



Claire Bicknell
Account Manager
Clareville Consultancy
Arts and Humanities graduate

"As an Account Manager, my role is to run a team of three business-to-business executives and assistants in our growing PR consultancy. No day is the same so my job is very varied. I supervise seven clients and I am very hands-on with the campaigns. I have to think 'What perception or reputation does my client want to have?' and how I can achieve that through their target media. I write press releases, target forthcoming features, organise product launches, journalist interviews, photocalls and much, much more."



Louisa Beejay
Account Executive
Manning, Selvage & Lee
Italian and History of Art graduate

"I recently attended E3 in LA for Microsoft's Xbox, which is one of the largest and most important trade shows for the games industry. We managed all the aspects of Xbox's European presence at E3 – press conference, party, one-to-ones and group media briefings with key spokespeople. All of these went smoothly and contributed to the overall success of the Xbox European team at E3."

A PR LIFE – THE LADDER, THE PAY AND THE LIFESTYLE

An AM or an AE... what will you be? The path in PR can be as slow or fast as you want as your career is very much driven by your own personal ambitions and aspirations. This chapter sets out the typical career path in consultancy and explains how the job jigsaw fits together across account teams. It also discusses the pay scales and the typical lifestyle.

Start climbing that ladder now with our quick guide to the job:

- **Junior Account Executive:** a role requiring little experience, junior execs are often placement students on a sabbatical year out from university. Juniors are responsible for administration and rarely have a client-facing role, though they may build up to this as they near promotion to the next level.
- **Account Executive:** the entry point for most graduates, execs are expected to do the majority of the day-to-day work on an account such as media sell-ins, feature writing, sorting press clippings and compiling press packs. It is at this stage that individuals, with the help of their account managers, start to build up their contacts, particularly with journalists. Other work centres around research, liaison with third party suppliers and event organisation.
- **Senior Account Executive:** the senior exec takes on more responsibility, often acting as account manager on smaller accounts to gain managerial experience. The job profile is focused less on personal development and more on responsibility to the client and the team. This is often a challenging role.
- **Account Manager:** a manager's overall responsibility is to ensure that results are delivered. He or she oversees the workload of the team and must be able to spot potential danger points on the account. The client will often come to the manager as the first port of call if they have a problem or request or need advice. Managers report to account directors and delegate work to the team.
- **Senior Account Manager:** the senior manager role is related to the senior exec role in that it is a transition to the next level. Senior managers will begin to take on the responsibility for directing accounts in a mentored environment as they progress upwards.
- **Account Director:** the responsibility of the account director is to manage the relationship with the client and ensure best performance is achieved for both client and consultancy. The account director oversees client work at a high-level – day-to-day running of the account is left to the manager – but it is still up to the director to know what is going on and to ensure the client is happy. Directors are often involved in generating new business for the consultancy as well as being responsible for coaching the team.
- **From here you can become Group Account Director, Member of the Board, Managing Director and even CEO – the sky's the limit!**

Training

PR consultancies go out of business if they don't look after their people and any good company will offer a wide range of schemes. Training programmes tend to be individually tailored to ensure that every member of staff receives the maximum amount of help. Professional development tends to be offered through a mixture of in-house and external courses and also involves coaching and mentoring from senior managers. All PRCA consultancies must provide training as part of the Consultancy Management Standard (CMS).

The pay

Good PR consultancies reward their employees through a combination of competitive salaries, excellent benefits and individually-tailored packages. While pay scales are not at the level of City bankers, there are examples of PR folk who have made their fortunes. Like any industry, if you've got the idea and the motivation there's nothing to stop you starting up your own business. The hours can sometimes be long but, again, good PR consultancies that are well managed have strict policies on working hours.

The graph on the next page is a rough guideline for salaries at different levels. However, salary is, of course, commensurate with experience.

This graph reflects average salaries from across the UK:

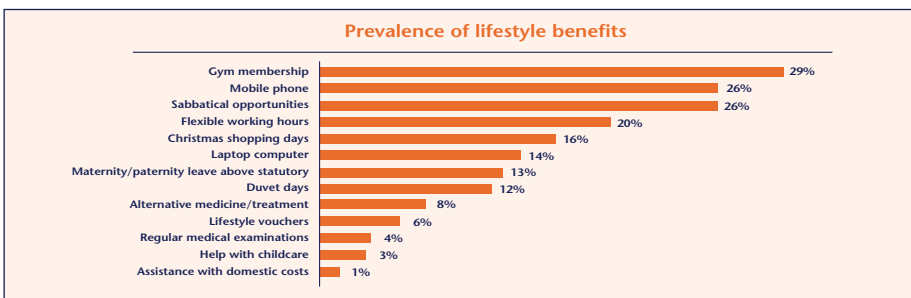
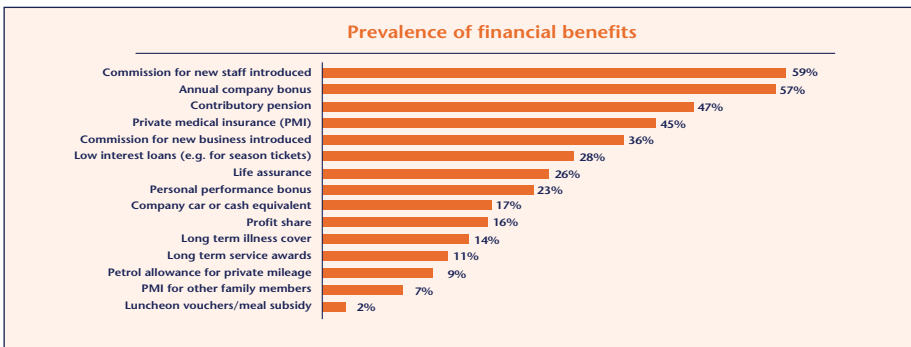
Junior Account Executives:	£11,000 - 13,000
Account Executives (entry level for the majority of graduates):	£14,000 - 18,000
Senior Account Executives:	£19,000 - 23,000
Account Managers:	£24,000 - 35,000
Senior Account Managers:	£35,000 - 40,000
Account Directors:	£40,000+

Source: Frontline Survey 2001

Quality of Life

Different companies offer varying benefits and these can range from the sensible, such as pensions, to the sublime like duvet days, to unusual extras such as alternative medicine.

Benefits are broken down into three main categories – financial, lifestyle and career – and the graph below from recent a survey shows the most prevalent benefits in each category:



Source: Frontline Survey 2001

While it may not be all champagne and caviar as the media would like to portray, the quality of life is good, salaries are competitive and there are plenty of opportunities to go forth and network through initiatives like PRCA FrontLine.



Katherine Smith
Campaign Manager
Firefly Communications
Geography graduate

“The most rewarding experience recently has been a client calling up overcome with emotion because you have just managed to get them into six articles in the Financial Times – they take this stuff home to show their kids – it is mad!”



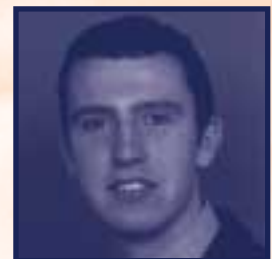
Laura Manley
Account Executive
Text 100
English Literature and PR graduate

“My main function as an account executive is to communicate with the media, making sure my clients make the most of all opportunities for press coverage. Developing angles and creative ideas to gain media exposure can be challenging, especially within the IT sector, where you need to make complex messages lucid and interesting to a wide-ranging audience.”



Vicky Brown
Account Manager
Manning Selva & Lee
English and History graduate

“I work as part of a team on a number of integrated marketing campaigns within Europe for our client Philips. This means the PR work that we do is interwoven from start to finish with the advertising and promotional campaigns. It is particularly satisfying to see one uniform message being delivered in a variety of ways, ultimately with greater impact on the consumer.”



Anthony Scammell
Account Manager
Golin/Harris International
English Literature/Sociology graduate

“The client is Bass Brewers, and I work on Worthington’s sponsorship of the League Cup. Effectively, we operate a press office which acts as an interface between the brand and the media. Getting results is always satisfying. Setting up a photocall and then seeing it in the papers the next day is a great buzz.”