other key stakeholders, and has performed general managerial duties from handling budgets to supervising junior members of staff.

WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff

Tom works in a two-person press office working to promote 5,100 people and their work whilst protecting the company's reputation. He handles frequent reactive media enquiries on top of proactive campaigns. During his time at the company he has:

- Secured coverage in national, trade and local newspapers, television and radio
- Provided media training to board members prior to television, broadsheet and radio interviews
- Dealt with crises in the media
- Managed the company's external regional PR support in Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester and Scotland
- Revamped the company's social media presence, trained board members and other staff on how to promote the company through online channels, and created a social media policy and training for marcomms teams across the global business
- Introduced public affairs to the business, providing a weekly bulletin of important political decisions affecting key business streams

Notable coverage has included widespread national, trade, local and broadcast coverage of the company's flooding work, and national and trade media coverage of WSP's apprenticeship scheme. I have also blogged extensively on behalf of staff for Building, NCE, Huffington Post and other specialist publications.

Awards

In his first year at WSP he helped the two person team win 'best in-house PR team of the year' at the International Building Press Awards (beating Crossrail) and was highly commended at the PRCA Awards for 'best in-house PR campaign of the year'.

PRCA Intern Campaign

In his previous role Tom created the PRCA's (the PR professional body) Internship Campaign with PR Week, which included securing an endorsement from the Deputy Prime Minister and BIS's social mobility 'tsar' Alan Milburn on the front page of PR Week.

Since launching the campaign it has been on the front page of PR Week numerous times, with positive coverage in the Guardian online, Huffington Post, The Drum, Marketing Week, and across the Lib Dem blogosphere. It gained the support of other key groups including InternAware and the Taylor Bennett Foundation.

The campaign directly led to over 100 companies agreeing to pay their interns, and attracted new members to the professional body.

Other roles

Tom interned in the Parliamentary office of the Lib Dem Transport Minister Norman Baker. This involved research projects, media briefings, drafting press releases, and social media management.

Tom has an undergraduate degree (2.1) from the University of Sussex for Politics and a Masters (Merit) degree in Political Theory from the LSE.