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HATS OFF TO TYNESIDE PR FIRM

PR agency O Communications is celebrating an industry award hat trick after being shortlisted for the Chartered Institute of PR's top regional award for the third year running.

The Newcastle firm, which despite 2009's global recession grew by 40 percent last year and recently celebrated its fifth birthday. Now it is once again in the running for the 'Outstanding Public Relations Consultancy of the Year' award at the CIPR's North East PRide Awards.

As the reigning 2009 Outstanding PR Consultancy, O Communications will go head-to-head with five other North East agencies in an attempt to retain its title at a glittering awards ceremony on Thursday, December 9.

Ouseburn-based O Communications, which has also been nominated for a clutch of other awards including Best Non Profit Campaign and Best Event, has enjoyed previous success at the awards, having been named runner-up Outstanding Consultancy in 2008 and Best Small Consultancy in 2007. Meanwhile account manager Gemma Clarke is shortlisted for the Outstanding Young Communicator Award.

The agency, which employs nine staff in its converted pottery offices, has been shortlisted for Best Non-Profit Campaign for the work it did for Enterprise UK/Make your Mark.

O Communications was appointed from August 2009 to April 2010 to create awareness of its new programme of North East activities including Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW), the Make your Mark Challenge, Make your Mark with a Tenner, Make your Mark in the Markets and One Big Idea.

Meanwhile, its innovative World Cup in a Warehouse event, where 500 business people watched the only England World Cup to be held during working hours at the premises of its client Hoult's Yard is up for Best Event.

The CIPR PRide Awards are hotly contested and recognise creativity, planning and outstanding execution of PR campaigns. It is the only awards scheme which showcases the best PR work being carried out across the UK regions and nations.

O Communications represents a wide range of top north east businesses, in sectors such as property, regeneration, technology, enterprise, retail and leisure, arts and culture, technology, process skills and education.

It is known for its work for organisations such as the Entrepreneurs' Forum and Young Enterprise North East, and was this year appointed to represent national house builder Miller Homes in the region.

Kari Owers said: "2009 was a very strong year for us with several strategic account wins and staff appointments and we introduced new services such as our OPUS PR evaluation tool that demonstrates clear ROI for our clients. Our online PR activities continue to grow significantly too with ever-increasing emphasis on social media and video in the PR mix.

"We also launched our Ocademy at the start of 2010, which is our in-house training school to ensure our people at every level are at the very forefront of the latest trends in PR and we develop the agency with the ethos of learn, share and lead.

"The competition is tough this year for the top award, and we wish everyone up for a PRide Award this year the very best of luck. Our success in recent years has been helped greatly by the recognition from the CIPR and we're looking forward to the ceremony in December."

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