

PubAffairs Profile

Name	Josephine Spiller
Job Title	External Relations Manager
What academic /professional qualifications do you have?	BSc (Hons) Politics and Modern History — Brunel University MSc Media and Communications — London School of Economics
How did you get into Public Affairs?	I worked on the newsdesk of an American television network whilst at university as I had always hoped of becoming a journalist. When I finished my Masters degree I decided I wanted to do something different and spoke to my university s careers department. They gave me a careers test that told me I was ideally suited to becoming a political consultant. I applied to, and was accepted onto, the Hill & Knowlton graduate trainee scheme and the rest, as they say, is history!
What others careers did you consider?	Journalism and law. I grew cynical with journalism and didn t go into law as I didn t do as well as I expected to in my A Levels and ended up doing a politics degree instead.
How did you get your current job?	I was working as a freelance journalist and looking for something full time and permanent. I saw my job advertised in the Media Guardian, applied and was given an interview. The interview consisted of a presentation so some of my research consisted of speaking to lots of people at PubAffairs who work in related industries they were able to tell me what the big issues in the industry were and who the major players were which really helped in the interview.
What characteristics do you need to work in Public Affairs?	A large amount of realism, sense of humour, lots of resilience, some cynicism and to be very outgoing. You need to be able to walk into a room full of strangers and not be daunted.
What skills are most important in your job?	Speed of assimilation. You need to be able to read a brief, press release or written ministerial statement and analyse it very quickly to provide information and advice on how it will effect your company, objectives, campaign etc. Clarity of thought and judgement. Your views will not always be considered to be correct but as long as you have thought through them well and can deliver them concisely they will be considered valid.
What does your current role entail on a day to day basis?	Keeping up to date with my how my company is being discussed in Parliament and by other stakeholders. Answering MP s letters Responding to MPs queries for information Organising events Designing and writing our Westminster Newsletter Organising our Political Party Conference presence Writing policy letters to MPs Responding to Early Day Motions

<p>How do you go about making contacts?</p>	<p>Networking groups have helped me enormously. I am a member of five! I also study part time and the people I have met though this I keep in touch with. I also remember that people have helped me start off my career and now try to do the same to other new entrants. I would also suggest going along to every meeting, business breakfast and seminar that you can get an invite to. Whilst you will rarely get a change to network with the guest speaker you will meet lots of fellow Public Affairs professionals who will be helpful in the future.</p>
<p>How has networking at PubAffairs helped you?</p>	<p>It helped get me my present job. The contacts you make at PubAffairs (or other networking groups) may not yield instant results but they will eventually.</p>
<p>What advice would you give to anyone looking to break into Public Affairs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use every contact you have. • Read everything you can get your hand on. Public Affairs professionals should be highly aware of the world around them. • Make the Media Guardian jobs page your default web page. • Get experience wherever you can. I got my first professional job through an internship and the time put in working for nothing has paid dividends many times over.