

PubAffairs Profile

Name	Phil Murphy
Job Title	Head of European Public Affairs
What academic /professional qualifications do you have?	MA (Hons) History/Economic History PgDip European Policy, Law & Management
How did you get into Public Affairs?	After completing a PostGrad in European Affairs, I landed myself a 6-month stage/trainee post at an EU Trade Association in Brussels. This proved to be a great introduction to the world of European affairs. I wrote off to various EU political consultancies, MEPs and others and with hindsight I took too unfocused an approach to all this. I believe the Brussels world is much more cut throat to break into than in the UK — most jobs at lower levels have 50-100 applications for each post. But I was very happy to land the job at the European Advertising Standards Alliance, and even happier when after the 6 months was up, I was offered a step up, and a permanent post. This is the thing about public affairs, you need to do your time at the bottom of the ladder — this can be anything up to a year. Monitoring and other skills that you learn at the start are invaluable for when you move onwards and upwards.
What others careers did you consider?	To be honest, I really didn't have a clue what I wanted to do, right up until the last few months of my PostGrad. I made the usual run-of-the-mill applications to all the big companies out there for their Graduate Training programmes, had quite a few interviews and attended more assessment away days than I can remember! But I really wanted to do something using my EU knowledge and I knew I should head to Brussels in some shape or form.
How did you get your current job?	Having worked for an advertising grouping in Brussels for 2-and-a-half years, when a job came up at the Advertising Association back in London dealing with purely EU Public Affairs, I was fortunate to be invited to an interview. I'd made a good contact base in the Brussels advertising sector and knew the issues, so it was an ideal opportunity.
What characteristics do you need to work in Public Affairs?	You need to be resourceful, resilient, able to work under pressure, and to get on with people — both those around you, and those you meet in a work environment. Also being able to take the rough with the smooth — lobbying is a mix-match of winning and losing on the issues, and you should prepare to do both!
What skills are most important in your job?	You need to be able to do 2 things: 1) Read and understand information quickly — assimilating it to identify the threats or opportunities to the organisation you work for — you are likely to be dealing with lots of different subjects/issues at the same time, so there's juggling to be done; 2) Write well and have the ability to communicate directly with people and get whatever message across — breaking down the issues for others to understand in a clear and concise way; imagine you get yourself into the ideal lobbying opportunity where you have a one-on-one for 2 minutes — it's about knowing what to say so that the person leaves with the idea that you are someone whose interests they should bear in mind.
What does your current role entail on a day to	Essentially keeping up with latest issue developments, and identifying influencing opportunities. Developing Association positions on European political and

<p>day basis?</p>	<p>legislative issues through member contacts then representing the agreed views to legislators and opinion-formers at European and national levels. Advising Association members about developments in international and European affairs. Developing network of contacts within the European Institutions, UK Govt departments, EU trade bodies and other stakeholders. Submitting regular written and oral reports for the Association's Council, Executive, AA-Net and website. The Advertising Association is also one of the founders of the Advertising Information Group — a grouping of similar trade federations in Germany, Austria, Hungary and the UK. My role in this is as Director of Exchange with responsibility for the Exchange grouping through Partnership development - enhancing mutual respect and trust developing between various advertising industry associations and groupings at the European level, and improving the quality and flow of latest information between national advertising bodies, their members and any interested parties in the wider industry. I also manage the consultant working on behalf of the Advertising Information Group and maintain regular contact and co-ordinate the office in Brussels.</p>
<p>Which campaign that you have worked on are you most proud of?</p>	<p>To be fair, I've enjoyed working on lots of different things — that's what I enjoy most about public affairs, there's variety in the job and issues. I facilitate a cross-industry grouping of c.100 bodies globally on a particular EU measure that poses a big threat to the ad industry. We've staved off the EU law through the political process since 1998 - which has been satisfying! But I think the thing I've most enjoyed was being a guest on the BBC's World Business Report in May 04 at the time when EU trade Ministers were due to reach political agreement on a law in Brussels — being interviewed live in the studio was a great experience.</p>
<p>How do you go about making contacts?</p>	<p>Literally, any which way I can. Every event provides an opportunity to network, and you need to be able to create openings with people. I believe that the most difficult skill to learn is not having the confidence to go up to someone and talk to them at a reception or conference — it is the ability to get away from them! This may sound odd, but the confidence to talk to people is either in-built or can be gained through time. But you must be able to politely leave their company to allow you to mingle with others — you need to leave that person with the fact that you have enjoyed talking to them and will want to be in touch again, but without making it obvious that you are moving on. I think the most important thing when talking to someone is to make them feel like they are the centre of your attention during the conversation — always look interested and (fatally) never look around the room/over their shoulder when they are talking to you. Play off what they have to say and always have 2 or 3 questions lined up to ask. Not everyone wants to talk work all the time, so you need to be aware. You can also never know too many people. Remember that you take your contacts wherever you go, whatever job you move on to.</p>
<p>How has networking at PubAffairs helped you?</p>	<p>I originally set up the PubAffairs network because I'd returned to the UK, and wanted to get to know as many people and make as many contacts as I could. I got together with 10 other like-minded people, and we decided meeting in the pub once a month was a great idea. PubAffairs has introduced me to so many different people, working in every sphere of the public affairs industry.</p>
<p>What advice would you give to anyone looking to break into Public Affairs?</p>	<p>Start gaining experience as early as you can. At University, get involved with things that are going to add to your CV in any way, shape or form — be prepared to work for free for your local MP/MEP, or work for a local charity or University and build up experience of Communications in general. It's never too early to start looking for a job for when you graduate — take the pressure off yourself and get something sorted, then you can concentrate on your studies and on having a good time. The public affairs industry is vibrant, with many varied opportunities out there.</p>