



A meeting was held on the evening of 25<sup>th</sup> January 2010 at the FT's office to informally discuss:

- How the IBP can better serve (and attract) younger journalist and PR members
- How it might seek to achieve this
- What kind of networking events would appeal

The following individuals were present:

Claer Barrett, Investors Chronicle (chair)	Sarah Richardson, Building
Hardeep Sandher, Property Week	David Doyle, Property Week
Lydia Stockdale, Inside Housing	Mike Phillips, Estates Gazette
Alasdair Reisner, CECA	James Carnegie, Aylwin Comms
Naomi Galt, FD	Claudia Robinson, FD
Sarah Keltie, FD	Gemma Shah, Jones Lang LaSalle
Sam Kidby, London Communications Agency	Niki May Young, World Architecture
Michael Webster, Gorkana	Polly Roberts, Gorkana

All are happy to meet again to discuss further, or organise an event

#### Conclusions of discussion:

- There is strong support for IBP events aimed at young people
- The IBP Futures group would be happy to organise these
- Evening is the best time, with drinks (which could be sponsored)
- The venue does not need to be "posh" - a central London pub is fine
- There has to be a theme – it should not just be a piss up
- Initial focus should be journalistic skills; a "big name" talking about how they made it
- How to get on the nationals is *the* hot topic (sorry editors!)
- Trade journalists want to network with those on the nationals
- PRs are happy to come to gain access to journalists, regardless of event content
- PRs present expressed interest in sponsoring events
- Having people from industry there is less important, but could come later
- Being introduced to people at events would really help (maybe by board members?)
- The events should not be too large (40-60 people max)
- Entry should be controlled (names on a list)
- In principle, people would be happy to buy a membership / ticket for these events
- Editors cannot be relied on to spread the word. Each magazine needs a young IBP contact who can tell colleagues about the event (everyone in the room put themselves forward)

#### Additionally...

- With the cache of IBP Awards, we have more to offer than competing networking groups
- To attract younger members, the IBP needs to be better at its own PR
- The website needs to offer better information for new prospects
- PRs who were members of IBP found application process difficult
- Gorkana would be interested in JV / link up in some way
- All future IBP events can be advertised (for free) on Gorkana
- There was strong support to Ruth Slavid's suggestion that we should reach out to young journalists and PRs made redundant / job seeking / freelancing, and advertising events on Gorkana is probably the best way to reach these groups

**Discussion points of interest:**

**Current perceptions of the IBP** were rather mixed. Several were members as a result of having been entered for awards. However, few had been to an IBP event other than the awards. Those who came to the summer party really enjoyed it. There was awareness of IBP events that had been e-mailed to members, but were considered “expensive”. How will the news be delivered was mentioned as something that sounded good, for example, but only one person had attended. Those who had attended events described them as “old school” with people talking to people they already knew. In conclusion, a lot of young members / potential members feel IBP events are “not for them”.

**The cache of the IBP awards** is our greatest weapon. I was surprised to hear about the large number of networking groups targeting young journalists, and from within the built environment sector. They don't have an awards ceremony, but we do – and there lies our USP. The IBP has the potential, and the membership database, to offer something unique. As an aside, several people mentioned that **“What the IBP Awards judges are looking for”** could be a good basis for an event. Having links to award winning articles on IBP website was also viewed as desirable. People know winning an award boost your career – and even more so in tough times!

Suitable **“big names” in journalism** for an event were discussed. The obvious candidates are Andrew Marr, Robert Peston or Nick Robinson – newspaper journalists who have made it on TV. Getting someone like this for the first event would be a real coup – but we shouldn't limit ourselves to media stars. Dominic O'Connell, the new business editor of The Times, and Richard Fletcher were mentioned, to general murmurs of approval.

Understanding **“What's in it for me?”** is the key to getting a good response. For trade journalists, how to get a job on a national – and how others have done so – is an obsession. This may be hard for editors to stomach, but if we are running a networking event then we need to be aware of this. In general, career development is the thing most journalists AND PRs are most bothered about.

The format – most preferred a **Q&A format, with “two chairs on a stage”** with someone like Giles Barrie asking the questions. Then, there would be questions from the floor. This way, the guest speaker does not navel gaze too much, and attendees also get to observe interview technique.

Gorkana events team believed said “big names” would do it for free, if approached by a young person, as they would want to “give something back”. They offered to help recruit. However, people felt the **IBP website** should be given some attention before we start pitching to people, as it doesn't yet reflect the “young” ethos, or have an easy-to-find “about us” section. The first thing “big names” will do is put IBP into Google, so we need to look our best.

The idea of having a “big name” from the property or construction industry appealed less – it was seen as too specific to a publication and not the wider group. Also, you are surrounded by competing journalists, so unlikely to be of any use as a story (I was surprised by this!)

A good point made – in a recession, **in-house training budgets** are non-existent. Some of the basics of reporting are not properly covered nowadays. **Legal issues**, what you can get sued for, and what you can get away with, could be a very popular event. “Not having the confidence to tackle legally challenging stories will lead to weaker journalism in the long run”. **Investigative techniques**, as taught by Peter Gilman, were also favoured.

Editors are not considered to be the best way of conveying information about IBP events. It was proposed that each publication (there aren't many) should have a **“young” point of contact** to receive info about IBP events and circulate. Everyone present nominated themselves.

**Other networking groups / events we should be aware of:**

**Gorkana** does breakfast events for PRs (where an editor speaks about deadlines, what stories they want, scope of their publication etc) These are quite formal and businesslike, but work. They have also held panel discussion format events with several journalists. They tried a quiz night format with journalists and PRs, but it descended into a piss up and people “found it hard to make meaningful connections”. Ditto cocktail making – fun, but just a “piss up”. Deputy chief executive Michael (name) – who looks in his early thirties – is very keen to discuss a potential joint venture with the IBP on these events.

**Profile** (which is an EG spin off) follows a similar PR breakfast format. Both charge hefty subscriptions, and pay journalists for participating. Only of use to PRs.

### **European Young Professionals (EYP)**

Free to subscribe, this organisation is for all professionals and holds a monthly London event which some of the panel had attended. It costs £5 entry but is “very corporate” and “hit and miss” what industry professionals you might meet.

### **Schmooze and Booze**

Organised by a young sub-editor on the Daily Mail, this is a new networking event for all PRs and journalists in London – but with more of a consumer than business focus. You have to pay for your own drinks. Comment from someone who went to one: “It was quite big, but difficult to find useful people, and there were all sorts there.”

### **Property4Media**

Spun out from the website, they organise quarterly drinks events in fairly swanky London venues. It is invite only, to selected group chosen by them. Sponsors pay for drinks, but in return you must sit through dreary speech and presentation (often about building or interiors products).

### **Young Entrepreneurs in Property (YEP)**

We think, now defunct, but in its heyday was getting 200+ to its events. Problems arose when membership became too open (“It was open to everybody, so you would end up talking to people who made floor filters and did glazing”). Similar to the “curse of the BCO” which suffers same problem with industry people being preyed upon by sales teams from lift companies!

### **City University**

Has a big name journalist come in every Monday night for journalists to interview, they submit questions beforehand. People come and speak for free, which is encouraging. Linda Christmas would be a good person to get onside for our events.

### **Other event ideas:**

Wine tasting is good – but very expensive

“Speed networking” – like speed dating but with journalists / PRs/ industry contacts was suggested, but would have to be very well organised to work.

How to use Twitter as a journalist

Blog night / talk from famous bloggers

Consider running an event online, instead of in an actual venue – a webinar

### **What the PRs want from an event:**

“A relaxed atmosphere to meet journalists and get to know them – certainly not to push stories, but to find out more about them and what they cover.”

“I can tell my boss I’m going to this to meet journalists and really impress them”

“A small charge would be fine – at any rate, it’s much cheaper than a lunch and you will meet more people.”

Both groups agree – you have to feel you’re getting something out of the event personally, in terms of career development / opportunities, as you are leaving work to go to an event.

Of our group of 16, four were returning to the office / taking work home with them after the meeting finished. Long hours are part of the job more than ever in a recession.

“You have got to be able to justify two hours at an event”

### **Notes on the website:**

There is no obvious “about us” section, people said they could not find it quickly

“It is really hard to work out how to become a member on the website. It took me over 15 minutes”

“The most valuable thing the IBP has is its members. As a member, I should be able to log in to the website, and search for other members and their contact details, just like I can on other networking sites.”

“There should be pointers and tips on how to enter the IBP awards”

**Other comments:**

Disappointment over dropping of Housing category

Frustration that web journalists are not recognised in awards when so much of content is now digital / video / interactive. Should the IBP move with the times a bit here? More young members would be generated by the awards entries for these categories!

Ditto, awards for blogs. They are a part of journalistic life now, so why not recognise them?