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## **YOUNG BLOOD 'O COMMUNICATIONS' WIN CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2009**

FAST expanding PR firm O Communications is feeling proud as punch after being named Outstanding PR Consultancy of the Year at the CIPR North East PRide Awards on Friday night (Nov 6).

The four year old communications agency took away the top honour at the NewcastleGateshead Hilton, with judges praising its hard work in “talent development, their culture of innovation and enjoyment of work”.

The growing firm, based in Ouseburn, Newcastle, also came home with the Best Not-for-Profit title and a silver award for Best use of Photography and Design for Young Enterprise North East's One Day campaign and silver for Best Use of Social Media.

The judges said: “Established in 2005, O Communications has grown rapidly, to become one of the region's most highly respected and creative PR agencies. O's client base is a representation of business throughout the North-East. They work hard at talent development, their culture of innovation and enjoyment of work.”

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 is run by 36 year-old Kari Owers, and employs eight people at its converted pottery offices in the burgeoning creative quarter of Ouseburn.

O Communications managing director Kari Owers said: “To win this coveted award so early in our journey, and in a year of country-wide recession, proves that clients are seeking young, hungry and innovative PR agencies to deliver new ways of thinking and make their brands stand out.

“We are delighted to have been recognised by the CIPR for doing something different, and look forward to using the award as a basis to grow further in the next year.”

The firm represents a wide range of top north east businesses, in sectors such as retail and leisure, arts and culture, technology, process industries, skills, education and enterprise. 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 Enterprise UK in the region; promoting Global Entrepreneurship Week.

Since the appointment of former *The Journal* commercial property editor Rebekah Ashby to the team last year, it has also grown a strong portfolio in property and construction, including England's biggest speculative business park, Quorum.

Innovations such as Ovolution, its social media arm, have helped the creative communications agency pioneer online PR campaign delivery, having recently won a major contract to deliver video case studies for the science industries across the UK. Its team includes two video journalists, blog writers and in-house design studio allow O's clients to embrace the growth of media channels such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

Sally Keith, Chair of CIPR North East said: “A CIPR PRide Award is a hallmark of professionalism and success - it identifies, recognises and rewards the outstanding achievements of those working in the PR industry outside of London. To win a CIPR PRide Award is a tremendous achievement and I congratulate all of this year's winners.”

**ENDS**

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## Notes to Editors: CIPR Pride Awards 2009

The CIPR PRide Awards have grown in strength and stature, recognising public relations success and achievement in the nations and regions.

- There were over 1,400 plus entries UK-wide this year.
- Being shortlisted - even better winning one - is proof to your colleagues and clients that your work has been judged to be among the best in the UK - and is a great morale booster for your team.
- The CIPR PRide Awards is the only awards scheme which showcases the best PR work being carried out across the UK regions and nations and sets industry standards.
- There are thirteen areas taking part in the CIPR PRide Awards - Channel Islands; East Anglia; Home Counties South; Midlands; North East; North West; Northern Ireland; Scotland; Thames and Chiltern; Wales; West of England; Wessex; and Yorkshire and Lincolnshire.
- There are 24 award categories (25 in Scotland) - for a full list visit <http://ciprprideawards.com/page114153.aspx>
- The judging process is rigorous with a national panel of industry experts assessing the shortlisted entries and choosing the winners. For 2009 we appointed two Chairs of Judges, John Aspery and Chris Genasi, who will resolve any disputes and help ensure a fair and consistent judging process.
- Sponsors for the 2009 PRide Awards are as follows:
  - Headline sponsors are media intelligence company Precise
  - PRWeek are the National Media sponsors
  - Goddard Gadd, Redbrand and PRCA are also national sponsors