

Entrant company name: **Viva**

Category: **Small PR Consultancy of the Year**

1. Business Objectives and Performance

We set six objectives for 2024-25. We achieved all six.

1. Improve profitability for employee-owners. As an EOT since 2023, profit matters to everyone. Net profit rose 16.1% to £60,242 whilst revenue held steady at £867,411. Cash reserves strengthened 12.2% to £166,340. Revenue per head grew 20%. We deliberately invested in restructuring, replacing unsustainable workloads with a model built for longevity. The business is now leaner, better capitalised, and actively recruiting to expand.
2. Implement the hybrid agency model. Client needs had shifted towards project work requiring specialist skills at pace. We moved from 12 to 8 core staff, supported by specialist partners and experienced freelancers. Productive utilisation rose from 64% to 75%. Same revenue, sustainable workloads.
3. Establish specialist partnerships. Steph Bridgeman (Experienced Media Analysts) provides AMEC-level measurement and trains our team in evaluation. Claire Quansah delivers professional mentoring and career coaching. Prof. Simon Bolton serves as NED providing strategic governance. Fractional specialism that elevates capability beyond our size.
4. Retain key clients through transformation. 100% key account retention: BAE Systems (15+ years), Eurofighter (12+ years), AWE; all stayed. Security-conscious defence clients do not tolerate instability. Alongside retention, eight major clients/projects won: BAE Systems Saudi Arabia, Spring North, IoT Northern Group, Institute of Economic Development, Sarginsons, Autocab, Tutorful and IN4 Group - spanning defence, manufacturing, technology, public sector.
5. Launch NextGen Viva. Many applicants for junior roles had little meaningful agency experience. We created NextGen Viva: an intensive paid programme where participants work on real client briefs with a dedicated mentor. Four young professionals completed in 2025. We will repeat in 2026.
6. Build a credible industry voice from outside London. Our podcast PR in the Real World reached 50+ episodes 6,000+ audio downloads, 100,000+ YouTube views,

reaching 65+ countries. Every episode on the CIPR CPD portal. Consistently prioritises female and regional voices.

2. Business Strategy

We'd questioned the traditional agency model for years. Fixed headcount, everyone stretched across disciplines. It worked, but wasn't sustainable. In 2025, we stopped questioning and started building. Our hybrid model combines a tight core team with specialist partners.

Core team handles strategy, client relationships and coordination. Specialists contribute depth exactly when needed. It's built on the philosophy that greatness comes through the agency of others. Now we are better because we work with people who are better than us at what they do. The result: AMEC-accredited evaluation, professional mentoring and board-level advisory, capabilities typically reserved for agencies five times our size.

3. CPD and Professionalism

Every team member holds CIPR membership. Our Curious Minds Framework provides £1,200+ personal CPD budgets, structured Career Development Reviews and weekly learning sessions. The team logged 478 training hours in 2025, averaging 40 hours per person. Each week Steph Bridgeman delivers AMEC measurement training and campaign evaluation, while Claire Quansah provides structured career mentoring. We host masterclasses with Amanda Coleman (crisis communications) and Ben Verinder (AI), and continue a bespoke AI skills programme with Edge Hill University.

Each employee has a £500+ wellbeing budget including Spill professional therapy (9.5/10 rating) and Juno allowance (£45/month). Good Business Charter accredited across all ten components for two consecutive years. Cyber Essentials Plus certified. Our podcast is a formal CIPR CPD resource. We don't just meet professional standards; we actively help raise them.

4. Outstanding Achievements

Financial: Revenue maintained during restructuring. Net profit up 16.1%. Utilisation improved from 64% to 75%. Cash reserves ,£166,340. Now actively recruiting.

Client retention and growth: 100% key accounts retained through transformation. Eight new clients won across five sectors. BAE Systems Saudi Arabia represents international expansion of an existing 15-year relationship.

Eurofighter: The Fighter Show: Our standout achievement. Season 3 (2025) delivered 3.2 million views across 9 episodes, up from 227,000 in Season 1 (2023). Cumulative 2025 views: 5.97 million. 173,000 hours watch time. 6,900 new subscribers in 2025 alone. Top episode Gravity hit 1.2 million views.

The show transformed Eurofighter's audience demographics 42% of viewers now aged 18-35, up from 20% previously.

People: 8+ years average tenure (15 years for leadership team). 71% female workforce. 67% female board. Employee ownership embedded since 2023.

Recognition: CIPR Small PR Consultancy of the Year 2025. PR in the Real World surpassed 50 episode, over 100,000 YouTube avIEWS.

5. Campaign: Bolton Food & Drink Festival, The Secret Menu

Brief: Bolton Council's flagship event needed new, younger audiences for its 20th anniversary, without budget for the traditional media breakfast. In 2024, Danny Malin (Rate My Takeaway, 786k YouTube) attended organically and generated more engagement than the entire press programme. The insight: influencer content delivered disproportionate reach at a fraction of the cost. Budget: £8,300 total (agency £7,560, production £750). All creators unpaid. Zero paid media.

Objectives: Recruit minimum 5 creators. Generate minimum 18 content pieces. Increase interactions by 10% YoY. Grow following by 5%.

Strategy & tactics: We designed The Secret Menu, a Bolton-themed passwords (Bromley Cross, Rivington Pike, Fred Dibnah) unlocked exclusive dishes at 11 traders, turning attendance into a multi-stop content journey. Six-month vetting selected 18 creators (combined 3.2m following) with geographic relevance within an hour of Bolton. Instagram for reach, TikTok for discovery, YouTube for credibility, Facebook for community. Branded VIP cards and goody bags drove organic unboxing content.

Results:

18 creators (target 5 260% above target).

187 content pieces (target 18 939% above).

Interactions +845% YoY (target 10%).

Followers +36% (target 5%).

Total views: 903,442.

Cost per view: less than 1p.

68%+ interactions from non-followers; genuinely new audiences.

2% positive sentiment.

One of highest-ever festival attendance.

All 18 creators confirmed for 2026. A repeatable, scalable model born from budget constraint.

"Viva didn't just meet our expectations, they surpassed them." Bolton Council

Six objectives, six delivered.

Profit up 16%. Utilisation up 11 percentage points.

Every key client retained. Eight new clients won. The Fighter Show grew from 227k to 3.2 million views per season.

The Secret Menu delivered 903k views on £8,300.

NextGen laufend

Podcast growing

Employee-owned, trusted by Europe's biggest defence brands, and proof that you don't need to be big to be excellent.