

## **IBP Communication & PR Awards 2018**

**Category:** In house communications team

**Department name:** Savills cross border B2B communications team

**People:** Victoria Buchanan, Head of PR (B2B); Liz Williams-Bew, PR Director; Gemma Haines, PR Manager Europe; Natalie Moore, B2B PR Research Manager; Kirsty Moseley, Associate Director; Ashley McKeown, Associate Director; Hannah Pollack, Associate; Becca Allen, Associate; Allison Robinson, Team Co-ordinator.

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### **Budget**

£100K+

### **Objectives / strategy**

Savills cross border B2B communications team services the UK and pan-European business (2017 combined commercial revenue of £543.8m), linking with PR teams in Asia Pac and the US, from its global HQ in London. Centralised function maximises opportunities and avoids conflict across international client base. Individuals work with divisions, regional offices and countries to gain multi-disciplinary knowledge, travelling frequently within the network.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Strategy</b>
Drive new business / expand client base	Align PR output with divisional strategy and business plans (often helping to define objectives). Generate / maintain profile, targeting audiences inside and outside of property arena e.g. coverage for deals, new instructions, people moves, research-led pieces.
Secure profile for new teams / leadership changes	Harness thought leadership opportunities (press articles, blogs, panel / speaker opportunities) for key individuals.
Protect Savills brand and client reputations	Extensive crisis communications support across the business and especially to property management division, including out of hours.
Promote cross selling internally and showcase multi-disciplinary services externally	Collaborate across all divisions and share ideas for cross promotion e.g. utilising Savills retail / logistics teams to identify market themes and produce copy for joint blogs / features / research / thought leadership pieces.
Showcase Savills global expertise around the world	Lead corporate communications for M&A activity in UK and other countries e.g. Larry Smith Italia acquisition, 2017. Regular liaison with press offices in US / Asia / Australia, sharing research / deals / thought leadership opportunities.

### **Measurement / evaluation**

We focus on tracking new business leads, positive client feedback and other opportunities (e.g. speaker invitations) generated by coverage / blogs. This reflects the role of PR as a business tool, in line with our core objective. Examples:

- Whistle Punks instructed leisure team after founders saw head of division quoted in EG feature on competitive socialising.
- National cross sector report coverage led to head of research doing a law firm podcast, major bank strategy day and speaking at firm of accountants' client event.
- Serviced offices report coverage led to requests from several major London landlords.
- Head of Savills Cambridge invited to speak at Barbraham Institute following blog about start-ups.
- Property EU & Savills European Retail Briefing event led to invitation to present to major European fund.

### **Method deployed**

We add context / relevance to Savills national and international knowledge, adapting content for a range of media. E.g. Data from Savills 'Big Shed Breakfast' in December 2017 secured coverage in The Telegraph, The Times and The Daily Mail. Adapted with bespoke regional data / quotes, generating widespread local coverage on Place North West, Midlands Insider, TheBusinessDesk.com and more.

Equally, we create national press opportunities for regional teams by identifying local slants on wider news themes. E.g. Savills serviced offices research identified Manchester as key growth city. Meeting arranged with Financial Times northern reporter resulting in head of Manchester office and Savills research being quoted on this topic in print and on FT.com, January 2018.

### **Relation to objectives / cost-effectiveness**

A strategic approach to PR across all media platforms ensures the vast majority of output is closely aligned with our objectives. A highly cost-effective department given all coverage / opportunities are generated without additional costs.

### **Creativity / originality**

We monitor technological / social trends outside the property industry and feed ideas to Savills research team, generating innovative research and thought leadership to engage new audiences / titles. Examples of ideas originating from PR team:

- How younger travellers' preference to record experiences on social media is changing nature of hotel industry (covered by The Caterer, Hotel Owner & Business Breaks Magazine, June 2017).
- Rise in venture capitalist funding into start-ups across London. South Bank identified as hotspot with correlation to rise in serviced office take up (covered by Business Daily & other business media, November 2017).
- Conceptualised / led delivery of client-facing global publication, *MIPIIM Matters*, showcasing key areas of business at MIPIIM 2018. First Savills publication of its kind. Co-ordinated structure, content and wrote all copy on behalf of senior internal stakeholders. Hard copies available at conference and all content published online to enable social media sharing.

### **Outside contractors**

**UK:** WithPR; Epiphany; Tulcan **Europe:** Pulsar Conseil; Beil PR; Hallvarsson & Halvarsson; KREAB

### **Category specific criteria**

**Creativity:** Retail Revolutions report launched during REVO (September 2017) with initial burst of coverage for press release. Creative thinking about further uses saw content repackaged as a blog (400+ unique views) and feature in Shopping Centre (December 2017). A minor report theme (supermarkets 'rightsizing') was pitched to The Grocer and became a column by a Savills research director.

**Innovation:** We have expanded our reach beyond transactional divisions / traditional property press to tap into the evolving news agenda. E.g. sustainability and forward-thinking HR pieces. Also strategic PR for Workthere (new Savills venture helping businesses find co-working and serviced office space) has moved away from traditional print media to focus on online coverage with 'link backs' driving measurable traffic to Workthere website. Taps into 'click-bait' style consumer themes (e.g. which UK city takes longest lunch break), appealing to non-property press.

### **Achievement of results:**

#### *Metrics/measurements to support work of team*

- 5,400 press cuttings for commercial divisions in 2017 (16% increase year-on-year)
- 2,003 press cuttings for regional offices in 2017 (46% increase year-on-year)
- 179 commercial blogs published in 2017 (65% increase year-on-year). 2,300+ unique views for top five most read.

#### *Attitudinal change evidenced by post-campaign / project research.*

We have done much to support the industry-wide 'Changing The Face of Property' initiative, which aims to increase diversity / raise awareness of LGBT, gender, ethnic and socio economic issues. On behalf of Savills LGBT Group, we wrote advertorial for Pride Magazine and helped to host an event for Freehold (leading LGBT property networking forum) at Savills HQ, including internal publicity in advance. The event was attended by senior directors from across the business. Working with HR, we have been heavily involved in encouraging students from different socio-economic backgrounds to apply for property roles / apprenticeships through blogs and social media campaigns, also securing coverage in property / education trade press.