

PRCA Public Affairs and Lobbying Group Meeting

Friday 31st March, 08:30 – 10:00

Venue: Food and Drink Federation (10 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SL)

Attendees:

- Burhan Al-Gailani, Brands2 Life
- Liam Herbert, Chelgate
- Jayne Almond, Food and Drink Federation
- Antonio Dorileo, Food and Drink Federation
- Matthew Evans, Food and Drink Federation
- Jonathan Millman, PLMR
- Nicholas Dunn-Mcafee, PRCA
- Neha Khatwani, PRCA
- Emma Pointer, Weber Shandwick (Vice-Chair)
- Chris Rogers, Whitehouse Consultancy
- Lionel Zetter, Zetter's Political Services (Chair)

1. ORCL updates

- **Nicholas** and **Neha** briefed the Group on ORCL's recent guidance on APPGs and the code of conduct consultation. The Registrar's guidance aligned with the PRCA's response to the code of conduct consultation. The Registrar would be reviewing organisations who declare the "other" code of conduct on a case by case basis. She would not be pursuing a voluntary code of conduct either.
- The Group discussed the Registrar's guidance on APPG, which refers to the principles of the Act. Organisations who provide support services for APPGs must always consider that making a direct and relevant contact with a Minister is always a registerable activity despite the complex funding system of APPGs.
- **Chris** raised concerns about the way the Registrar wants clients and sponsors declared.
- **Nicholas** and **Neha** agreed to raise the issue with the Registrar at their next meeting.
- The Group discussed their concerns about APPGs and the public not understanding their function which could potentially paint the industry in a negative manner.

2. PRCA Mental and Physical Health Campaign

- **Neha** and **Nicholas** updated the Group on the PRCA's Mental and Physical Health Campaign. The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness about how mental health issues affect employees in the industry. The PRCA is also looking at raising awareness about how key players in the industry are implementing policies in the workplace to address and manage employee wellbeing. The

PRCA is looking at producing a toolkit which will host blogs, case studies showcasing the policies being implemented across the industry, useful resources, and recommendations for the industry. The PRCA will also be launching a survey to assess how attitudes towards mental health issues have changed since the last PRCA/PRWeek survey in 2015.

3. PRCA's work on the gender pay gap

- **Nicholas** briefed the Group on the PRCA's ongoing work on the gender pay gap. With the upcoming legislation on mandatory gender pay gap reporting which would affect employers with 250 or more employees, the PRCA has partnered with the Government Equalities Office to ensure that members are aware of the legislation and encourage the industry to consider voluntary disclosure as well.
- The Group discussed the fact that the PR and communications industry is in a difficult position considering that it is female dominated but still has a persistent gender pay gap. The legislation would also only affect 6 agencies in the industry.
- **Nicholas** also mentioned that there are several agencies in the industry that are voluntarily disclosing their gender pay gap. The PRCA is hoping to encourage more agencies to report their gender pay gap.

4. PRCA's work on "fake news"

- **Nicholas** and **Neha** updated the Group on the PRCA's work on "fake news" which started with its response to the Culture, Media, and Sport's Committee "fake news" inquiry. The PRCA will also be responding to Labour's inquiry on the issue. The issue is clearly important for the industry given that the industry heavily relies on the public's trust in the media. The PRCA's position on the issue is that social media sites should have a more robust editorial policy and should alert users of "fake news" but at the same time users are responsible for sharing content and therefore should be sceptical of the news they read online from.
- The Group discussed issues surrounding "fake news" and the difficulty in quantifying the term. It effectively links to trust and the public's scepticism of traditional media and mainstream politics.

5. PRCA Review of Political Predictions

- **Nicholas** updated the Group on the PRCA's ongoing Review of Political Predictions which is headed by PRCA Board Member and Connect Communications MD Andy Sawford. The advisory panel has decided on the 6 work streams which would result in the recommendations for the industry. The

work streams focus on issues such as the “bubble” within the academic circle, populism, confirmation bias, and trust.

- The Group discussed that this should not be an exercise in criticizing pollsters because the industry got it wrong by following “group think”.
- **Burhan** mentioned that Parliament has set up a committee on this issue. **Nicholas** would follow up on this.
- The Group also discussed the improper usage of polling for consumer PR, often from pollsters that are not BPC or Market Research Society members thus do not publish methodology or data.

6. Committee planning succession

- **Lionel** mentioned that the Group is looking for a new Chairman, interested candidates should get in touch with Nicholas and Neha to discuss next steps.

7. Events

- **Lionel** updated the Group on an upcoming event with Syed Kamal MEP in May. He asked the Group to suggest any additional speakers for an event in early July.
- The Group suggested Jess Philips, a wash up following the metro Mayors election. **Lionel** and **Nicholas** would follow up on the suggestions.

8. A.O.B.

- **Nicholas** and **Neha** would update the Group on a specific date and venue for the upcoming meeting.