




## #UnAwards18 ENTRY // NOMINATION FORM

Please complete this entry form and email it to [admin@comms2point0unawards.co.uk](mailto:admin@comms2point0unawards.co.uk) by 25 October 2018 (midnight)

You are able to send one piece of supporting information to help with your entry (but please only send one as our judges will not be able to look at any more than this)  
Thanks.

your name	Sally Northeast and Georgia Turner
your email address	Commsunplugged@gmail.com
your organisational @twitter	@commsunplugged
your personal @twitter [optional]	@salzasal @GeorgiaTurner
category entered	Best Creative Comms Work Best Collaboration Best Low Cost Comms Best Small Comms Team Best Comms Team Best Ethical Comms Behaviour/Diversity
name of organisation/team/individual being entered/nominated	
name of entry	Comms Unplugged 2018 More info at <a href="http://commsunplugged.co.uk">commsunplugged.co.uk</a>
date project delivered [to /	Planning began late 2017 and then carried on throughout 2018 and event delivered in September 2018

from]	
campaign/project budget	<p>All expenses covered by income. The 2018 event cost just over £9,000 to stage. The event is <b>not for profit</b>. Any surplus made goes into the 2019 event.</p> <p>Approx £250 was spent on promotional costs including venue hire for a taster event and printing of postcards.</p>
brief description of objectives	<p><i>“The average UK adult now spends 24 hours each week online”</i> (source – Ofcom 2018)</p> <p>So for communications professionals we may even exceed this. It’s potentially damaging and we wanted to do something positive to make change possible.</p> <p>We also know that communications and PR has featured in the top three most stressed industries to work in. As an industry we have been poor and slow to tackle this. We see Comms Unplugged as a part of the solution.</p> <p>In terms of hard measures we set the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide a different professional learning opportunity for communicators away from the distractions of the internet and technology, focussing on analogue techniques and face to face interaction</li> <li>• To boost and inspire delegates’ creativity by providing innovative experiences not found at other learning events</li> <li>• To give communications professionals some tools for looking after their own and their colleagues’ wellbeing</li> <li>• To create a community of professionals who learn from and support each other in the field and beyond</li> <li>• Deliver a not-for-profit event, selling enough tickets and sponsorship packages to cover costs with a small surplus for the following year</li> <li>• To run a 3-day event free of social media activity by our attendees</li> </ul>
brief outline of strategy/plan	<p>Now in its second year, we aimed to build on the success of the 2017 event by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extending the programme to include additional learning opportunities and activities and also additional down-time, which delegates told us was an important part of the event</li> <li>• Attracting a range of speakers, for no cost, who are less often seen on traditional speaking circuits and can bring a range of professional and personal perspectives and learning</li> <li>• Building on previous wellbeing activities to provide varied, quality opportunities to learn techniques which delegates can use in future</li> <li>• Increasing the number of delegates attending and benefitting from the programme while retaining the intimate feel of the</li> </ul>

	<p>inaugural event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harnessing the power, enthusiasm and reach of the original unpluggers to advocate for and champion the ethos and concept of Comms Unplugged</li> <li>• Extending our core ‘team’ by pulling in volunteers to help at the event from among the original unpluggers</li> <li>• Making extensive use of social media platforms to promote the event, embracing the irony of this in relation to the unplugged nature of the offer!</li> <li>• Increasing our use of video, telling authentic stories of the difference Comms Unplugged has made and could make for new attendees</li> <li>• To raise a minimum of £500 for our two chosen local charities, Dorset Mind and Dorset Wildlife</li> </ul>
<p>what did you deliver and how did you measure it?</p>	<p>The core team organising Comms Unplugged is Sally Northeast, Georgia Turner and Darren Caveney. We organise the event in our own time and for no personal gain or profit, and we have now set up a partnership to make the organisation more straightforward. We are committed to giving something back to our industry and helping to build resilience and wellbeing for communications practitioners.</p> <p>We work exceptionally well together as a team, even though it’s mainly done virtually via Google docs, email, Whatsapp and Skype! We discuss ideas together before making decisions and are largely in agreement about the direction and priorities for the project. We are always mutually supportive, pitching in and helping each other when our day jobs get in the way.</p> <p>We have a very clear vision of the ethos of our event and what we’re trying to achieve and this is central to everything we do in making Comms Unplugged a reality.</p> <p>What’s come as a very lovely surprise is the extent to which our unpluggers, in particular those who attended in the first year, have bought into that vision and actively champion it. They do this to the extent that we consider them our extended team.</p> <p>Through a WhatsApp group set up by one unpluggers after the 2017 event (and with a second group for 2018 unpluggers now in place) they contribute ideas, offer support through both work and personal challenges, volunteer their help (eg sourcing raffle prizes, assisting at the event with registration, parking duty, fire-building etc) and generally encourage us and each other every day.</p> <p>They are proactive in helping to market the event and talk about it at every opportunity, helping us to sell the concept and the tickets. Their commitment and belief in the event is such that one said:</p> <p><b><i>“Talk about the movement you have created because so many</i></b></p>

***have bought into the vision you had and believe in it. From a cultural change perspective, what you guys have achieved is huge. Organisations would pay a fortune to achieve what you've achieved. If you three got stuck in a lift for the rest of the year, the unpluggers would do their utmost to make sure #CU19 still happens."* (Emma Northcote, Dyfed-Powys Police)**

Comms Unplugged 2018 provided a 48 hour programme of learning and wellbeing between 13 and 15 September at the Burnbake campsite in rural Dorset. This was an increase of a half a day's activity on the 2017 event. Additional down-time was built into the programme to ensure a relaxed and calm environment. Delegates began arriving and pitching their tents or parking up their campers from the morning on the first day with activities starting at lunchtime.

The three organisers (including Darren Caveney) worked from late 2017 to create an interesting programme of speakers, who were found through a mixture of the organisers' personal contacts and some direct approaches via social media including LinkedIn and Twitter. All the speakers generously gave their time for free, with some camping over and joining in as delegates the rest of the time. Speakers including Sam Hodges, Head of Comms at Twitter UK, Alex Ball, then of NHS England, Heather Baily, Non-Exec Director at Dorset HealthCare, Philippa Stanton, artist and photographer, Matt Desmier, director of strategic consultancy Wise Old Uncle, newspaper editor Andy Martin, creator/director of Conker Gin Rupert Holloway, local government Chief Executive David McIntosh and Perago Wales's agile change and internal comms experts Ross Gregory and Victoria Ford.

Wellbeing activities included the ever popular Fresh Air Fridays mindfulness walks (they were also sponsors), yoga classes, a visit and talk from Wendy Williams and her alpacas and a guided walk by the National Trust at Studland beach. There was also live music from local bands on Friday night, singing and chat around the fire, stargazing with one of our unpluggers and our famous 'vent tent' where delegates can air their issues and seek solutions.

**Top media Tweet** earned 5,284 impressions

As the sun sets on **#CU18**, we send love and gratitude from our hearts to everyone who was in our field. Yes it's a learning/wellbeing combo in the fresh air, but it's **YOU**, the people who come, that make the magic happen. See you at **#CU19**  
**#unpluggedforever**  
[pic.twitter.com/OIKOghwbgR](https://pic.twitter.com/OIKOghwbgR)



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Food was mainly provided by Dorset caterers showcasing the best of the county's local produce. It included Fiery Fox's wood-fired pizza, paella by Idelica and superb sandwiches, quiche and cake by Love Cake.

Our team of original unpluggers assisted at the event with registering delegates, orientation, set-up and clear-down, supporting new delegates, building fires (!), problem-solving electrical issues (!) and generally helping the event to run smoothly.

Tickets were on sale from early March 2018 and had sold out by mid-August. We set a target of 60 but actually decided to oversell (capacity allowed this) and due to the demand we increased our maximum capacity to 85 (including speakers).

Promotional activity included:

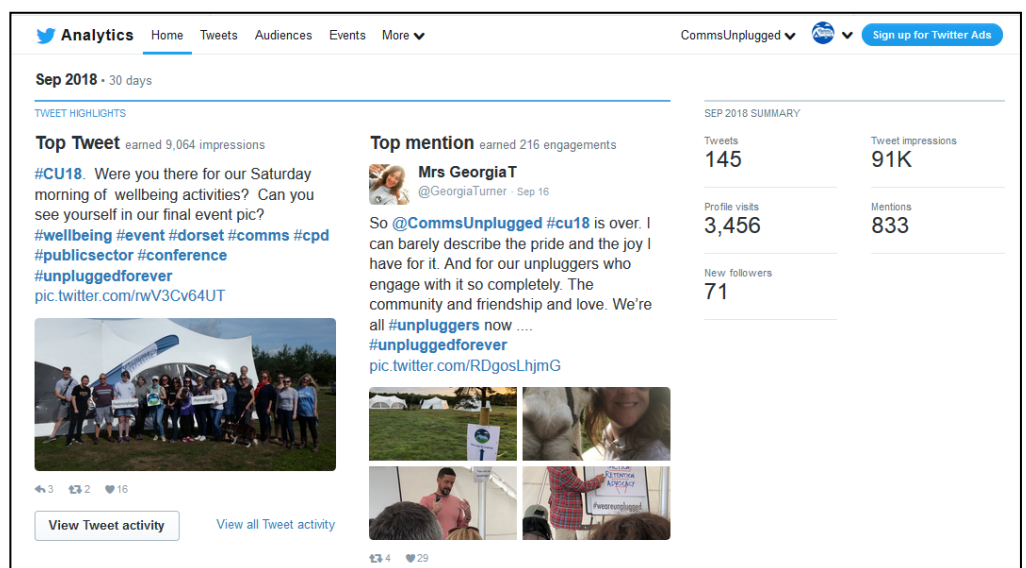
- 11 blog posts from the launch post (and not including the unplugging videos below) (<http://www.commsunplugged.co.uk/blog/>). In addition unpluggers blogged on their own sites about why people should come to the event.
- 'The 12 days of unplugged Christmas' series of mini-vids featuring organisers, sponsors and unpluggers (organised on the hoof at the 2017 Unawards ceremony!), including this one: <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bcwg6bYIs4o/?hl=en&taken-by=commsunplugged>
- A set of slightly mad orientation videos by Sally and Georgia to show unpluggers the route and the field before the event (<http://www.commsunplugged.co.uk/blog/getting-to-comms-unplugged-on-film/>)
- 12 countdown videos by the organisers and some of the original

unpluggers (starting with this one:  
<http://www.commsunplugged.co.uk/blog/12-days-to-cu18/>)

We set an ambitious target of **zero** social media posts and **zero** social media reach during the 3-day event. We are happy to report that we achieved this. Attendees switched off their phones.

Before the event we utilised Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn to engage with the communications community to encourage attendance and to talk up the benefits of Comms Unplugged.

And post-event, social media sang with a genuine love for an event – we prefer to call it an experience – from a field full of attendees.



During August and September we posted content across social. Twitter is our chosen key platform:

- 338 tweets, videos and GIFs generating 1,292 mentions and 206k impressions plus
- 32 Instagram posts
- 16 Facebook posts, videos and GIFs

But the key was the quality of the engagement, the richness of the real life relationships being formed and the uniqueness of the event. Metrics on their own will never quite capture that.

We were featured on the Talking Comms Podcast (<http://talkingcomms.libsyn.com/>) in a New Year edition (episode 2C) and the creators of the podcast, Darren Caveney and Adrian Stirrup, also recorded a special edition at the event itself (episode 7).

We ran a free taster event in June 2017 at Upton House in Dorset

<http://www.commsunplugged.co.uk/blog/we-cant-tell-you-how-to-be-unplugged-but-we-can-show-you/>), organised with the Government Communications Service in the south west. Of the 14 delegates, four went on to buy tickets for the main event (a 29% conversion rate)

In addition we worked with our sponsors to create a mono version of our brand which has used to great effect this year, keeping our look fresh, interesting and creative.



Our attached infographic gives a visual feel for what went on at the event and demonstrates our creativity in describing our offer and marketing it.

what were the outcomes/benefits?

There were 31 tickets sold in 2017 (with a few free tickets also given away) and along with speakers we had a total of 50 people in the field.

In 2018 we set a slightly increased maximum attendance of 85 (including speakers). We sold 68 tickets (though a small number of people could not attend in the end), with 45 of our delegates being new this year. In total across the event we had over 80 people in the field (including sponsors and activity leads), a 60% increase on the previous year. We doubled our income on the previous year (but of course also increased our costs).

In a survey of delegates we had a 38% response rate. Results include:

- 100% thought the event was excellent or good value for money
- 100% said they had learned a lot (50%) or a few things (50%) that will be useful at work
- 96% said they had learned things that would help them to improve their wellbeing
- 100% said the event had inspired them to be more creative and think about things different (79% said hell yes, 21% said a bit)
- 96% rated 4 or 5 (out of 5) on likelihood that they would come to the event again
- 96% rated 4 or 5 on likelihood that they would recommend the event to others

Comments in the feedback tell the story more effectively. They include:

	<p><b><i>“This is hands down the best comms event that has ever been created.”</i></b></p> <p><b><i>“The most relaxed environment in which I have ever experienced work-related development.”</i></b></p> <p><b><i>“It’s no exaggeration to say Comms Unplugged has changed my life. It’s broadened my horizons. It’s got me networking and enjoying it. It’s given me a confidence I didn’t even realise I was lacking and I’ve made real friends.”</i></b></p> <p><b><i>“This is very much a comms retreat – recharging, resetting and reminding us why we wanted to do this kind of job in the first place. That field really has been sprinkled with some kind of magic.”</i></b></p> <p><b><i>“I think lots of the wellbeing activities will help with my anxiety. I even got a [new] job because I was so chilled at the interview.”</i></b></p> <p><b><i>“The friendly atmosphere, the focus on wellbeing, the cake. Not like any other conference.”</i></b></p> <p><b><i>“An instant connection with fellow comms people, they ‘got me’ straight away.”</i></b></p> <p><b><i>“...such a good, unique, important event.”</i></b></p> <p><b><i>“Brilliant sense of support and community”</i></b></p> <p><b><i>“The people - I suffer from anxiety and was half excited for this and half terrified. I’m so proud of myself for going and for learning so much, couldn’t have done it without the community even before the field! Just the best few days.”</i></b></p> <p><b><i>“The organisers and attendees are warm and open. There is a real sense of care for each other.”</i></b></p> <p>The 2017 WhatsApp group and the new 2018 WhatsApp group provide a safe space for unpluggers to discuss a range of issues, share challenges and successes, seek ideas and support and generally continue to positive connections forged in the field. This serves to build and perpetuate the team spirit, build brand advocacy and loyalty and spread the positive messages and advice learned in the field.</p> <p>We also raised £1,000 for our two chosen local charities, Dorset Mind and Dorset Wildlife, doubling our target.</p> <p>The field is already booked 5-7 September 2019 for #CU19</p>
tell us why you should win	Comms Unplugged is totally innovative for our industry – as one unpluggers said: “It takes someone brave to just do it for these things to



[in no more than 100 words]

happen.”

At its heart are all the most important things for the comms industry – great relationships, personality, learning, community, uniqueness, wellbeing and teamwork.

We don't exaggerate when we say we've started a movement – we honestly believe this and aim to spread the benefits of this new way of thinking to as many comms people as possible.

We're incredibly proud of what we've created and of the growing team of unpluggers who have bought into our ethos.

