

thefutureofpr

CREATIVE SHOWCASE

Wright Communications  
TBWA\PR  
Porter Novelli

Everyone, even a computer, can produce a press release. So what's the role now for a PR professional in cutting through the noise of fragmented media and marketing hype? Smart practitioners are integrating PR into larger marketing plans, employing clever experiential marketing or social media or specialising in niche areas—all to win the battle for the hearts and minds of consumers

If you asked Al and Laura Ries, authors of *The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR*, you'd be told that advertising's credibility is shot through and that PR is the only way to launch a brand. The book dedicates eight chapters to debunking advertising, and only one chapter to the search for alternatives.

The 'father of marketing', Professor Philip Kotler, says advertising is overdone—and public relations is a close second. That's an extreme view, but there may just be something in the decreasing trustworthiness of advertising. And it's not just because ad people have an image problem (have you seen *Mad Men* lately?).

Instead, it's that, in an age where everyone wants to know—and can find out—how everything is made, people are discovering how advertising is made. They're concluding, rightly or wrongly, that because it's paid for, it's not as credible as the editorial they read, or better still, the information they get from friends.

In this environment, PR and communications people have a natural advantage. They're used to having limited control over the message. Traditional PR sends out press releases knowing that journalists will (or at least should) not just repeat it verbatim, but instead put their own interpretation on it.

PR people also know that's just the beginning. They're poised to respond to the press, the public—to any reaction that

comes from their message. This ability to react, and to manage crises, has become ever more important with the development of the 24-hour news cycle.

Ad people, on the other hand, are starting from a point of creating a message to perfection, carefully choosing the right media to present their perfect message in, and then timing the delivery just right so, to achieve a perfectly orchestrated outcome. Of course, it never happens that way, but until recently that was the ideal that advertising worked towards. That's changed dramatically in the last ten or so years, as conversation has become the dominant trend in how information spreads.

But despite PR's natural advantages and advertising's disadvantages at engaging in conversation, the race is on, not just between advertising and PR, but between all kinds of communications agencies, to understand and master this confusing new world.

That race is a difficult one, because the old skills are still very much in demand. The Public Relations Institute of New Zealand's 2008 research report shows that media relations and corporate communications remain the highest areas of work involvement for people who work in PR.

It's the perpetual challenge of innovation—how much resource do you apply to what's working, but eventually won't work, and how much do you apply to what's new and small, but likely to grow?

Some agencies are employing

specialists in the emerging fields of new media, social media and experiential marketing. Others are forming strategic partnerships, while others are attempting to transform their whole operation into an integrated marketing shop.

Some agencies started getting integrated in the late 90s, following the practices of Integrated Marketing Communication put forward by Professors Robert Lauterborn and Don Schultz. Most often they're small, nimble and able to quickly fashion the tools they need to reach the customer.

Other agencies have formed alliances (or been bought by large agency groups) to provide a full service while keeping the disciplines apart. Once again, this is tricky if the individuals from, say, advertising and PR backgrounds are well-steeped in the specifics of their particular discipline.

For those steeped in traditional advertising, every communications issue is an opportunity to create a big message, buy big media and broadcast. For those steeped in traditional PR, every communications issue is an opportunity to contact the journalists with the most relevant reach, tell them your side of the story and let them spread the word.

Fortunately, individuals and agencies are learning new skills, and new languages. As you'll see in these case studies, creativity today means much more than just pretty colours.

—Simon Young

# Public relations

## TBWA\PR loves the new media

Today's Web 2.0 is fast changing the way the world interacts with media. Are any PR agencies adapting to the new world of communication?

Yes. One agency that's leading the way is TBWA\PR. Established in 2006, it has swiftly emerged as one of the fastest-growing PR consultancies in the country because it understands this change.

"As mainstream media becomes an ever-smaller part of our information input, organisations need to understand and get involved with the important influencer networks that really form purchasing decisions," says Kelly Bennett, managing partner at TBWA\PR.

### Flossie's men

It's in the online space that these networks present the most exciting opportunities for PR. It's not every day an agency gets to work with Movac, backers of the incredibly

successful Trade Me website, and help launch a new online venture. But that's exactly what happened when TBWA\PR commenced work on promoting women's website network, Flossie.com.

To illustrate that Flossie.com has something for every woman, the wider TBWA\TEQUILA agency devised the strapline "Whatever you need, it's on us" and created the world's first-ever Man Vending Machine.

TBWA\PR led the charge in terms of making this concept come to light: a real, working vending machine was adapted to dispense real live single men on a busy Auckland inner city street. The Man Vending Machine satisfied over 200 women, drew big crowds, got national news coverage across multiple media, and both the story and video footage were picked up on websites and blogs around the world. And a viral clip of the man vending stunt has clocked up nearly 25,000 hits on YouTube. The result?

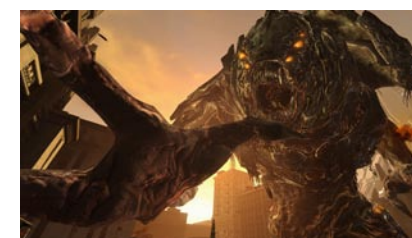
Flossie.com smashed its 12-month traffic targets in just two months and is now the number-one ranked network for females in New Zealand.

Despite the increasing fragmentation of traditional communications channels, however, mass media will never disappear. Societies are always going to be bound together by having a common reference point to discuss and engage with—and it's often the mainstream network news.

### Nando's bends it

When David Beckham and the LA Galaxy football team arrived for the second time in New Zealand late last year, Nando's immediately recognised an opportunity to align itself closely with sport's biggest global superstar.

And while his visit is now remembered for all the wrong reasons (the ARC's over-enthusiasm and mismanagement



Need a new man? The Man Vending Machine for Flossie.com



notwithstanding), TBWA\PR's campaign activity ensured Nando's 'owned' the event, despite the fact they were only a third-tier sponsor.

To ensure this happened, TBWA\PR consultants donned sassy cheerleading outfits, set off at the crack of dawn for the airport and positioned themselves with a brand banner proclaiming "David's Hot—But We're Hotter".

This cheeky word play on the hot Peri-Peri sauce (an integral part of Nando's culinary proposition) worked a treat. The stunt launched 'Nando's Cheerleaders', as the media referred to them, on to TV3, TVNZ, Prime News and C4, generating massive word of mouth.

### PlayStation games

When the sequel to PlayStation's *Resistance: Fall of Man*, *Resistance 2*, was announced, TBWA\PR had to look at new ways to engage gamers and build excitement.

With some fantastic new media content

available and an established community of *Resistance* fans, it set about building hype and expectation for the impending arrival of *Resistance 2*.

The first port of call was to establish a substantial online hub in conjunction with New Zealand's most trusted source of gaming information. From there TBWA\PR drip-fed a managed stream of exclusive trailers, interviews, updates on the game, previews and reviews. In addition, it used exclusive offers including a downloadable beta trial version of the game, where winners had a first hand preview of the game before anyone else.

The hub rapidly became the place where gamers from around the country and even overseas headed for *Resistance 2* news. It was so popular that during the *Resistance 2* beta trial, TBWA\PR's media partner's servers crashed. Coupled with the concerted online effort, substantive feature articles were secured within the mainstream media.

Altogether, TBWA\PR generated a phenomenal return on investment of 113 to

one, and the title delivered exceptional sales in the key Christmas retail period, standing out in a cluttered and competitive retail market.

### Conclusion

This kind of work is a long road from bashing out a well-worded release to the press, says Bennett, but it's also a whole lot more fun.

"We're pleased to be part of the new wave of PR practitioners who have the confidence and competence to play in entirely new fields of media and communication," he says. "It's great that we're getting under people's skin, and being a part of people's lives but we don't have to annoy them or interrupt them to make ourselves heard. We're just trying to have fun and make things interesting."

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Guerilla marketing David Beckham for Nando's; generating a return on investment of 113 to one for PlayStation's *Resistance 2*

# Four of the best

Porter Novelli turns the expected into the extraordinary

You don't become one of the world's most successful PR companies by aiming low. "We're masters at turning the expected into the extraordinary!" says Jane Sweeney, managing director of Porter Novelli, a full service PR company. The ebullient Sweeney is one of PR's most respected and experienced professionals. Her team includes a former magazine publisher, award winning journalists, internal communications and issues management specialists, the best government relations advisors on offer, and a technology specialist from the US.

Having run three agencies here and in the UK, Sweeney believes a full service offer is the only way to go. "I've seen marketing communications executed in a manner that is way out of line with corporate strategy and forward orders, Corporate Social Responsibility programmes that appear to 'conflict' with a contemporary brand—a full service agency takes all aspects of the client's focus and environment into account."

"Delivering the extraordinary" means Porter Novelli must do more than generate a few lines of press coverage or help issue a release. It means becoming an integral part of the client's communications team and strategy. While much of Porter Novelli's work is commercially sensitive, here are four examples of how it works in practice.

## Yealands Estate Wines

In just eight months Peter Yealands and his new sustainable Marlborough winery, Yealands Estate, have been elevated into the public arena.

Porter Novelli was charged with the job of launching this brand to wine drinkers here and around the world—and until recently PR has been Yealand's sole marketing tool. The challenge was to convey the key messages of the brand—innovation, sustainability and quality—to consumers increasingly sceptical of green-wash, and tell the story of Yealands' out-of-the-box thinking and pioneering spirit.

With saturated media coverage across television, print, radio and online, the launch was a huge success. Combined with ongoing sampling campaigns and event sponsorships, consumers today not only recognise the brand, they buy into the story behind it and the man who made it all happen.

Yealands Estate launched in August last year, and has since sold all wines from its 2008 vintage. It exports to Australia, the UK, Europe and, as of April, the US and Canada.

## Kapiti Cheese

When award-winning boutique cheese Kapiti relaunched in September 2008, Porter Novelli and its Clemenger Group sister companies,

Colenso and OMD, brought the project to life. An idea was formed for a new brand platform, 'Every piece a New Zealand original', reflecting the hand-crafted nature of each piece of cheese.

Artists including Dick Frizzell and Jenny Dolezel were commissioned to create art inspired by the cheese. Five chefs, including Al Brown (of Logan Brown) and Michael Meredith (of Merediths), were appointed ambassadors for the Kapiti Chef Collection. Each created a signature Kapiti dish published in *Cuisine* magazine and served in their restaurants. The collections were unveiled in September 2008 at an exclusive cocktail function in New Zealand's Home of the Year—itsself a Kiwi original.

Porter Novelli worked with Kapiti partner Air New Zealand to exhibit the Kapiti Art Collection in Koru Lounges in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. The Porter Novelli team developed a relationship with Air New Zealand Fashion Week designer Adrian Hailwood, who served Kapiti cheese at his runway event and exhibited the Kapiti Art Collection. Media covered the Kapiti story on *Nightline*, *The New Zealand Herald*, *Sunday* magazine, *Newstalk ZB* and *Kia Ora* magazine, and Kapiti cheese is now on the menu at fine dining establishments throughout New Zealand.

## Fuji Xerox

The challenge Porter Novelli chose to accept was a formidable one. Client Fuji Xerox was launching a new high-quality production press in New Zealand and needed support to tell their story in a compelling way. Their target audience was niche, focusing on print shops and creative agencies. And the economic climate was tight.

The company partnered with a group of artists called x5 for a national art exhibition that kicked off in Auckland at an exclusive Parnell venue. Fuji Xerox produced limited edition, signed prints of selected works to demonstrate the high quality of the 700 Digital Colour Press and the vibrancy of the artists' work. Guests received a print of their choice.

It was a hip, chic launch event not normally synonymous with technology functions where the artists, press and creative agency types mingled with Fuji Xerox staff, drank fine wine and listened to jazz.

The 700 Digital Colour Press was well received by the audience dazzled by the print quality and the evening's festivities in Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington and Christchurch. Media covered the event with all targeted publications reporting on the event and the new product, providing the reach Fuji Xerox was looking for

In selecting a PR firm, businesses should ask the question: "Can these people take their place at the executive meeting, advise the CEO on matters that keep her/him awake at night, impress the company's marketers with their creativity and ability to execute, and assist the HR director with a restructure? If not, they are not going to give you the bandwidth you require," says Jane Sweeney

to reach their potential customer base.

The results speak for themselves. Fuji Xerox blew apart their sales forecast for the year, selling more than double the number of units they anticipated. Not bad in a recession!

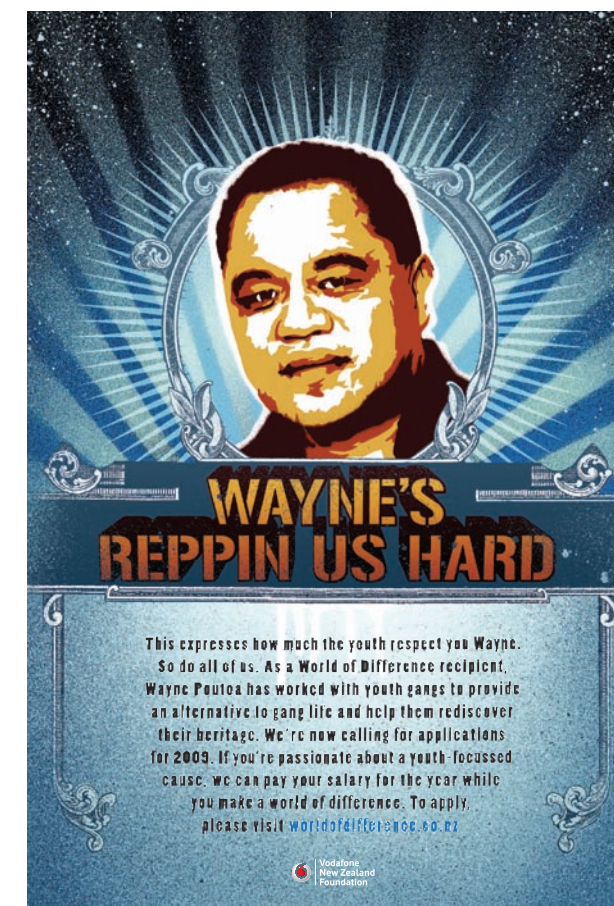
## Vodafone World of Difference

Back in 2005, Porter Novelli began working on the World of Difference programme, which pays the salary and expenses for up to six passionate Kiwis to work with their charity of choice for a year, to really make a difference.

Funded by the Vodafone New Zealand Foundation and the Vodafone Group Foundation, the programme has recently shifted focus to support those who work with youth in New Zealand.

Over the past three years Porter Novelli has profiled these previously unsung heroes in the media—not an easy task, as they are such humble people who prefer to fly under the radar. The campaign coverage has reached every Kiwi five times over across all broadcast, print and online media.

The Vodafone Foundation won the Robin Hood Foundation's Prime Minister's Social Heroes Award for World of Difference in 2008 and the programme has now gone global, being run by Vodafone Foundations in eight countries.



Making the news: Porter Novelli ensured Yealands Estate and Kapiti Cheese had strong stories to justify all the coverage

Cause-related: Vodafone was already doing good; Porter Novelli helped get the recognition

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# Taking responsibility

‘Do the right thing,’ says Nikki Wright

When Westpac launched an ambitious sustainability plan this year, it required not just the usual array of communicators and ad people to get the new message across.

For a start, the message was complex, comprising Westpac’s CEMARS certification (short for Certified Emissions Measurement and Reduction Scheme), the launch of Westpac ecoshop and a major internal sustainability plan.

It was also bold, aiming to position the bank as a leader in corporate responsibility and change the way the bank does business in New Zealand.

Westpac knew it required expert assistance so turned to Wright Communications, a specialist in corporate social responsibility and sustainability.

“They really understand the issues businesses face in grappling with this nebulous topic and are very clued up on the area of carbon management,” says head of corporate responsibility at the bank, Suzie Marsden. “Wright Communications impress me with

their great ideas and very importantly, their collaborative working style.”

## Walk the talk

Nikki Wright to set up Wright Communications in 2006 because she could see a gap: no-one was specialising in corporate social responsibility. Now the Auckland-based consultancy boasts an enviable client list including Ecostore, McDonald’s, Mainzeal, Ricoh, Sir Peter Blake Trust and Villa Maria.

“It’s relatively easy to be a communications practitioner. Anyone can write a press release and generate media coverage for their clients,” says Wright. “It’s not so easy to challenge your clients to always do the right thing by their stakeholders and it’s not common to have that advice delivered from a consultancy that practices what it preaches.”

That means walking the talk. Wright Communications is the first PR consultancy to achieve carbon neutrality through Landcare Research’s carboNZero programme. “Our footprint is only small, but it puts us in a strong

position to assist our clients with reduction strategies and reporting requirements.”

At its Shortland Street office, the consultancy uses full recycling services, duplex printing, electronics and toner cartridge product stewardship and overnight powering down of electronic equipment. Consultants use a low-emissions Smart Car and GPS for travel to client meetings, ensuring business trips are efficiently planned and have a low-environmental impact.

Wright Communications is also a member of the New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Business Network—a valued pro-bono client.

## Full service

Sustainability is a specialty but Wright is also a full service consultancy working for multinational brands such as McDonald’s. National communications manager Kate Porter says Wright advises her team across all issues. “We use other communications agencies for tactical work but Nikki acts as a sounding board for a wide range of issues. She’s very socially aware and a great thinker. We have a small team, so I find her excellent to run things past.”

Doing business the ‘Wright Way’ means being guided by three values: people, planet and profit. “This means we are communicators that are aware of the wider social, environmental and economic context that our clients operate in and bring that understanding to everything we do,” Wright says.

Corporate responsibility reporting is the capability that sets it apart from other consultancies. In addition to being trained in GHG inventory reporting through Landcare Research, Wright produces sustainability reports using the Global Reporting Initiative (G3) guidelines and is the only agency, to Wright’s knowledge, with this expertise.

“There’s an international trend toward corporations needing to provide a greater level

of transparency than they have done in the past. One of the ways they can achieve this is through better reporting procedures and this is where Wright Communications can add value. Our clients tap into our sustainability expertise and we assist them in producing triple-bottom-line reports that address all aspects of their business.”

## New wave

Wright says triple-bottom-line reporting is becoming far more common across all sectors. The reports are also an important communications tool, creating opportunities to engage with stakeholders across the board.

“We’re part of a new international wave of professional public relations that is contributing more to our client’s business. We will continue to introduce our clients to new practices to enhance their reputations and credibility, and ensure they are fully accountable to their stakeholders.”

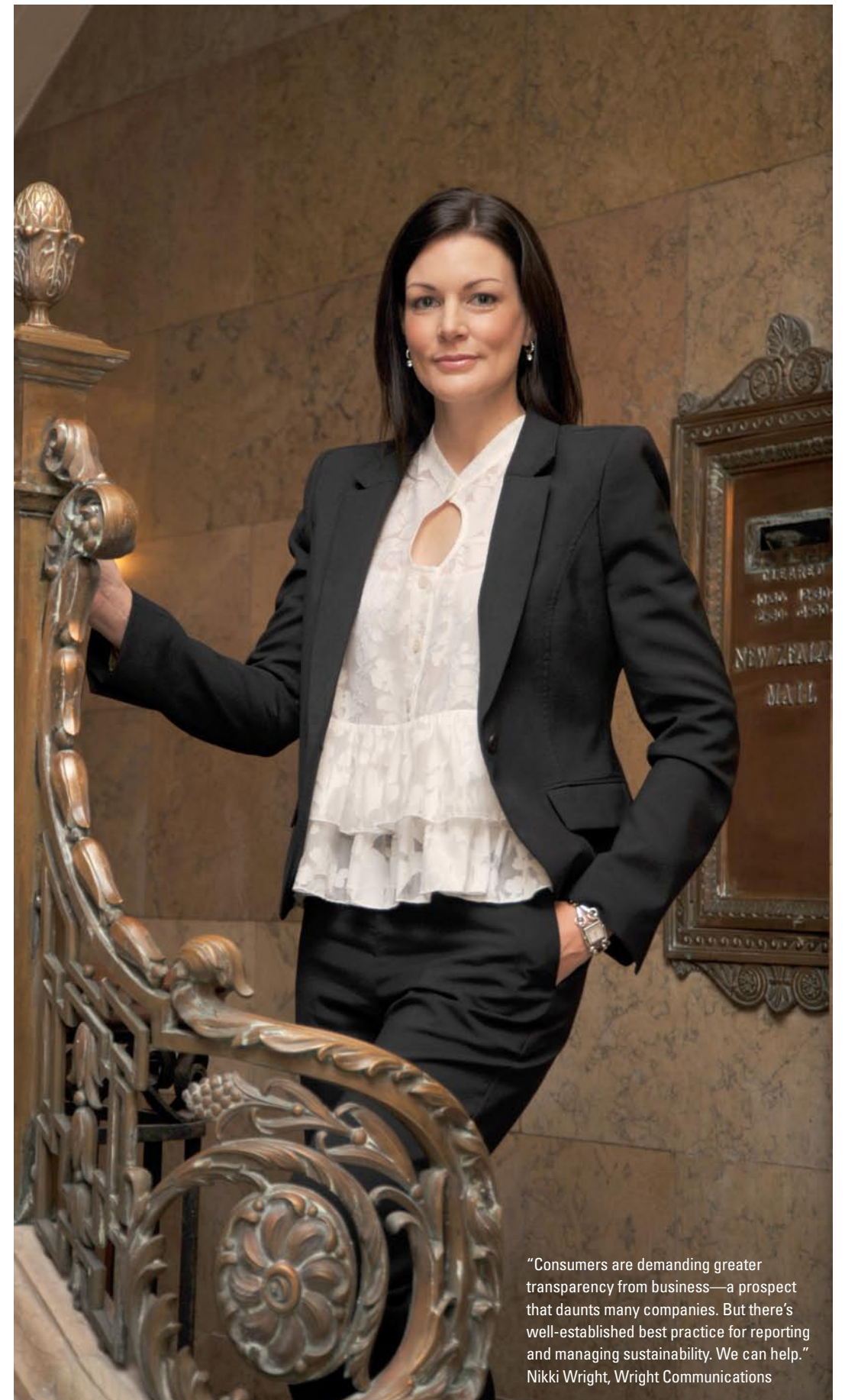
Wright Communications is a full-service PR consultancy with expertise in corporate responsibility and sustainability communications.

### Services offered:

- Strategic communications planning
- Stakeholder research
- Corporate responsibility-led initiatives
- Sustainability and annual reports
- Change management and internal communications
- Brand and corporate reputation management
- Risk/issues and crisis management
- Media relations and training

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“Consumers are demanding greater transparency from business—a prospect that daunts many companies. But there’s well-established best practice for reporting and managing sustainability. We can help.”  
 Nikki Wright, Wright Communications

Ricoh engaged Wright to produce its inaugural sustainability report, to international G3 standards, and to formulate a major carbon reduction programme. And Westpac is on a mission to be the most sustainable bank—with Wright’s help

