

Chloe's Story

Managing Director of Comms Kick.

A move to Skipton for better quality of life and work life balance.

Thriving business, based in the area, working all over the country.



Describe your business/work in 20 words

Comms Kick gives business communications a kick with creative digital content, press coverage, PR events, marketing materials and copywriting.

Describe what your best day at work looks like

My best day would be planning a new PR and marketing campaign for a business. This is a chance to get really creative: I look at what the business offers, who its target market is and how best to catch that market's attention.

I'll do some "business-y" things such as creating a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, threat) analysis of the current marketing strategy and analysing competitors before brainstorming ideas to create something new, fresh and exciting.

I'll create a 'concept' which means developing things like a slogan for the campaign, key messages, planning the sort of images we want to create. I'll then write a strategy which outlines what we want to achieve, how we are going to do it and then what success looks like. Will we need to create a promotional film? Clips for Instagram posts? Is there a way we can make the business newsworthy so I can pitch ideas to press to get the business on TV or in a magazine? Is there a budget to work with? How shall we spend it? Perhaps I'll source some good places for advertising, in which case I'll brief a graphic designer on what I want them to create, or perhaps we'll spend the

budget on putting on a promotional event to attract our target market.

This takes me longer than a day but getting started is really fun and it's very rewarding to use my skills to help a small business develop.

What do you love about your work, running a business?

I love the variety. No day is the same. I work well under pressure and as an agency with multiple clients there is usually more than one deadline I am trying to meet which really motivates me.

Can you describe a favourite project or event you worked on recently?

Working on Classical Sheffield's Classical Weekend has been one of my favourite projects. It was the first client I had where I had to go and pitch Comms Kick in an interview rather than receiving a referral through word of mouth or via another client so I felt I had a lot to prove.

The weekend was a festival taking place in different venues across the city so I developed a campaign centred around musicians "popping up in front of you". This included a film featuring different musicians appearing out of coloured smoke through the city. This was then carried through the entire campaign. It was a new city for me to work in and I met loads of different, passionate people. As well as promoting the festival itself there were lots of news stories as the

organisation commissioned new work and programmed events centred on three themes: Women in Music, Beyond Borders, and Future Makers. There were lots of strict deadlines and some challenges but the weekend itself had a real buzz about it and I learnt a lot about managing my own business while meeting targets for a client.

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What are your ambitions for your business?

Hiring a PR and marketing agency has previously been seen as something reserved for big business and, often, urban-based businesses. I hope that with its friendly, adaptable and fun approach Comms Kick will change that and work with more small to medium enterprises as it develops. I intend to grow Comms Kick so it has premises and a team of staff with an excellent reputation across various sectors.

Which skill is absolutely essential to running a successful business?

Adaptability: even if you're very organised from the beginning and have a plan, things might change –

even when they change for the better it might mean you need to alter direction quickly and respond fast to a situation.

How do you make a living from your business? What is your business model?

If a business wants Comms Kick to help them with (or manage) its PR and marketing I have an initial meeting with them to ascertain what is required. I'll then develop a small proposal outlining what Comms Kick can offer and quote how many days are required. This might be a one-off three-day project split over a month, or one day a week for a year. I then charge a day-rate for my time. With some businesses I charge what's called 'a retainer'. This means I might do a lot of work for them one month, and not so much the next but the business pays the same each month.

Have you learned from any times when things didn't go quite the way you expected?

It can be difficult estimating how long a piece of work might take and I have suffered in the past because I have charged too little for the amount of time some work has taken or just taken on more tasks for the client when they were not in the original brief. Instead of having an honest conversation with the client I have simply carried on and this was not good for my business, my finances or my personal life.

I have learnt to schedule a review as soon as I take on a new client so that I have a space to discuss challenges like this a couple of months into starting a new project. I have also found that conversations which feel like confrontation often aren't if worded correctly.

There are some great resources to help with this (for example, Emma Gannon's podcast Ctrl, Alt, Delete).

At the end of the day most people don't expect you to work for free so being honest usually means both parties feel respected.

If you could work with anyone in the world, who would that be and why?

As more and more people enter the 'liquid workforce' I think Emma Gannon is leading the way in starting conversations about the pros and cons of this and I'd love to work with her – I'd love her to come up to Yorkshire and see all the great businesses here! I would also love to shadow Social Chain Founder and CEO Steve Bartlett for the day, I love his honesty about working in this industry and we need more of his attitude in business.

What does success mean to you?

I started Comms Kick when my son was seven months old and my initial reason was flexibility – I wanted to eat at least one meal a day with him (so far, I don't always achieve this but I've got a pretty high success rate). However, contrary to popular portrayals of mums in the media, becoming a parent also made me more ambitious and determined.

Success for me would be a diverse portfolio of satisfied clients with an excellent team at Comms Kick who feel happy when they come to work. And where all of us eat at least one meal a day with our families and can make up for it on the rare occasion we don't!

Why are you based in the Lakes and Dales?

I was raised not too far away in Ilkley and I love the Yorkshire Dales. I've lived in the South East, Midlands and New Zealand and all those experiences just made me realise that this region really does have so much going for it. Going for a country walk can be something you do after tea rather than just being reserved for a day trip at the weekend and yet I can get a forty-minute train and be in Leeds City Centre.

The drawbacks are that it can be harder to find people in the same boat as you – there aren't the same sort of networking events or training that there

are in a city, though that is changing all the time. You also do have to be prepared to travel to make the most of opportunities, so you need to like train journeys!

What did you want to be when you were growing up?

I wanted to be an actor and after being one of three people to do Drama A-Level at my school I trained at the National Youth Theatre before going on to Loughborough University. The best thing I did while there though (except meet my husband!) was join the student media; writing for the student magazine and becoming Head of Press and Events at the radio station. I learnt about a whole new industry, got to interview upcoming bands and sent to gigs for free as well as organising big events. This experience got me my first job as a Press and Marketing Assistant and was really valuable.

What do you want to be now?

Founder and Communications Consultant at Comms Kick with a hired accountant so I don't have to worry too much about my tax return and book-keeping! The world is changing so rapidly that there's no point in a five-year game plan. So might this change? Of course, but for now I feel really in control of my life and I love it.

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