Simple ways to raise your profile: A PR guide for the cultural and creative sectors

Transcript

15 October 2026, 12:00PM

Francesca Sanderson 1:57

Thanks to everyone for joining us today for this introduction to PR for cultural organisations. A couple of housekeeping things. This webinar will be recorded and published on our website. So do please, if you find it helpful, feel free to point other people to it in due course. And live captions are available. So, if you click on 'more' and then go to 'language and speech' and 'show live captions' on Teams, or you can also click 'Alt', 'Shift' and 'C' on your keyboard.

Before handing over to the brilliant Kate and Caitlin from Riot, who are very kindly delivering this for us today, just a little bit about Figurative. We're an independent charity. We were incubated for nine years in Nestor and then spun out as an independent organisation two years ago. It's gone very quickly. And we are dedicated to impact, investment and innovation in the cultural sector. So, we're always looking for ways to be additional and supportive to the sector.

We currently do this in several, through several routes focused around funding and social impact. We've got investment funds; our Arts & Culture Impact Fund is our currently open investment fund and that provides loans to purpose-driven UK cultural organisations.

We also have some philanthropy development work. So we are working in several places around the UK with place-based networks supporting cultural organisations to boost their contribution to civic identity and attract philanthropy that way.

We do a lot of research and advocacy, so this is mainly around new funding and impact models for the sector, how to demonstrate social impact, how to bring in new funding and investment. We've got one coming out soon on revenue participation agreements, so different types of financial instrument, and we launched one about decarbonisation and the economics there in June.

We also have an advisory business, so we do international development of arts funding and finance models.

And one of the other things we try and do is use our position in the sector to build a resource library. So having practical introductions to many topics, including financial reporting for charities; how to develop a theory of change, toolkits for collaborating with other arts organisations; uses, funding for AI, etc. If you look at our website, there are a few of those resources.

And that brings us to today's webinar, which is a quick guide to PR for cultural organisations. Many of you I know will be managing your PR alongside other responsibilities, as does the wonderful Maggie for us. So having a few key pointers and go-to plans can make a big difference.

We are really happy to be joined by Caitlin and Kate from Bright Communications. They're a consultancy specialising in PR for the cultural sector and they will lead the session with time and for questions at the end. So, without further ado, I will hand over to Kate and Caitlin. Thank you.

Caitlin Allen 5:03
Good stuff. OK, so. This is us. I'm Caitlin. I'm the Managing Director at Riot Communications and I will tell you a little bit more about us very shortly.

Kate Stote 5:26
Hi, I'm Kate Stote and I'm the Associate Director at Riot. Thanks everyone for joining us today. So as we've mentioned, the session is all about simple, practical ways to raise your profile and get people talking about your work. We'll look at identifying your USP, understanding what makes people pay attention, know who to approach and make more of the activity that you're already doing.

Obviously, there's a wide range of people with a wide range of experience on this call. So just to reiterate that this is an entry level session. So we can't obviously cover off every scenario, but we really hope that you leave with useful ideas that you can put into action straight away. And for anyone that wants to, or any PR or comms

people on the call that actually want to speak about a more specific challenge, we are really happy to do another call and follow-up session separately to discuss that. So please do get in contact with us after this presentation.

Caitlin Allen 6:29

Great. So a little bit more about us just to start. We are a communications consultancy. Most of our work is about connecting cultural institutions of all varieties and their leaders with new audiences to deliver lasting impact. So those two words, audiences and impact, are absolutely vital and sort of inform everything that we do.

We work all across the worlds of arts, culture and entertainment. So that ranges from publishing and TV through to theatre and comedy. It's very, very, very broad. We work in the museums and heritage space, so there we mean heritage institutions. But also heritage brands, - say, things like Winnie the Pooh and Peter Rabbit. And we also work across charity, philanthropy and the third sector. And there's, of course, a lot of crossover between these three areas. Lots of our clients in the arts and culture space are charities also. So, to bring that to life a little bit more, here is a quick snapshot of our clients. So, it's very diverse.

We work with Aardman, who are the Oscar-winning creators of Wallace and Gromit and Shaun the Sheep and Chicken Run, and many, many more brilliant creations. Publishers like Penguin Random House, Harper Collins, Bonnier. Institutions like the V&A Museum, Science Museum Group. Charities that range in size from Bookmark Reading Charity, which is an amazing literacy organisation, all the way through to Their World, which is a global education charity. And with foundations like, for example, the Genesis Foundation, which runs a whole range of programmes that supports early career artists, primarily in the performing arts.

Kate Stote 8:28

So we have the goal of this session. So we're just going to give you a quick overview of what we're going to cover. We're going to look at what makes news. We're going to look at press release basics, working with influencers and ambassadors, making the most of your events and projects. We're then going to look at a case study, which hopefully brings it all together. And you'll have five things to do now; so, a nice little

checklist of things that you can take away from here. So hopefully plenty of practical tips along the way.

So obviously the first big question is: what is PR? So it's so much more than just getting coverage. It helps people understand who you are and what you do and why it matters. It can raise awareness, it can build credibility, it can introduce your work to new audiences and give people a real reason to care. It's also about building lasting relationships with the media, your partners, your communities and your supporters.

So obviously you don't always need a huge budget. I think that's quite there in bold. You know, there are sort of, you can generate other PR opportunities without a huge budget. So often the best stories are already coming from your organisation. So, it could be from the people who are involved. It could be the community around you. It could be an exciting project you have coming up, a partnership or a milestone.

I think the key thing to do is take a step back and consider what someone outside your organisation might find interesting, surprising and worth sharing.

Caitlin Allen 10:08

So first up, we're going to talk a bit about crafting your messaging. And before we get into press release messaging or crafting sort of specific news stories, we wanted to zoom out a little bit and talk about nailing your narrative. So socially driven arts organisations and charities are often doing quite complex work. So you might be addressing a kind of specific and quite nuanced challenge in society. It might be multi-layered work. You might have multiple strands of programming that's quite hard to summarize under one kind of umbrella. You may have a duty of care towards the clients who work with your organisation and who you are providing services for.

So it can be quite complex to summarize that. But to engage the media, it is really, really vital that you can distil what you do into a brief and memorable pitch. So we would encourage everybody, if you have not done this work yet, to really think about how you can communicate that in a one sentence version, which is quite often what your opening pitch to journalists will be, and your one paragraph version that will become a boilerplate that you can use in all of the press releases that you put out.

For these brief versions, the one sentence version and the one paragraph version, it's essential that they're memorable and really easy for you to deliver. So they don't want to be too formally worded or complex in terms of the structure. They've got to be things that are really easy for you to deliver out loud and in conversation.

They have got to capture your USP. So at the same time as being clear and concise, they've got to communicate what is unique and special about your organisation compared to other organisations in that space.

Once you've got them, you should repeat them often. I think this is something that we can often be nervous about doing for fear of boring people or something like that, but it is absolutely essential that once you've got your key messaging and you've got your narrative, you are repeating it very often in all sorts of different communications.

People need to hear things multiple times before it really lands with them and they really take it on board. So repeating that narrative about your organisation at every opportunity you can is a really smart thing to do.

And then of course you should brief your staff, brief your trustees, brief your volunteers, everybody who works within the organisation in whatever capacity should be able to deliver that pitch, that one sentence, that one paragraph version with confidence so that it's really consistent, you're all hitting the same notes and landing those important key messages.

The next thing that we wanted to talk about is what makes news, because the temptation very often when you're looking at securing PR is to begin from a place of, well, this is what we want to say, this is what we want to talk about. But it can be much more productive and you're more likely to have success if you begin from a place of thinking about what a journalist needs to make a story. You know, they have requirements. So for you to translate what you want to be out there into something that they can run in their newspaper, online, on their radio show, we've got to be thinking about what works for them.

So we've put together a list of what makes news, starting with the obvious: something that is new. So something that's launching, something that's opening, something that's changing, new information that's being released into the world. That could be in the form of a survey that you've commissioned. It might be new data from your annual impact report that shows the power of what you have been doing.

Firsts are news – so the first time something's happened, whether that's in the country, in the city, in your area, potentially even within your organisation, if it's significant enough.

Milestones make for great news. So, you know, thinking about the world of arts, that might be X 1000 tickets that have been sold, that might be an amount of money that's been raised by the organisation or perhaps the number of young people that have been supported. These are things that I'm sure you're all tracking anyway, but they are great opportunities for news stories too.

Human interest is wonderful. So the media really, really love touching or surprising people stories. I think this can be trickier for charities or others of socially driven organisations because you will often have this duty of care towards the clients and that can involve confidentiality. So really appreciate that these can be trickier to uncover, but if you have people who have benefited from your work or participated in your work and they're willing to talk about what it's done for them, how it's impacted them, that is really, really powerful.

Next upon our list is timely. Is there a connection to something topical? Is there a seasonal moment or an anniversary that you can connect what you would like to say to make it newsworthy, to make it relevant to the news agenda?

Is it surprising? Things that are unexpected or unusual make the news. And I would really encourage you to think about this from the perspective of someone outside of your organisation. Sometimes when we're working within something, you know, we've become used to things, we sort of don't see them in that same way. So I really encourage you to look at that with sort of fresh eyes.

Do you have something that's visual? So the media are always extremely keen for strong imagery or video content. So, if you have something that would make for a lovely picture, that is great potential. That's a really good starting point.

And last on our list for now is, is it universal? So is it something that affects a large group, or that anyone can take part in? And with this one, we don't necessarily mean that you have to be providing a service for a kind of for, you know, a huge group of people or for anybody. But is there a way that you can invite the general public in if you're running an event? Could you invite people in that makes it really kind of open and accessible and relevant to that wider audience?

One of the, we asked everybody to submit alongside them signing up for this, any kind of particular PR challenges that they were facing. And somebody posed a question around how to secure national press attention when they are delivering work in a kind of specific geographic location. So how do you, how do you make, how do you become universal and relevant nationally if what you're delivering is happening in a kind of really specific geographical place. And one thought we had on that was, you know, setting yourself up as a great example of what can be achieved. So looking at compiling some information that really clearly shows what the issue was, what you have done and how that has, how that has led to positive change. If that's something that could be replicated elsewhere, that is a way to demonstrate that this is of interest beyond the kind of immediate community that you're working with.

So moving on to finding your story, a really good way of making sure that you have something that is a story that's going to work for people outside your organisations is explaining it to somebody who's never heard of you before. That is essentially what you're going to have to do with journalists. So work it out, out loud, talk it through: what's interesting, what's different, what's new, what's surprising about it, why does it matter and why should somebody care about this now? These are all the things that you would have to sort of talk through with the press. So working into it yourself first is a really good starting point.

And we've put together a little checklist here of things that you can ask yourself if

you're wondering if something has got PR potential. So here's our list. Is it new? Is it the first, the biggest, the oldest, or the only one of its kind? Any sort of superlative is good, has a good foundation for a PR story. Is there a human story? Do you have somebody who can speak about its impact? Is there an unexpected angle or aspect? Does it connect to something happening in the wider world? Is there a strong visual? And can you explain why it matters in one sentence? If the answer is yes to one or more of these, you may have a story on your hands.

Kate Stote 18:37

So the next point to look at is what's your aim? I think you need to be really clear about your aim, what you're trying to achieve, who you're trying to reach and what you want them to know about you. So it could be young audiences, local families, tourists, schools, funds or arts audiences. But once you know who you want to reach, think about where they get the information from, which media channels they're using, and how you're most likely to reach them. You don't need to be everywhere, so focus on the time or the place, the time and the places your audiences already use and trust.

So then just thinking, and everyone always wants like the big piece of coverage in national news straight away, but as tempting as it is, your local media listings can often be the most impactful and powerful way to go. They sort of help you reach the people on your doorstep, and they strengthen your community relationships. They encourage attendance. So start by thinking about where your audience is already looking for those news events and things to do, because sometimes the most valuable coverage definitely comes from close to home. So don't overlook it.

So what we'd suggest you do here is focus on building relationships with a small number of journalists or publications and some local influencers as well, the ones that really, really matter to you. Follow their work, understand what they cover and only send them stories that are relevant because obviously they don't want to read lots of irrelevant things there. And I think it's really important that you think about the relationship. So obviously, as with everything in life, relationships take time. So don't just wait until you actually need that piece of coverage. You need to have started speaking to them before that. You can introduce yourself, you can offer to meet them for a coffee, let them know where you can provide useful insights,

especially if you have an expert voice, you know, tell them all about that. Journalists are so much more likely to approach you for a comment if they already know who you are and what you can offer them.

Caitlin Allen 20:49

So next up, we're going to talk a bit about press materials. So you have a story on your hands. What emphasis do you need to turn that into press coverage? And we're going to begin with press release basics.

So a press release does not need to be complicated. It is not a sort of mysterious document that is complex to put together. It just needs to be a clear and useful explanation of your story.

And we say useful, we mean that in a sort of pretty literal way. You want the journalist to be able to take your press release and turn it into a news article with as little effort as possible, essentially help them do their job, give them something that is the foundation of an article so that they just need to do a kind of light edit to it. So, you know, write it in a style that sort of is, you know, matches news coverage.

From your press release, the journalist should be able to very quickly understand the five W's. Who is involved in this? What's happening? Where is it happening? When is it happening? Why does it matter? And why now? I think that last one is really, really vital. That harks back to the what makes news, that we talked through earlier.

Journalists need a reason to run a story at a particular time. You know, they will rarely just do something because it's something that they like. It's got to have, there's got to be a reason for it at this particular moment in time. That might be your new information, it might be your anniversary, it might be a milestone that you've hit – but there's got to be a reason why they would do that story now.

In terms of structure, this is what you're aiming for. So your headline should just make the story clear. Do not worry about puns or word play or doing anything clever with the headline of your press release. That is the job of the sub editors at the newspaper. Your job is just to get across very, very clearly what your story is.

Similarly for the introduction, so that needs to be your first paragraph is one sentence that summarises the news story and gets it all across as concisely as you can. You have space to bring in the details in subsequent paragraphs. So a press release should move from a one sentence summary into more detail as you progress through it.

You'll want to bring it to life with quotes, with human voices. Ideally, you will have two. Somebody from within your organisation who can talk about, you know, why you've done that piece of work, why it's so important, why it's so timely, why it's so essential, and somebody who has participated in the work, someone who's benefited from the work, somebody who can talk about, you know, what it's meant to them, what it's done for them.

You want all your practical information in there, dates, location, tickets, website, anything that people will need to follow up and learn more and, you know, participate and join in with what you're doing. And your contact details, have it all in one place, make it super straightforward for journalists to get in touch with you, add your e-mail address, add your phone number at the bottom.

And I think a final point on this when you're thinking about putting your press releases together is to remember that lots of UK newspapers, their in-house style, the way that they write is for a reading age of about 14 years old. So that means that they write in a very kind of clear way, using straightforward language, very kind of straightforward sentence structure, minimal jargon.

And it's a really, really good idea, just before you go to put your press release together, to go and go onto the website of, you know, one of your top targets, one of the places that you're really hoping will run the story, and read a few articles. They don't have to be articles that are covering a similar topic, but if you just read a few and sort of immerse yourself in the style and how a journalist writes, that's really, really useful in terms of making sure you're going to be giving a journalist something that they can turn into a story with as little work as possible.

The next one is to talk about visuals. So if you are aiming for anything more than a

sort of tiny news in brief piece, you will need some strong visuals to go alongside your press release. You'll need it for press, but also for a website, digital, social media channels. So we really recommend investing in photography.

That might mean setting aside some budgets for a photographer for your key events at the beginning of the year. But there is another way to do it. I know a couple of brilliant small arts organisations who have built relationships with volunteer photographers. So they have found photographers with press experience who are happy to give, you know, a couple of days of their time a year to come along and get pictures from their events. I'm sure you all have volunteers working with you in various different capacities, but it's a really smart thing to do to find somebody with a specific skill set who's willing to support you in this way.

You should always plan your pictures in advance. So you will rarely be in a position where you're running an event or you've got some activation happening and you can pause everything that's going on for the photographer to kind of tweak the setup and move things around and get the perfect picture. So you need to think beforehand about the space. You have to work with the scale, who do you want in those images, how are you going to get your branding in in a way that will work. So plan in advance, brief your photographer as much as you possibly can and that will set you up for success.

You should always include people in your press photography. If you have a look through the websites of The Guardian or the BBC, you will find that probably 19 out of 20 of the images on their websites feature people. So always include people experiencing, participating, not just empty spaces.

Make sure you get a variety of shots. So you want some natural, some posed, some portraits, some landscape. If you have a variety, then you're going to be in a good position if the picture desk needs something that can be cropped into a square or something like that. You want range, so you've got options.

It's really important to keep your branding subtle. So very highly branded images are less likely to be used by the media. It feels too much like advertising. So you need to think cleverly about how you're going to get your branding or your kind of essential

brand imagery into that kind of picture. It's not too overt.

You need to check permissions and I imagine, you know, all organisations who are sort of, you know, socially driven arts organisations and charities will be really great at this and this sort of, you know, safeguarding and permissions, but you make sure to get consent from anyone featured and make sure you caption your images. So very often, your photography will end up with a different contact. It will end up on the picture desk. It won't be with the journalist who has written up the story. The picture desk needs the information too. They need a caption which sums up what's happening in the image very clearly.

Next up, we have a few examples of different types of photography that work well just to kind of really bring this to life. So on the left here, we've got a very classic press photo for museums, galleries, exhibition openings, anything like that. They obviously want to showcase, showcase the work, showcase what people can see. You really want people to get a feel for what the experience of visiting something like this will be like. But you've got to have people in the shot. This is a really great way to get around that.

In the middle is an example from a recent campaign that we had done for a lovely Winnie the Pooh anniversary. It was all about donating copies of Winnie the Pooh to community phone box libraries. So we've got Sally Phillips, who is the face of the campaign. They're central in the photo, face to camera, very clearly you can identify who that is. We've got the context of the red phone box and the books there. And our branding is an image through this Winnie the Pooh book that Sally is holding. So it's not a kind of logo, but it's there. The messaging is there. The thing that we want people to be aware of is there in the image.

And on the right is a rare example of a press shot that works without any people in it. And Kate is going to talk through that one in a little bit as part of our case study. And then we have a couple of landscape examples here. Something that you will notice in both of these photos is that there are three people in them and that's something that we would really recommend. If you're targeting the nationals, you want two or three people in your photo as a general rule.

There is a really interesting difference here between sort of local and regional news outlets, and nationals. So your regional titles, your local titles will very happily publish photographs of especially large groups of school children because their parents will go out and each parent will buy 10 copies each. So that is something they're very, very happy to do. But it is really rare to see a larger group of people in the UK national papers: they have a strong preference for two or three. If you see a bigger group, it will likely be sort of world leaders, it will be royal family, it will be celebrities at an awards do. So I would be, if you're looking to target both, if you want your local newspaper, but you're also looking for a national, make sure that you have both, not just a sort of big group photo, as that will not fly with the nationals.

I think lastly in this little section, we've got a toolkit here of things that are really useful for you to have so that as and when you have a story, you're prepared and you're kind of good to go with the essentials. So first up is a media list of the publications that matter to you. Rather than sort of a general aim to have press coverage, you really need to know where you want that to be; target the publications that matter and they're going to make a difference for you.

You want your boilerplate, that's your one paragraph summary of your organisation, and then an image library. So ideally if you have a story and you really think it's got potential, you want new imagery that is specific to your story and ties in with your story, and it’s brand new and it's sort of taken in the moment. If you do not have that, it's useful to have an image library of things that you could use at any moment that sort of meet the criteria we've talked about.

You want spokespeople both from inside and outside the organisation, including in an ideal world case studies. You can speak about their lived experience. Stats are wonderful. So both stats show the need for your work and your impact. So you can show why this is really an issue that we should all care about and be engaged with and what you are doing to address it.

And a simple plan that allows you to look ahead. Lots of, there was a sort of theme in the challenges that people shared with us. Lots of people flagged that they are doing PR as one part of their role and their sort of core function actually sits elsewhere. So they're doing sort of PR as an additional part of the job, but they have a real kind of

resource challenge. There isn't a dedicated PR person. Totally hear that. And for lots of people, it's not going to be a, it's not going to be possible to do a sort of always on PR campaign all the way through the year. So we would really recommend that you look ahead, look at what you have going on in the next 12 months, use that news checklist to sort of identify what your biggest opportunities are, and decide beforehand where and when you are going to invest your time.

Kate Stote 32:33

Nice. So you've got your PR toolkits and now we're going to go on to look at some additional tactics. So the first one that we're going to look at is working with influencers. And here we've put you another nice little checklist that you can go through when looking to work with one. But I think this just follows, you know, some really simple steps.

So just to go through them with you, you know: first be clear about your goal, the people and the content and the audience, make sure that they're genuinely relevant to you. Look at what that person's posting, how people are engaging with that content and what previous partners they've worked with and if they feel authentic.

And then there's the approach. So when you approach them, explain clearly what the opportunity is, what you're offering, what you'd like them to do. And if you need guaranteed content or any specific messaging, I think that you really do need to put some budget aside to make sure that it hits all the all the key messages for you. But if you don't have any budget, influencers still absolutely love free tickets. They love previews and they love any behind the scenes content that that you can offer them, that's all still really appealing. So it's always best to get in touch first and see how you can work together.

And then again, once you've once you've got them involved, you know, it's giving them all the essential information and then just really allowing them to have their own creative freedom, because the content still needs to sound like them. That's why they've got all those followers. That's why those followers follow them. So it can't suddenly be completely off, you know, off in a different direction and very, very branded. So I think you also have to take note of that sort of side of things. And then finally, you know, again, going back to the building your relationship, you know,

maintain that relationship, stay in contact afterwards, continue to invite them to any event or anything else that you have coming up and then work with them to see what the posts and the activity actually achieved.

So another one to work with is ambassadors. And as soon as we say ambassadors, everyone thinks famous people, but you don't always, it doesn't always need to be a famous person that supports your charity, for instance. There're so many other people that you can think about. There're so many people out there that already believe in your work. And, you know, if they can talk about it genuinely with genuine enthusiasm, they are also really good people to partner with. So just some examples here of who those people could be. They could be an artist, a volunteer, a participant, a visitor, or a local community figure. So what I think really matters is the real connection and what you can do and what they can and how they can tell your story in the most authentic way.

So again, just make it easy for them. You know, make sure you give them the clear information, the key messages that we talked about earlier, any images that you can share with them to bring the story to life. But I think it's also really important that they do speak in their own voice and to keep it nice and authentic.

Caitlin Allen 35:48

And we're just going to briefly now touch on events, really thinking again about maximising on activity that you're already doing, understanding that everyone is time poor and that PR can be an extra job on top of an already very, very full to-do list. So if you are putting on an event, think about how it could work harder for you.

Could you invite along a journalist that you've been building a relationship with to bring them behind the scenes and really show them firsthand the impact of your work? There is nothing like witnessing firsthand what your work is doing for the communities that you are supporting.

Could you invite along influencers or content creators that you have been building relationships with to help the event travel beyond the room, beyond the people who are physically present there to a wider audience through their platforms?

Could you ask an ambassador or a special guest to join you for the event that you're putting on? That might generate a photo opportunity, a strong image. If you have an ambassador that's sort of recognisable, either on a national level or on a local level, that will generate a photo ops that will help you make more of that event.

And could you combine it with another milestone if you have something coming up? you know, you're about to hit a milestone and you can see that, you know, you've been tracking and you've got something brilliant that you're about to achieve. Could you combine it with that? Could you combine it with an anniversary or a calendar moment? All of the different things that we've talked about are different sort of types of news stories, but if you can combine and make multiple into one moment, that's going to be more powerful and generate more results on interest.

Kate Stote 37:30

So we've added in a case study here, which hopefully sort of brings together several of the tips that we've given today. Also, this is something that we worked on that didn't have a huge production budget. It mainly covered our time, a photographer, and it was really focused on making the most of the exhibition itself.

So it was at the Young V&A. I don't know if any of you saw the Inside Aardman exhibition that opened earlier this year, but we were working with the Young V&A to launch them. So the brief from them was to make sure that we're reinforcing their reputation, making it the biggest exhibition ever and making it a must visit family destination. We also had their 50th anniversary as well. So lots of really nice touch-points to speak to media about.

So how we went about doing that, you can see this image on the right-hand side, which Caitlin touched on earlier. But so we set up this really fun, playful photo shoot with Wallace and Gromit in and around the Young V&A, because we didn't have any imagery beforehand. So we had to sort of, we needed a strong image to launch the campaign. And so this is the image that we took and we used for our tickets on sale announcement. And that was back in November before. And then, and this, this was, this sort of went everywhere. I mean, obviously there's huge fans out there for Wallace and Gromit, but it really became our hero image for the whole campaign.

And so it meant that we got to get loads of great listings coverage on the lead up to the actual exhibition. And then just before the exhibition, we set up a photo call where we invited photographers and broadcast media down to come and obviously have a first look, capture their images. And then we also peppered that with, we invited some young school children to be there so they could be on camera and they could also be in the shots, which again is something that, because it was obviously targeted at families, something that the media really loved to see. And we also then invited influencers down so they kind of got the first look before it opened to the public.

So, and yeah, the results were really good. I have a quick snapshot of what some of the coverage looked like, but on the day of opening, it was in every single, you know, big print pieces in every single national. And you can see we sort of got pages in the Sun, the Express, and the Mirror, and you can sort of see how the images work. You know, lots of people use the Young V&A and, you know, we were saying about the branding earlier, sort of very subtle branding, but it really clearly shows you like what the exhibition is and where it is just by looking at that picture, you almost don't need any sort of copy around it. And the children worked really, really well as well. So that really encouraged broadcast people to come down. I'm sorry if you can hear the drilling in the background. No, okay. So that, you know, encouraged broadcast to come down and obviously they wanted to interview the children and see, you know, get their thoughts on that, on what they thought about the exhibition. And then we had the curator there on hand, who obviously gave all the background knowledge to it. So it was a really successful campaign and got some wonderful broadcast pieces, especially on sort of ITV London. And as a result of that, I think the exhibition sold out for the first month on opening day straight away, and was the biggest selling exhibition the Young V&A have had to date. That's a really successful campaign for us.

But I guess the key sort of take away from this is that, you know, you don't always need, it doesn't always need to be an expensive activation. You know, you need the strong story, a good picture and a well-timed approach, and that really, really helped bring this project to life.

CA **Caitlin Allen** 41:16

So as Kate said at the beginning, we really wanted to end with five things that hopefully, you know, you can take away and start doing right away. Perhaps these won't be relevant to everybody or all five would be relevant to everyone, but hopefully there's something in here that is something that you can, you know, start doing right away and will hopefully help with your PR work going forward.

So on our list, we've got, firstly, draft or review if it exists already, your elevator pitch. Will it work for a journalist who has never heard of you before? Is it clear and concise whilst also communicating what is unique about your organisation? That's really essential.

Next up, we would recommend identifying two or three journalists who are likely to be interested in your work and reach out to them. Reach out to them now. Don't wait until you've got a news story. Get in touch with them and invite them for coffee. It could be in person, it could be online if you're not in the same city, but ask them for the opportunity to tell them about who you are and what you do and what you're expert in so that they are aware of you.

And the next time you would like them to run something, they've already primed, they're already briefed, they get it already, you'll have less of a sell on your hands when the moment comes that you would like press coverage. It might be that there is a particular title that writes for the sector that you work in. So, if you are a literacy organisation, The Bookseller is likely to be important to you and somewhere you would aspire to get coverage. If you are in theatre and performing arts, then The Stage is very likely to be on your list. So one of your two or three journalists might be somebody who works for the trade title that is relevant to you. And the others might be a local journalist, might be someone on the local newspaper or a BBC radio producer. But do that work before you need to deploy those relationships. Try and get to know them in advance of needing them.

Look at your year ahead and decide on the two or three moments when you will invest resource in PR. We know it's not possible for it to be and always on all the time for everybody. So pick those moments in advance and plan for them and hopefully that will help with that resource challenge.

Review the ‘what makes news’ checklist. We're happy this webinar will be available afterwards and we're happy to circulate the deck. But think like a journalist. Think from that point of view first and work with what you have because you absolutely will have things that fit this criteria over the coming months.

And set aside budget for photography or find a photographer who will volunteer for you. Images are more important than ever, so there's something that is absolutely worth investing in, whether that is budget or your time to find a lovely supporter who will help you out with that work.

That brings us to the end of our slides. As Kate said up top, we are very, very happy to hear from anybody afterwards. If you have a sort of specific challenge, if you're working in a comms function and you have something specific that you would like help with troubleshooting, please do get in touch with us. We are really, really, very happy to hear from you.

I think we do – if anyone has a question that you would like to pose now, you know, we're here for it. We can try and answer any questions that you have. But please do also know that that's an option. You can get in touch with us after this and we'll be really happy to chat.

KS **Kate Stote** 44:32
Thank you.

CA **Caitlin Allen** 44:46
I wonder if, oh, I'm going to have it just open the chat because I couldn't see it whilst we were talking. No, I think perhaps Maggie, we can hand over to you and just, yes, reiterate that we're really happy to hear from people after this.

MG **Maggie Gray** 45:04
That's great. Thank you so much, Caitlin and Kate. It's great to have such a clear sort of overview and some really useful tips there about what makes a story, how you think about audiences, where and how to pitch and what kind of photos to use is

fascinating as well. So I've definitely got some very useful takeaways from this and I hope everyone else has too.

I've just got a few small things before we go. The slides and webinar recording will be added to the Figurative resources page, figurative.org.uk/resources. We'll e-mail you the link to that page once it's been updated so that you've got access to everything shared here. Don't forget to explore the other webinars and toolkits on that page. We've got some really interesting, yeah, sort of resources looking at impact strategy, business models, AI, and how to collaborate with other organisations, among other things. So we hope you'll find that useful too.

We're constantly trying to build on that resource kit. So do contact us if there are any specific practical skills or areas that you're looking to learn more about. We're always keen to hear suggestions and try to sort of build that into our forward like resources program. So any suggestions, do send them our way.

And please sign up to our newsletter, follow us on LinkedIn for future updates and webinars and events. But thank you again for coming. I think that's everything. Thank you very much. And thanks again, Caitlin and Kate, for a really fascinating webinar.

CA **Caitlin Allen** 46:43
Thanks, everyone.

KS **Kate Stote** 46:43
Thanks, everyone. Thank you. Bye-bye.

MG **Maggie Gray** 46:44
All right.

CA **Caitlin Allen** 46:46
Bye.

end