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# East Midlands Chamber

## An introduction to PR



Dan Robinson  
Media and Communications Manager

# Chamber PR support

- Business Network magazine
- Email newsletters – Business Network weekly

# Business Network magazine



BUSINESS  
**network** @EMCBizNetwork

# Business Network magazine

- Circulation of 5,000 and estimated readership of 15,000 – sent to business leaders across the East Midlands
- Published 10 times a year (double issues in July/Aug and Dec/Jan) both in print and online
- Delivered in partnership with Kemps Publishing, which deals with advertising

# Magazine themes 2023

**February:** Generation Next

**March:** Manufacturing and trade

**April:** Smart business and smart technology

**May:** Travel and tourism

**June:** Environmental, social and governance (ESG)

**July/August:** People and skills

**September:** Sustainable places

**October:** TBC

**November:** Future of energy

**December/January:** TBC

*\*Subject to change*

# Magazine sections

- Member News
- Appointments
- Chamber News
- Sustainable East Midlands
- Business support
  - Digital & Technology
  - Legal
  - Finance
  - Skills
  - Property
  - Information
- Main features (big interview, focus feature, politics, international trade)

# Types of articles

- News stories
- Thought leadership (AKA educational articles, op-eds, byline features)
- Member Focus monthly feature
- Features written by editor (big interview, focus feature, politics, international)
- Kemps sales features - found in [media pack](#) (themes include apprenticeships, logistics & transportation, conferencing & events)



# What makes a good news story?

- Clue is in the name – news is **new** or current
- Should be something readers want/need to know about. Who will care?
- Identify a news hook that's interesting to a wide business audience. It should be:
  - Timely
  - Relevant
  - Have magnitude
- Examples:
  - Growth – new jobs, new premises, turnover growth, mergers & acquisitions
  - Success stories – awards, certification, big contract wins
  - Appointments of new staff
  - Case studies – innovation, collaboration
  - Unique research
  - New business models and products
  - Key events
  - CSR/ESG engagement

# Finding news in a 'boring' story

“**Company does job**” – eg web designer designs website for client in Kent; commercial property agency leases office. So what?

But, it may make a news story if you can answer these questions:

- Is the client a household name?
- Or is it a public body? Eg an NHS trust, so perhaps an opportunity to roll this project out further
- Has there been a particular impact on the client with learnings that can be adopted elsewhere?
- Does it have a wider impact on a community or economy?
- Have you done something particularly innovative?
- Is there some data behind this that tells a story?

# Finding news in a 'boring' story

**"We didn't really do much"** – eg company is just one of many in supply chain of major contract

But it may make a news story if you can answer these questions:

- Can you give more details about the role you played?
- Did it create/sustain jobs at your company?
- Is this just the latest in a range of big companies/projects you've been involved with?
- Can you demonstrate innovation in your input?

# How to write a news story

News stories should cover six basic ingredients – who, what, where, when, why and how

## Paragraph 1

Sum up the news story and introduce the business/person that it's about

## Paragraphs 2-3

Put the story in context and who else is involved, how it came about and highlight why it's important

## Paragraph 4

Include a quote to add opinion – explain why this is important, why people should care etc

## Thereafter

More relevant information, perhaps including a timeline of events and further details, as well as another quote (maybe from a client)

# Things to remember

- Include a brief company background – where it's based, when it was founded, what it does, number of employees, turnover (if willing to share)
- Is there any relevant info that readers should know about – recent acquisitions, other projects you've worked on?
- Details should be tangible – when demonstrating growth, give numbers and dates
- Always write in the third person
- Take a factual tone – opinions should only go into quotes
- But make sure there is at least one quote – and that it's not just a single line
- Include full names and job titles for people quoted
- Word count is flexible but a rough guide is 300-600 words

# How NOT to write a press release

- It should not be an advertorial. This means using phrases that would be more appropriate in marketing material
  - “Company A is the leading manufacturer of life-size plastic sheep”
  - “Company B is made up of a dedicated team of engineers who are willing to go above and beyond what is necessary...”
- It should not read like it was lifted from the ‘About Us’ section of your website or as a company CV. We’ll cut out what we deem to be promotional makeweight
- Don’t bury the news line – tell us what your story is from the very beginning

# Press release good example



- Headline and summary are useful for us to understand what the story is about very quickly
- Lots of interesting news hooks in this story
  - Business growth – demonstrated by tangible numbers for turnover, jobs and HQ relocation
  - New business model launched
  - Covid relevance – how a business has prospered despite the pandemic
  - Young entrepreneur success story
- Background to business, including when it was founded, what it does, number of customers (there was also a 'notes to editors' at the bottom including customer names)
- Features two strong quotes

## CCM Group Experiences Record Breaking Year Following Company Restructure and Ambitious Growth Plans

*Young entrepreneur and Group Director at Nottinghamshire based creative agency, Trent Peek, has experienced a groundbreaking year after making the decision to restructure, invest and launch a new business model.*

Nottinghamshire business, [CCM Group](#), was fortunate enough to experience vast growth and tremendous success throughout 2020, thanks to its innovative team, forward-thinking approach and flexible business model.

Trent Peek, Group Director at CCM, made the bold decision during 2020 to restructure the business for future growth, invest in its people and services, all alongside launching a new B2C brand. Not only has CCM Group grown in headcount and services, but since 2019, the business has quadrupled its turnover from £3,000,000 to a projected £12,000,000 this financial year.

Trent Peek explains, "After a monumental recruitment drive, our employee headcount has tripled from 16 to 46, with the majority of the onboarding taking place between the months of March and September 2020. It has been a whirlwind of a year, with so many exciting changes taking place across the company. I feel lucky and privileged to have been able to welcome lots of amazing people to the team who've helped us get to where we are now."

Such growth has seen Trent and the directors invest heavily in the business, relocating the company from its Mansfield based workplace to a three story, 12,000 sq.ft building including a 7,000 sq.ft warehouse in Huthwaite, Nottinghamshire, one of the biggest changes CCM has experienced in over 20 years.

Launched in 1997, the family business has developed and changed significantly over the years, expanding its business offering from print management, through to marketing services, product fulfilment and now consumer facing brands. At the start of the pandemic, Trent decided to shift CCM's strategy and focus, utilising its existing, robust supply chain to provide organisations with the much-needed goods and services they couldn't access elsewhere. This change in direction is what became the driving force behind the creation of a successful consumer facing brand, [Trusted PPE](#), offering an honest, accessible and personable service to over 20,000 customers since launching in April 2020.

Richard Ardis, Managing Director at CCM Axis adds, "What Trent and the team have achieved over the past year is nothing short of incredible, and what is even more astounding is that it's all been achieved before Trent turned 30 years of age. Trent hasn't only managed to create a fantastic working environment for everyone at CCM, but he's proven himself to be an inspiring young leader that isn't afraid to take risks for the better."

For more information on the various services CCM Group offer, head to their website at [www.weareccm.co.uk](http://www.weareccm.co.uk).

-Ends-

# Thought leadership articles

- Opinion articles authored by a senior representative within an organisation. They should be written in a first-person perspective
- The topic covered should be interesting and informative to readers – and ideally something they haven't read about elsewhere. It may build on a newsworthy topic or be more generic
- This is an opportunity for a company/individual to position themselves as an expert on this subject. Therefore, the article should be educational, rather than using it as an opportunity to promote the company's own services
- It's also not an opportunity for you to shout about how you've helped customers – if you want to use case studies, it's probably more worthy as a news story
- Word count should be between 500-700 words



# Thought leadership structure

- Write freely and be conversational
- Don't use lots of bullet or numbered points
- Briefly explain at the top why the subject is important to our readers and introduce some background if it's not widely known, including latest developments
- Sub-headings can help guide the structure, whether as a 'listicle' or just introducing new sub-topics
- It should provide some commentary or advice
- You may wish to end with a prediction, final piece of advice or call to action (which shouldn't be a business pitch)

# Thought leadership good example

- This is a topical article as it responds to a news story
- It sets out the background to a change in the law and then explains the impacts this has
- Sub-headings are used to guide the narrative and make key points
- While there's no information about the author's business or contact details, the reader will be able to identify him as an expert in this field should they need support – this is the marketing benefit of PR

## Avoiding a Brexit-induced staffing crisis

The introduction of the UK's new immigration rules in November 2020 and the end of European free movement requires British companies to navigate more red tape post-Brexit, but this shouldn't deter companies from recruiting skilled workers from across the EU and further afield to drive growth. **Thalej Vasishtha** (pictured), corporate immigration law specialist and managing director of Chamber patron Paragon Law, explains how firms can continue to access overseas employees.



### OBTAIN A SKILLED WORKER LICENCE

From 1 January 2021, UK employers wishing to recruit a skilled migrant worker need to have checked if their vacancy is eligible for a sponsor licence, be knowledgeable of their obligations under the system and have obtained the relevant skilled worker licence for the category of employment.

To offer employment to an EU and non-EU national under the Government's new points-based immigration system, a business must be registered as a sponsor with the Home Office, the job on offer must be skilled at the appropriate level and the worker should be paid the appropriate salary according to the job and experience.

Therefore, for a business, the first essential step is to acquire a skilled worker licence because, without this, a business will not be able to move ahead in the recruitment process. Generally, it is taking the Home Office up to eight weeks to deal with licence applications. When you add to this the time it will take the business to be in a position to apply, the advice is to act quickly and secure the skilled worker licence for the business – which in turn will allow the business to offer a role to skilled overseas workers without further delay.



From our experience, this key message failed to reach many businesses, or employers may have chosen to delay the process. However, compliance is essential so the process needs careful planning and the requirements are not going to go away. Employers that have not yet done so must agree and set in motion their response to the changing regulations. Further information detailing the required action is available on the gov.uk website.

### ALLOW ENOUGH TIME

According to data from the Home Office, in December 2020, just 5% of British companies had applied for a sponsor licence. This has resulted in increased demand on the Home Office throughout the early part of this year, which means applications could take longer. It can be a time-consuming process to get the business ready to apply so it's best to allow adequate time.

Once the application is filed, as part of the decision-making

process, a company may be visited by the Home Office for an audit to ensure they are compliant and acting legally. Much of our work involves advising businesses on ensuring they are aware of their sponsorship duties, and setting up systems and processes to ensure the company will remain compliant during the duration of their sponsorship of foreign workers.

### PREPARATION IS THE KEY

Preparation of the skilled worker licence application is the key to a successful outcome. A business should be fit and ready for a pre-registration audit and ensure all documents required in support of the application are in order.

If an application is unsuccessful, there is a six-month cooling off period before a business can apply again. Not having access to staff could present significant skills shortages.

### SEEK PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

If you have not already done so, I strongly recommend you apply for a licence now and seek professional advice regarding your post-Brexit recruitment strategy if you are unsure of your requirements. We are always here to help Chamber members and as part of our relationship we will provide an initial free consultation to members followed by a written tailored summary.

# Images

- Please send images in colour and hi-res (**at least 1MB**). Anything smaller than this may not reproduce well in print
- Send images as JPEGs – not embedded into press releases
- The better the image, the most likely the article is to get a prominent position in the magazine
- A headshot is a head and shoulders image with a plain background (ideally not a holiday photo!) and is welcome – but the best images are more dynamic and may feature team shots with a photogenic backdrop
- Logos are an appropriate substitute for images

# Deadlines

- Deadlines for articles are the **beginning of the month before** the magazine edition you'd prefer to feature in. For example, send by the beginning of March for the April issue
- However, this doesn't guarantee a slot in the April edition and the editor will need to balance the number of member submissions with the number of pages in the publication
- If there's a particularly pressing need for it to go into a certain edition, please state this clearly and explain why
- Articles that aren't of a time-sensitive nature may be held back until a later edition, but it's unlikely this will be more than a couple of months

# Housekeeping

- Send articles as text in an email or in Word documents – not PDFs or Notepad
- Don't send newsletters or links to a webpage or blog – send press releases or bespoke thought leadership articles
- We are unable to provide proofs before publication due to time pressure and the sheer number of submissions
- We reserve the right to edit submissions accordingly to ensure content is aligned to the look, feel, style and consistency of the magazine
- Please don't use words that have a copyright or trademark sign – we can't reproduce such signs
- Don't use footnotes for references – just write out where research came from
- Calls to action will only be used if:
  - A company is offering something for free
  - Chamber members can benefit from an exclusive offer
  - There's a charitable URL, such as a JustGiving page
  - The call to action is pivotal to the story, such as if someone is looking for the business community to reach out for a new project

# Other marketing opportunities

- Business Network Weekly email newsletter for promoting news and events (we can link to your website) - send articles to [jasmine.Thompson@emc-dnl.co.uk](mailto:jasmine.Thompson@emc-dnl.co.uk)
- Member-to-member offers – in the [Supporting Growth section](#) of our website
- Ad-hoc social media support (if it's useful to Chamber members)

# Thank you

We are hugely grateful for your contributions and look forward to reading about the latest news and opinions within our membership

Please send articles to [dan.robinson@emc-dnl.co.uk](mailto:dan.robinson@emc-dnl.co.uk) and [jasmine.thompson@emc-dnl.co.uk](mailto:jasmine.thompson@emc-dnl.co.uk)