



DHR
COMMUNICATIONS

DHR
COMMUNICATIONS
Sustainability
Report
2014

MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR



Catherine Heaney

DHR Communications is different to most PR companies. We've been referred to as "a campaigning PR company": our clients tend to come primarily from the not-for-profit and statutory sectors, our staff are passionate, dedicated and committed to the causes and campaigns we support, and we've worked on ground-breaking human rights, mental health and equality campaigns.

Our team shares a strong value system and that is reflected in the work we do.

Our business model - including the emphasis we place on CSR - helps us to achieve our objective of delivering exceptionally high quality PR to organisations that might not otherwise have the capacity for such services. This is the sector we've aligned ourselves to and we want to be the best at it, which is what drives us on through the difficult times.

At DHR, we work on ground-breaking – and sometimes controversial – campaigns on issues such as human rights and equality. We do this because we're passionate about those issues. This is one of our biggest achievements and as founder and Managing Director, it's something I'm extremely proud of.

We have chosen to make CSR an integral part of all our work, and to embed CSR within the core, day-to-day activities of our business. We have a company-wide CSR programme, comprised of a number of different strands: 1) making PR more accessible to groups and individuals with limited budgets; 2) enhancing the local community (Dublin 8) in which the company is based; and 3) facilitating employees to participate on voluntary boards and in international volunteering programmes, with a view to them sharing their skills and expertise with non-profit organisations.

We believe CSR has multiple benefits. It allows employees develop new skills, meet new people and work on projects outside of their comfort zone. It opens up opportunities and allows us to facilitate collaboration and networking between clients from different sectors. Most importantly, it means we know we can provide support to charities, organisations and individuals to which we are deeply committed.

Genuine engagement in CSR leads to a happier working environment and a more fulfilled staff. We highly recommend it!

Catherine Heaney

Managing Director

DHR COMMUNICATIONS WHAT WE DO

Based in the heart of the Liberties in Dublin 8, DHR is a local PR agency with global reach and a social conscience.

The company was founded in 2004 and today works with clients across a range of sectors, including education, technology, business, healthcare, the public sector, and the arts. These include Samaritans, Irish Aid at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, the National Library of Ireland, and the National College of Art and Design.

DHR employs a team of 12 communications professionals and trained journalists with diverse backgrounds across areas including politics, international development and media. Services offered include: media relations, public affairs, event management, crisis communications, digital and social media, and CSR and social good campaigns.



The DHR team
“our staff are passionate,
dedicated and committed
to the causes and
campaigns we support”

DHR COMMUNICATIONS

HOW WE DO IT

MISSION

DHR is a PR company with a social conscience. Our mission is to deliver high-quality public relations and public affairs services to clients, in keeping with our company values.

VALUES

- Our people are our greatest asset.
- We offer clients high-quality services and good value for money.
- We value transparency, creativity and collaboration.
- We promote – and adhere to – high ethical standards in all our work.

LAYOUT OF THIS REPORT

This report is has been created to communicate our responsible business practices and policies. It's laid out in the following sections:

- **Workplace** - p5
- **Environment** - p9
- **Marketplace** - p11
- **Community** - p15

Our CSR practices and policies are centred on the values by which we work, and themed into these categories



Workplace





WORKPLACE

At DHR, we place great value on our staff. Growing our business and taking on more employees has been a challenge, but our people are our greatest asset. The people that come to work at DHR are aligned to our ethos, passionate about the campaigns we take on, and naturally attuned to our 'shoulder to the wheel' culture of hard work and excellence. Investing in, supporting and promoting our staff is the key thing that has contributed to our company's success and growth.

Discrimination policies

The PR industry is female-dominated, but - as with many industries - most senior roles are held by men. At DHR, we are bucking this trend: we have a high proportion of female employees, and our management team is led by women. This is something that distinguishes us in the public affairs space, in particular, where the majority of firms are led by men.

Executive Director
Martina Quinn

In Kathmandu, Nepal,
with a class of English-
language students



“we support senior and long-term staff in achieving their personal development goals”



WORKPLACE

Employee communications

We ensure our employees are facilitated to grow within our organisation by meeting every six months to review and appraise their progress, agree areas for improvement and attribute new responsibilities.

To help us empower our staff, we are moving towards a new system through which people will identify their own objectives and develop metrics with which to measure progress. Additionally, we cover everyone's membership to the Public Relations Institute of Ireland and encourage our staff to regularly attend seminars and meetings.

We also have a staff meeting every month, where we talk about business development and upcoming campaigns and projects. Everyone takes a degree of responsibility for looking at new opportunities.

Professional development

Recently, we made the decision to establish a professional development fund within our organisation. This investment will enable all staff members to apply to do short-term/part-time courses to benefit their own careers while also improving the company's service offering.

From account manager level, we encourage staff to join the boards of non-profit organisations, and to incorporate their support for those organisations into their day-to-day workload at DHR. As a result, organisations like Show Racism the Red Card or D8CEC can be treated as clients.

Often, joining a board presents staff-members with an opportunity to project-manage different aspects of that organisation's work, or to develop new skills, which in turn benefits their own professional development.

Workplace diversity

We've always had a diverse workforce. We work on projects that promote diversity and interculturalism - like Africa Day - and often take on interns from the communities we're working with. Also, we've always had someone from another nationality on our staff - German, Canadian, Malaysian, Swedish.



WORKPLACE

Work-life balance

Achieving an optimal work-life balance can be an issue and the nature of the business means that sometimes we have early morning meetings and late evenings at the office. It can be intense. That's why we're flexible - we ask our staff to be flexible with us in how they give their time, so it's only fair that we're flexible with them. We ask them to take time in lieu when they can, and to make the most of the quieter summer months.

Personal development

We facilitate career breaks to support senior and long-term staff in achieving their personal goals. One staff member recently spent a month volunteering in Nepal. Opportunities like this can benefit the company in the long run.

Managing Director
Catherine Heaney

Volunteering in Ethiopia



“opportunities like career breaks can benefit the company in the long run”

Environment





ENVIRONMENT

Environmental impact

In our office, we do what we can for the environment by recycling paper and printer cartridges, and we make an effort to switch off lights when we're not using them as well.

Sustainable travel

Our biggest investment in terms of environmental impact has been in sustainable travel. We participate in the 'cycle to work' scheme and offered a new bicycle to everyone in the company. Almost all staff-members availed of this offer and everyone loves it. Cycling is healthy, saves us money on taxis, and also helps to reduce our transport-related carbon emissions.



“cycling is healthy, saves us money, and helps to reduce our transport-related carbon emissions”

On their bikes

Our staff get up to speed with their new transport

Marketplace





MARKETPLACE

Business ethics

One of the values underpinning DHR's work is a commitment to high ethical standards. We do not work with any companies or agents that promote tobacco, alcohol or sugar. In fact, we tend to work primarily with organisations that are striving for positive societal change.

Our commitment to a quality service

DHR has an internal quality assurance (QA) system in place since our company was established in 2004. This ensures our employees:

- Have the requisite skills and expertise to undertake their work.
- Conduct themselves at all times in a professional manner.
- Avail of training and mentoring to ensure they are up-to-date with new developments and emerging trends, and can guarantee excellence in service provision to our clients on an ongoing basis.



“we have a commitment to high ethical standards and do not work with companies or agents that promote tobacco, alcohol or sugar”

Our team commitment

We offer the highest standards of service delivery to all our clients.



MARKETPLACE

Our QA system also ensures appropriate levels of supervision are in place for all members of staff, and that effective feedback mechanisms are in place for our clients. The system is designed to make sure our clients receive a thoroughly professional, cutting-edge and high-quality service at all times. We regularly audit and update it to guarantee its ongoing effectiveness and relevance.

We give our absolute commitment to the highest standards of service delivery for all clients. We are very proud of our work to date and, at the outset of any new engagement, we undertake to:

- Fully understand the client's needs.
- Develop creative and common-sense strategies that work.
- Offer quality services.
- Invite the client to offer feedback on an ongoing basis.

Third-party accreditation

All members of our team are members of the Public Relations Institute of Ireland (PRII). As such, they have met the professional requirements and standards laid down by the Institute.

In addition, they are bound by a number of Codes of Professional Practice, which guide DHR in ensuring we deliver best-practice PR services – and do so with integrity. These codes are:

1. The European Code of Professional Conduct in Public Relations (Code of Lisbon).
2. The International Code of Public Relations Ethics (Code of Athens).
3. The PRII Code of Practice for Public Affairs and Lobbying.

DHR is also a member of Dublin Chamber of Commerce.

Transparency

We value transparency and accountability, and promote these values amongst our staff, our clients and wider stakeholders. We regularly facilitate clients to operate in the most transparent and publicly accountable manner, for example, by producing annual review reports and/or publishing key information online.



MARKETPLACE

Promoting CSR

We participate in the Government's Corporate Social Responsibility Stakeholder Forum and helped to launch the National Action Plan on CSR, which was produced by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (below). Through this work we are committed to promoting CSR in Ireland. We regularly collaborate with organisations that are active in the CSR space, including Chambers Ireland, Dublin Chamber, Business in the Community Ireland, and Business to Arts. We provide support, advice and thought leadership through our links with these and other groups.

In addition to running our own company-wide CSR programme, we also advise our clients on their CSR activities and on how they can promote sustainable practices in their work.

“we participate in the Government's Corporate Social Responsibility Stakeholder Forum and helped to launch the National Action Plan on CSR”



Launching the National Action Plan on CSR

L-R: DHR's Martina Quinn; Ian Talbot, Chief Executive of Chambers Ireland; Minister Richard Bruton and DHR's Catherine Heaney

Community





COMMUNITY

DHR's location in Dublin 8 is a key part of our corporate identity. We have been based here since our company was established in 2004. Our location in the Liberties - with its centuries-old associations with creativity and commerce - defines us in many ways. It gives us an edge, and demonstrates our commitment to our company values.

Volunteering

One of our staff members is a voluntary board member of a local community education centre, D8CEC (Dublin 8 Community Education Centre). Our Managing Director chairs a new structure in the area, currently called the Liberties Business Forum. It's the brainchild of Dublin City Council and is aimed at bringing together the key stakeholders in this area to make the Liberties a better place in which to work and invest. Participating in these groups is a way for us to give back to our community.

Another way we give back is through providing pro bono services for local events. We have provided support for a number of events run by local schools and community groups down through the years, and we also use our website and social media channels to engage with the local community and promote events and activities in Dublin 8. Community is important to us and we strongly encourage all staff-members to engage with the community in which we are based.

Local school-children from Dublin 8 cheer on the Mexican Ambassador to Ireland as he attempts to smash a pinata during a special alternative Halloween festival, organised in Dublin 8 with support from DHR.

“we have provided support for a number of events run by local schools and community groups”



ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING

This sustainability report was developed by Responsible Business for SMEs, a service from Business in the Community. We want to help Irish Small and Medium-size Enterprises (SMEs) to do better business by sharing their responsible and sustainable practices with customers, suppliers, employees, and the wider community.

Small is bigger

SMEs are the 99% of Irish business. In raw numbers, they dominate Irish life: more people work in them than in multinationals and more do business with them. This makes SMEs uniquely placed to maximise the positive impact of business on Irish society and the environment. By communicating their good practices, they can reap big rewards because of their visibility in the regions, towns, villages in which they work and their proximity to the impact.

Small is better

Around half of all SMEs are engaged in various activities within their communities. These can include charitable donations to community projects, sponsorship for local football teams, working with non-profit organisations, and pro-bono work.

Many are already reducing their environmental impact by greening their products and supply chain, changing behaviour to reduce resource consumption and waste, supporting conservation initiatives and NGOs, planting trees, etc. Some are developing sustainable supply chains, for example by putting sustainability criteria into purchasing policies. Many are investing in their workforce by developing a good company culture and supportive internal policies and practices.

Small is beautiful

The actions a company takes in an effort towards sustainable and responsible business are unique to that company and directly dependent on its operations, size, location and internal capacity. By reflecting on what it is doing and the tools at hand, a sustainability report can help Irish businesses to identify opportunities for improvement that are within reach.

...so why are we keeping it quiet?

Very few SMEs seek competitive advantage for their responsible business practices by reporting on and communicating their efforts. By inspiring and supporting them to do this, BITC wants to help Irish businesses get the message out. Whether or not they use the term CSR, customers, employees and government bodies have an expectation for responsible and sustainable business practice, and competitors may already be doing it. Sustainability reporting meets this expectation by clearly setting out a company's achievements and ambitions. While it's not an accredited standard or certification, sustainability reporting has an important role to play in helping small and medium-size enterprises to share their sustainability story and do better business.

Business in the

Community

Ireland



**Responsible
Business
for SMEs**

For further information on creating a sustainability report, contact Responsible Business for SMEs - rbsmes@bitc.ie

DHR COMMUNICATIONS

Sustainability report: Highlights

- Company-wide CSR programme, with sustainability embedded in day-to-day work
- Staff participation on boards of non-profit organisations
- Career breaks for senior and long-term staff to pursue volunteering and educational activities
- Supporting and encouraging cycling to work
- Key SME on the government's CSR Stakeholder Forum

Business in the
Community
Ireland



Responsible
Business
for SMEs

Responsible Business for SMEs

32 Lower O'Connell Street, Dublin 1
T. +353 1 874 7232

rbsmes@bitc.ie

www.rbsmes.ie

www.facebook.com/BITCIreland

www.twitter.com/bitcireland

www.linkedin.com/company/business-in-the-community-ireland

www.youtube.com/user/BITCIreland