

Awards and Rewards for an International Approach



Jane Shepherd MBE (right) with Miles Fisher, British Embassy Vienna

Expert international connections and the guiding hand of an experienced International Trade Adviser from the Department of International Trade (DIT) have helped Shepherd PR take their business to new heights.

Company founder Jane Shepherd has been the driving force behind their international success and has recently been awarded an MBE for services to International Trade and the community in the 2019 Queen's Birthday Honours.

Shepherd PR have a unique 'bright thinking' approach to communications. Linking traditional public relations with online strategy and video to create cost-effective, integrated solutions, they now have a growing portfolio of commercial, industrial and corporate clients as well as a host of trade associations and professional bodies. Export accounts for some 10% of turnover.

With an early career built in international PR within the construction industry, Jane had experienced first-hand a successful blueprint for international success. So unsurprisingly, after her company had become well established in the UK, the time was right to look towards overseas expansion. Jane had spent a lot of time in Austria over the years and realised that with her company's expertise, they would do well there. Jane worked closely with her International Trade Adviser, Kathryn Borg, to

develop a strategy to turn the idea of offering a UK media presence to Austrian clients, into a reality.

The journey began with a local 'Meet the Expert' event when Jane was introduced to Miles Fisher, a senior commercial attaché from the British Embassy in Vienna.

"DIT helped us to shape the opportunity; Kathryn has set the agenda and continues to move us very methodically through the whole export process. The fact that we also have access to local, on the ground knowledge and expertise in Austria through Miles helps us to focus and move forward with confidence. I learned more from my 10 minutes with Miles than from anything else and so the process of registering our office in Innsbruck was much easier than it would have been."

Jane also accessed a Nottingham University student placement scheme which helps companies employ the expertise of foreign-language speaking students. Not only have the four students taken on by Shepherd PR over the years made important improvements to the company's website but they also support other areas of the export strategy.

They were instrumental in winning Shepherd PR's first major account in Austria, Innsbruck Tourism.

Jane recounts, "When we visited Vienna, Miles gave a comprehensive insight into the tourism market in Austria and provided a wealth of useful background information. We also attended a major tourism event at the Messe and made even more connections. We came back from Vienna and shared all the information we gained with two of our international students and from that they found us a really good lead with Innsbruck Tourism."

"Jane's achievements have had a lot to do with staying focussed and getting everything set up in preparation for winning business," says ITA Kathryn Borg. "From the initial website developments, securing multilingual support to meeting Miles in Vienna and attending key international events. Jane deserves every success."

Shepherd PR also work with alternative Austrian economist, Christian Felber, promoting his books about responsible business strategies in the UK. They have set up a partnership for another Austrian client, OeAD in Vienna, with the London School of Economics, Salford and Nottingham universities to facilitate international mobility, exchange and cooperation. Jane is also a Midlands Engine Export

Champion, one of 30 high profile business leaders from across the region offering their expertise and advice to inspire companies to export and support existing exporters looking to expand into new markets. As testament to Jane's enthusiasm and commitment to her work and in recognition of her achievements in International Trade, Jane received an MBE in the 2019 Queen's Birthday Honours.

"I've always had half an eye on export, but if DIT hadn't got involved it's an idea that we could still be just talking about now. It has saved us a huge amount of time and effort."

With a wealth of expertise, professional and bi-lingual marketing resources, plenty of enthusiasm, and a growing client base, Jane and the team have already made their mark in Austria. But that's only the start of their export journey as now their model for doing business internationally has been developed, the team have set their sights on Ireland.

Jane explains, "Get it right the first time, then you're just 'tweaking' for language, customs and culture because you've got an established framework that works for you. Once you have that model, you can roll it out to every other part of the world."

Bright thinking indeed.



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Fast Facts:

Company:	Shepherd PR
Location:	Derbyshire
Sector:	PR, Social Media and Video
Size of business:	7 employees, plus consultants
Years trading:	20 years
Years exporting:	5 years
Exporting to:	Austria

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**Department for
International Trade**

The Department for International Trade (DIT) is the Government Department that helps UK based companies succeed in the global economy. We also help overseas companies bring their high-quality investment to the UK's dynamic economy, acknowledged as Europe's best place in which to succeed in global business.

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