



## AMEC International Communication Effectiveness Awards 2015 Entry Form

**Category:** Best use of Measurement of a Single Event  
**Entering Company Name:** PR News Partners  
**Client:** British Council  
**Campaign title:** UK-Russia Year of Culture

### OBJECTIVE/BRIEF

2014 was announced the UK-Russia Year of Culture in a diplomatic agreement between the countries. This Year of Culture included hundreds of different events held either in Russia or Great Britain. Those events belonged to different spheres: art, education, music, theatre, etc. The British Council was the key organizer of the Year. The British Council is a non-profit international organization, *the goal of which is to develop cooperation between Russia, Great Britain, and other countries in the spheres of education, culture, and art.* The Year of Culture was supposed to be a significant and unique event in the social and cultural life of Russia, as well as a platform for the promotion of the British Council: it was supposed to increase people's awareness of the Council's activity and form a sustainably positive image of the British Council within the target audiences and among the existing and possible sponsors.

In late 2014, the British Council ordered an analysis of a campaign to promote the UK-Russia Year of Culture in the traditional media from PR News Partners. The main goals of the analysis was to evaluate the efficiency of the promotion of the British Council and the Year, develop a list of recommendations concerning further PR activity and the invitation of investment from sponsors. The importance of the expert analysis of the Council's activity was, among other things, caused by the difficult political situation in 2014 – it made the promotion of the Year complicated.

Based on the client's request and strategic PR goals, PR News set the following objectives to its study:

- development of a complex model evaluating the efficiency of the PR campaign;
- analysis of the peculiarities of the British Council's image in different contexts (education, music, culture, etc.);
- analysis of media coverage risks and their influence on the campaign;
- compilation of a list of recommendations to improve coverage of future events.

### STRATEGY

The main peculiarity of the project lied in the fact that the Year of Culture was a complex object in terms of media analysis, as it included a big number of events each with its own coverage.

To solve this issue, PR News chose a complex approach to the evaluation of media activity quality suggested by the AMEC as part of its international media study standards. This approach included a number of qualitative and quantitative evaluation parameters.

## AMEC International Communication Effectiveness Awards 2015 Entry Form

|                                  | Awareness  | Knowledge/<br>Understanding   | Interest/<br>Consideration   | Support/<br>Preference     | Action   |
|----------------------------------|--|---|--|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Public Relations Activity</b> | Media relations (press releases, interviews, etc.): 2514 articles/programs<br>Events initiated by British Council – 29<br>Press conferences: more than 10 over a year<br>Quotes: 257 quotes from British Council officers<br>Sponsor coverage: 1861 mentions |   |  |                            |   |
| <b>Intermediary Effect</b>       | Number of articles/programs : 11031;<br>share of initiated articles/programs : 23%;<br>Media outlets: 2,088;<br>Coverage geography: 68% - federal, 32% - regional (11 federal districts);<br>Mentions in headlines: 35%;<br>Pictures: 51%                    | Share of key messages: 33% of the total number of articles/programs with British Council mentions;<br>Coverage format: news – 41%, event announcement – 34%;<br>Wide range of event topics: culture, music, art, science, and technology. | Scripted media campaign and sequential coverage;<br>Coverage tone: 17% positive coverage;<br>Coverage format: reports/reviews/analyses – 14% | Third-party speakers : 167 |  |
| <b>Target Audience Effect</b>    |  |   |  |                            | Well-formed media image of British Council; strategy for further promotion           |

Besides the conventional parameters we used integral criteria based on the basic laws of social perception (J. Bruner, D. Norman, U. Neisser), including whether the coverage of the project followed a certain plotline or script. This criterion demonstrates the quality of the target audiences' understanding of the key messages. Moreover, the analysis of the coverage tone was based on three universal perception pairs: strength-weakness, activeness-passiveness and attractiveness-unattractiveness.

The study was aimed at the complex analysis of the coverage of the Year of Culture and the detection of the key peculiarities of the British Council coverage, which should be taken into consideration for the purposes of future promotion of the organization and its activities.



## AMEC International Communication Effectiveness Awards 2015 Entry Form

### EXECUTION/IMPLEMENTATION

The study spanned coverage by the Russian national and regional media outlets throughout 2014. The events of the Year of Culture differed in format and structure, belonging to different spheres (culture, music, art, education, English language, social affairs) and types (exhibitions, concerts, theatre plays, educational programs, forums, seminars, etc.).

Coverage of the British Council and the events of the UK-Russia Year of Culture (87 events) was the main object of the study.

### Key results:

- The UK-Russia Year of Culture was widely covered by the traditional media, with average monthly coverage amounting to 950 articles/programs. The events of the Year of Culture and the British Council were covered by a total of 2,088 media outlets across the country (see Appendix 1).
- Among the analyzed events, 29 were initiated by the British Council and 58 were supported by it. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of the coverage showed that The Hitchcock 9 Screenings, the 15<sup>th</sup> New British Film Festival and Selector Live were the most efficiently promoted events initiated by the British Council. Their coverage was mostly positive, used a variety of formats and quoted a lot of speakers, and all three projects were clearly personified.
- The events of the UK-Russia Year of Culture set the context for the promotion of the British Council's activities in the following 10 areas: business, contests & grants, learning English, awards, science & high technology, fashion & design, education, society, art and culture. Previously, the British Council was mostly known to the general public as an educator and the coverage in the context of the Year of Culture helped significantly broaden this view by communicating the messages that *it supported and developed culture and allowed wide audiences to get acquainted with unique cultural heritage*.
- Using the script-based method we broke down the sequence of the coverage (see Appendix 2) and found out that it had gone through all stages that were necessary from the viewpoint of social perception. The announcement and development-of-the-story stages were the most prominent ones, which can be explained by the nature of the promotion campaign. It is also logical, given the order that events usually unfold in, which goes as follows: announcement → event (reports) → evaluation, reviews and analyses. Each stage corresponded to a certain key message (Appendix 3).

### EFFECTIVENESS OF ASSIGNMENT

The efficiency of the promotion of the British Council and the events of the Year of Culture in the Russian media is proven by impressive qualitative and quantitative results reflecting the width and depth of the reach:

- A high degree of headline exposure, a wide variety of coverage formats and genres, numerous quotes and a high level of personification warranted successful promotion of the Year of the Culture events. Based on the results of the study, we developed suggestions for the British Council to adjust its communication strategy and find the optimal formats of communication with the target audiences.
- A wide range of topics and messages expanded the perception of the British Council from a primarily educational organization to an organization that also works in such areas as culture, art, science, technology, etc.



## AMEC International Communication Effectiveness Awards 2015 Entry Form

- By working with sponsors, the British Council was able to extend its range of partners and opportunities to promote its activities.

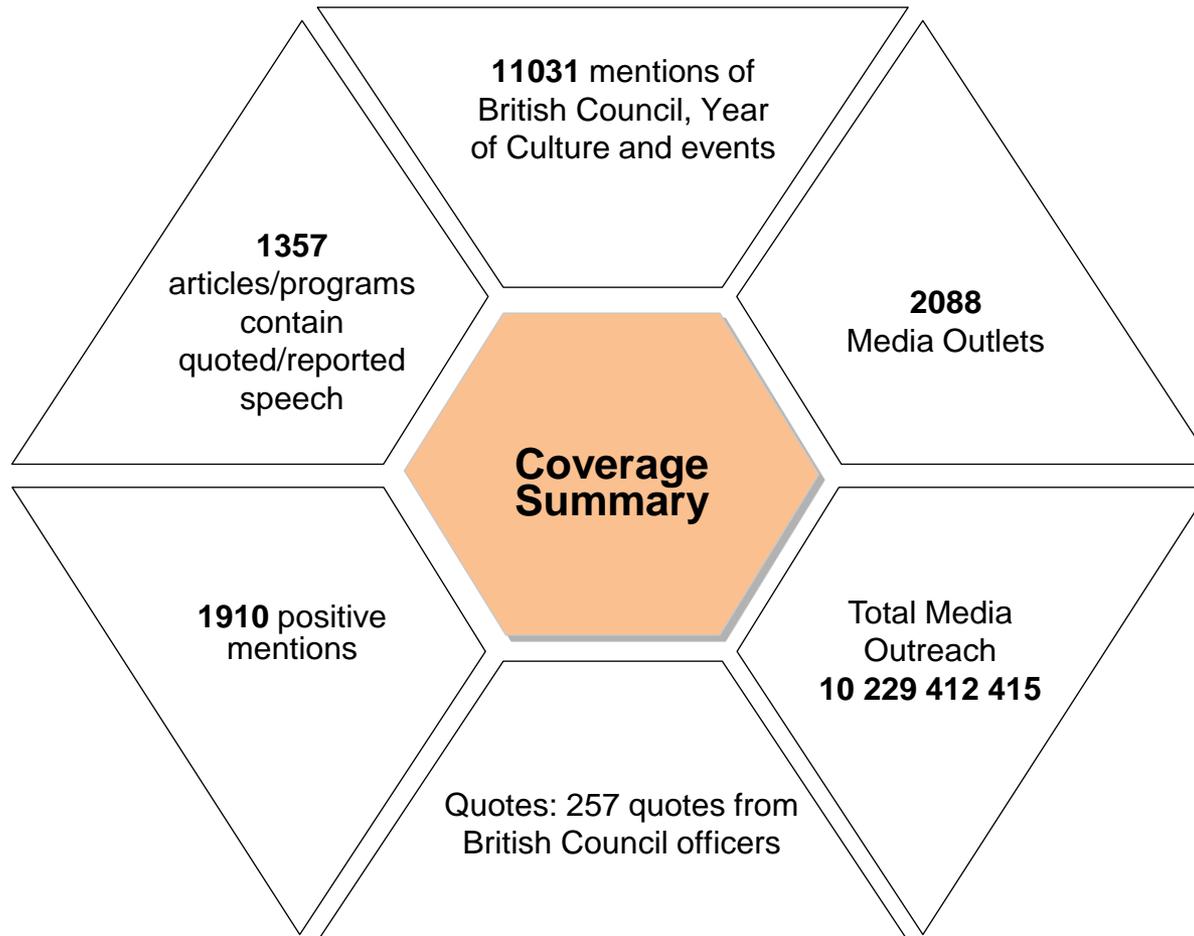
**Maria Nikanorova, PR Director, UK-Russia Year of Culture 2014, British Council:**

*The analysis of the PR campaign for the UK-Russia Year of Culture offered a detailed look at a year of media coverage of more than 300 events. We wanted to see how key messages communicated by the British Council found such a widespread response in the media. The study helped us arrive to certain conclusions as to how we could improve future PR campaigns for other activities and prioritize initiatives. On a bigger scale, the study revealed the link between cultural initiatives and the political context. Although negative press was less than 1% of the combined coverage, it was important for us to see where this press that posed certain reputational risks came from. We also made a point of following the coverage of sponsors to help us with future partners.*

*We'd like to thank PR News for the flexible approach to analysis, unique expertise and tools that allowed us to follow and evaluate in great detail more than 11,000 articles and programs covering such a massive endeavor as a cultural exchange year.*

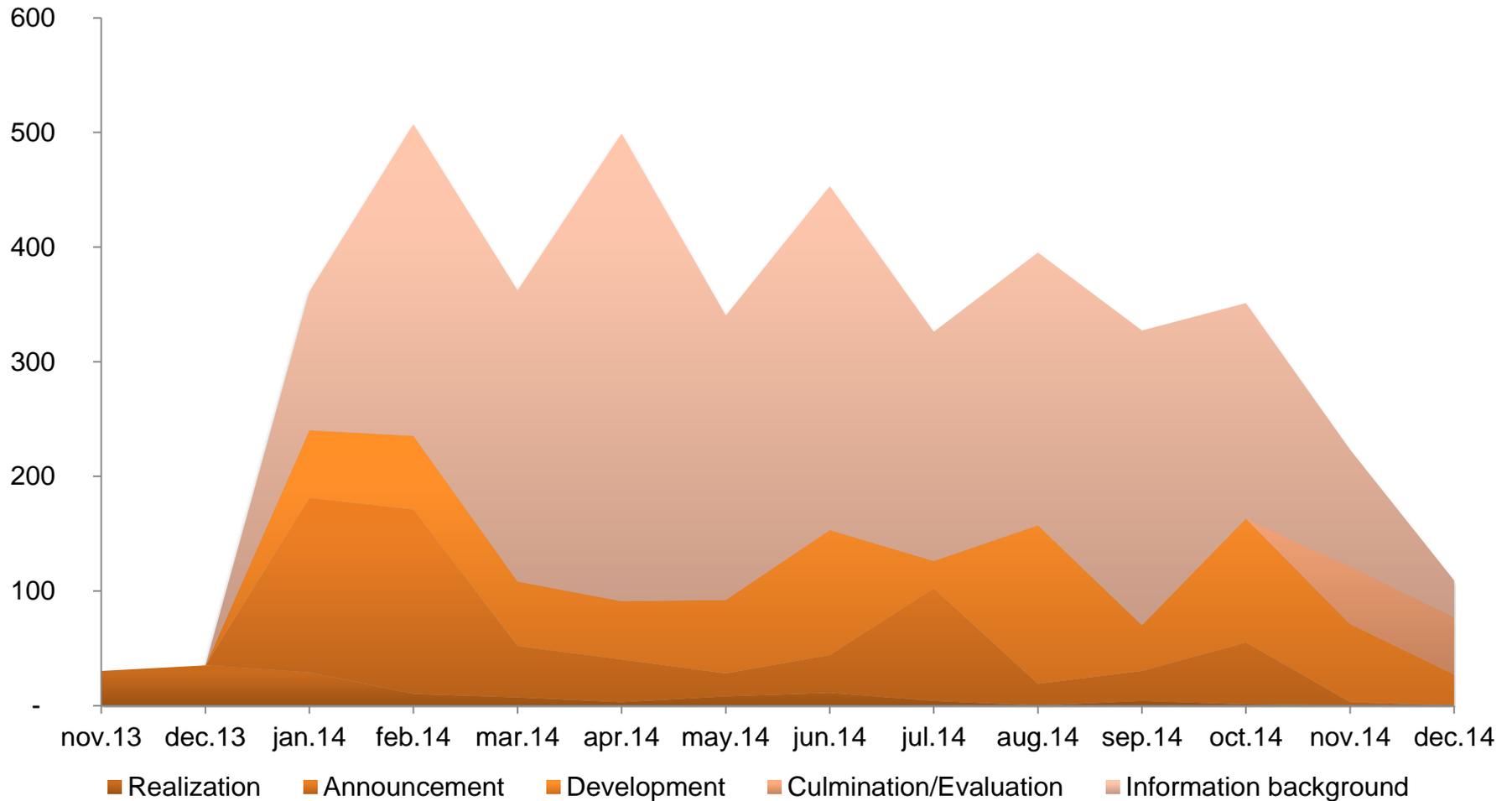
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## Appendix 1. Coverage of the UK-Russia Year of culture events and the British council



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## Appendix 2. The script-based structure of the Year of Culture coverage



## Appendix 3. The script-based structure of the Year of Culture coverage: Key Messages

