Figurative

Simple ways to raise your profile

A PR guide for the cultural and creative sectors

with Riot Communications

Housekeeping

Figurative

This webinar will be recorded and published on the Figurative website: www.figurative.org.uk/resources

Live captions are available:

- Click More → Language and speech → Show live captions in Teams
- Or click Alt + Shift + C on your keyboard

How we support the sector

Figurative

Impact investment

We raise and manage specialist funds providing repayable finance to the cultural sector. Our £16m Arts & Culture Impact Fund is currently open for applications.

Philanthropy development

We help cultural organisations develop their philanthropic networks through a series of place-based partnerships.

Research and advocacy

We research and design new funding and impact models, and advocate for increased funding, investment and support for the cultural sector.

Advisory

We share our expertise and help design sustainable finance and impact models with policymakers and funders across the world.

riot

SIMPLE WAYS TO RAISE YOUR PROFILE

A PR guide for the arts & culture sector, presented by Caitlin Allen & Kate Stote from Riot Communications

October 2026

INTRODUCTIONS



Caitlin Allen
Managing Director



Kate Stote
Associate Director

WELCOME

Thank you for joining us!

Today session is all about **simple, practical ways to raise your profile** and get more people talking about what you do.

It’s about:

- Finding your USP
- Understanding what makes people pay attention
- Knowing who to talk to
- Making the most of the activity you’re already doing

You’ll leave with ideas you can put into action straight away












WHO WE ARE

An award-winning communications consultancy that connects cultural institutions and their leaders with new audiences to deliver lasting impact.

- Arts, culture & entertainment
- Museums & heritage
- Charity, philanthropy & third sector

OUR CLIENTS


AARDMAN


HarperCollinsPublishers


Genesis
FOUNDATION


4th
ESTATE


Penguin
Random
House


Bookmark
Reading Charity

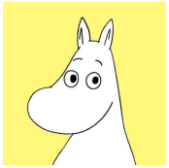

NERO
BOOK AWARDS


Beatrix Potter
160
years


SCIENCE
MUSEUM
GROUP


CELEBRATING
100
YEARS
WINNIE-THE-POOH


RAILWAY
MUSEUM






Their
world


BONNIER
Books UK


Theatr
Clwyd


V&A


amazon publishing


EDINBURGH
COMEDY
AWARDS
audible


BLOOMSBURY


LRB


FISKARS®


THE
NINE
DOTS
PRIZE

THE GOAL OF THIS SESSION



WHAT WE'LL COVER

Today we'll look at:

1. What makes news?
2. Press release basics
3. Working with influencers and ambassadors
4. Making the most of your events and projects
5. A case study
6. Five thing to do now

And plenty of practical ideas along the way.

WHAT IS PR?

PR isn't just about getting an article in the media. It's about:

Raising awareness:

Making more people aware of you and what you do.

Building credibility:

Helping people understand why your work matters.

Reaching new audiences:

Getting in front of people who might not already know you.

Telling your story:

Giving people a reason to care.

Building relationships:

With media, partners, communities and supporters.

YOU DON'T NEED A HUGE BUDGET

Some of the best opportunities come from things you're already doing.....

You might already have:

- Interesting people
- Brilliant stories
- A passionate community
- An exciting project
- A milestone or anniversary
- A new partnership
- Great images
- An event
- An unexpected story behind the scenes

The challenge is recognising what other people might find interesting!

CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGING



NAILING YOUR NARRATIVE

Charities are often doing complex work.

To engage people who aren't already familiar with your organisation, you need to be able to distil what you do into a brief, memorable pitch.

- Have a one sentence version and a one paragraph version (boilerplate).
- Make them memorable.
- Ensure they capture your USP.
- Repeat them often.
- Brief your staff, your Trustees and your volunteers - everyone should be able to deliver the one sentence and the one paragraph versions with confidence, hitting the same notes and key messages.

WHAT MAKES NEWS

NEW: Something launching, opening or changing, or new info being released.

FIRST: The first time something has happened.

MILESTONE: x thousand tickets sold / money raised / young people supported.

HUMAN INTEREST: Touching or surprising people stories.

TIMELY: A connection to something topical, a seasonal moment or anniversary.

SURPRISING: Something unexpected or unusual.

VISUAL: Something that looks great in pictures or video.

UNIVERSAL: Something that affects a large group, or that anyone can take part in.

FINDING YOUR STORY

Imagine you're explaining it to someone who has **never heard of you before**.

What's interesting?

What's different?

What's new?

What's surprising?

Why does it matter?

Why should someone care now?

A SIMPLE STORY CHECKLIST

Ask these questions....

- ❑ Is it new?
- ❑ Is it the first, biggest, oldest or only one of its kind?
- ❑ Is there a human story? Do you have someone who can speak about its impact?
- ❑ Is there an unexpected angle?
- ❑ Does it connect to something happening in the wider world?
- ❑ Is there a strong visual?
- ❑ Can you explain why it matters in one sentence?

If the answer is yes to one or more... you may have a story!

WHAT'S YOUR AIM?



KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Who are you trying to reach? What do you want them to know about you?

- National audiences
- Local communities
- Local families
- Young people
- Arts audiences
- Tourists
- Funders
- Schools

Then think about: Where do those people get their information?

DON'T JUST THINK NATIONAL

Local media and listings can be incredibly powerful

Local and regional media can help you:

- Reach audiences on your doorstep
- Build community relationships
- Drive attendance and build credibility

Sometimes the most valuable coverage is closest to home.

The best place to start is where your audience already looks for things to do

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Identify 5-10 people or publications that really matter to you

- Follow their work
- Understand what they cover
- Read what they write
- Send them relevant stories
- Be helpful
- Don't only contact them when you need something

Relationships take time.

PRESS MATERIALS



PRESS RELEASE BASICS

A press release doesn't need to be complicated.

Think of it as:

A clear, useful explanation of your story.

A journalist should be able to quickly understand:

- Who is involved?
- What is happening?
- Where is it happening?
- When is it happening?
- Why does it matter?
- Why now?

A SIMPLE STRUCTURE

- ❏ **HEADLINE:** Make the story clear.
- ❏ **INTRO:** A summary of the news in one sentence.
- ❏ **DETAILS:** Explain further in subsequent paras.
- ❏ **QUOTE:** Bring it to life with a human voice.
- ❏ **PRACTICAL INFORMATION:** Dates, location, tickets, website.
- ❏ **CONTACT DETAILS:** Make it easy for journalists to get in touch.

ACCOMPANYING VISUALS

- **Invest in photography:** For press, but also website, digital and socials.
- **Plan your pictures:** Consider the space, scale, people and branding.
- **Include people:** Show people experiencing your work, not just empty spaces.
- **Capture variety:** Take natural and posed shots, in portrait and landscape.
- **Keep branding subtle:** Over-branded images are less likely to be used by the media.
- **Check permissions:** Get consent from anyone featured.
- **Include a caption:** Know your key message. Sum up what the campaign is about in one clear sentence.




LIBRARY
LIBRARY
Winnie the Pooh


V&A


FLYING SCOTSMAN
CENTENARY
60103


EDINBURGH
COMEDY
AWARDS
audible
DLT
ENTERTAINMENT

PR TOOLKIT

- ❏ A media list of the publications that matter to you
- ❏ A boilerplate i.e. a one paragraph summary of your organisation
- ❏ An image library of strong, press-friendly photographs
- ❏ Spokespeople from inside and outside the organisation
- ❏ Case studies who can speak about their lived experience
- ❏ Stats that show the need for your work and your impact
- ❏ A simple plan that allows you to look ahead and decide where/when to invest your time

ADDITIONAL TACTICS



WORKING WITH INFLUENCERS

A checklist:

- ❑ **Set your goal:** What you want the activity to achieve.
- ❑ **Find the right people:** Look for creators whose content and audience are relevant.
- ❑ **Check their content:** Review their tone, engagement and previous partnerships.
- ❑ **Make a clear approach:** Explain the opportunity, why it matters and what's on offer.
- ❑ **Agree the ask:** What they will do, when and on which channels.
- ❑ **Give them the essentials:** Share key messages, dates, links and assets.
- ❑ **Allow creative freedom:** Let them use their own style to keep content authentic.
- ❑ **Build the relationship:** Respond quickly and keep in touch after the activity.
- ❑ **Track the results:** Monitor posts, reach, engagement, clicks and attendance.

WORKING WITH AMBASSADORS

Who already believes in what you do?

An ambassador doesn't have to be famous.

They could be:

- An artist
- A supporter
- A volunteer
- A participant
- A local figure
- A previous visitor
- A community champion

The best ambassadors are people who can: Tell your story authentically.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR EVENTS

Whenever you are putting on an event, consider how it could work harder for you.

Could you:

- Invite a journalist you've been building a relationship with, to show them the impact of your work first-hand?
- Invite influencers or content creators, to help the event travel beyond the room through their platforms?
- Ask an ambassador or special guest to attend, to generate a photo opportunity?
- Combine the event with another milestone / anniversary / calendar moment, to increase the news value?

CASE STUDY



YOUNG V&A X AARDMAN

The brief:

Make the launch of ‘Inside Aardman’ at Young V&A the museum’s biggest ever, reinforcing its reputation as a must-visit family destination and celebrating animation studio Aardman’s incredible 50-year legacy.

The tactics:

- A playful photoshoot generated strong images to use across the campaign.
- A no-stone-unturned press office function included previews, an exhibition opening photocall, and a comprehensive features programme.
- Invited influencers to boost social reach and ‘things to do’ discoverability.





...and the greatest exhibitions

Twelve months of unmissable London shows



The List



A grand day out at V&A



Getting ready for a grand day out



A grand day out: Aardman exhibition at Young V&A to celebrate feats of clay

METRO

The Guardian

DAILY EXPRESS

THE Sun



In brief

A grand day out at the museum...

PRINT

DAILY Mirror

THE i PAPER

THE STANDARD

THE TIMES

DAILY STAR

FT FINANCIAL TIMES



'It's absurd madness, really, but magical'



Aardman's secrets laid thrillingly bare



Aard work pays off



A grand day out: Aardman exhibition at Young V&A to celebrate feats of clay

BBC TODAY

itv Good Morning Britain

BBC IN TUNE 3



BROADCAST

LBC NEWS

BBC RADIO 5 LIVE

Local BBC Radio

GHR GREATEST HITS RADIO

shareradio

itv LONDON

FIVE THINGS TO DO NOW

- ❏ Draft/review your elevator pitch. Will it work for a journalist who has never heard of you?
- ❏ Identify two or three journalists likely to be interested in your work. Invite them for a coffee.
- ❏ Look at your year ahead. Decide on two or three moments when you will invest resource in PR.
- ❏ Review the ‘What makes news?’ checklist. Think like a journalist and work with what you have.
- ❏ Set aside budget for photography - or find a photographer who will volunteer for you.

QUESTIONS AND THOUGHTS?

riot

Let's create work that lasts.

Contact:

caitlin@riotcommunications.com
kate@riotcommunications.com

Figurative

www.figurative.org.uk