



29 under 29
PRWeek picks 29 young professionals who have made their mark on the industry **Page 23**

www.prweek.com

The next generation

PRWeek has identified 29 young PR professionals who have already made a major impression on the industry. Here, we meet them to find out how they scaled the ranks and what their plans are for the future

Who says youth means inexperience? The results of *PRWeek's* inaugural search for the industry's top '29 under 29' reveals a group of professionals who, in addition to their energy, all share entrepreneurship, diligence and commitment as qualities that mark them out for special attention.

Of the 29 we selected – all were aged under 29 at the time of entry – six have established and successfully built up their own agencies, and a further three have launched, or currently head, agency divisions.

Three are already heads of PR for major high-street brands, while the top 29 also contains PR managers from groups such as WM Morrison, the *Financial Times*, *Time* magazine and

digital network Homechoice. PROs were invited to nominate either themselves or their colleagues by completing an entry form detailing their achievements and career progression. The final list of 29 names was decided by a judging panel comprising public affairs professor Jon White, Fuse PR MD Jay O'Connor, and *PRWeek* features editor Peter Crush.

White is a visiting fellow at the Henley Management College and an honorary professor of PA in the University of Birmingham's School of Business. His books include *How to Understand and Manage PR*, and *Excellence in PR and Communications Management*. O'Connor won the CIPR's Young Communicator Award

in 2001 and chairs the group's Education & Training Committee.

Candidates were judged according to three factors: the extent to which they have risen through the ranks; their proven skills in managing budgets, people and clients; and their ability to cope with situations 'beyond their years'. PROs were also judged on how well they are contributing to the industry outside their normal 9-5 day, be this through networking, conference speaking or improving their own skills and education.

Their level of responsibility, creativity and proof of strategic thinking were also deemed important, as was evidence of individual flair, creativity and the testimonials of clients and staff.

Louise Angel, 25
Account director, Geronimo Communications

CV 2003, Geronimo; 2002, trainee account exec, Weber Shandwick

Few PR execs can boast that they started their career by preparing briefings for the prime minister, but this is exactly what Louise Angel did – for Tony Blair – while studying politics at Leeds University. Today, Angel is on a full-time secondment as a Geronimo consultant to the Office of the Children's Commissioner, as its interim associate director of communications. She is working to set up the press office, public affairs and marketing function of the new organisation.





Neil Spring, Michelle Noschese, Julia Mitchell and Nita Shah

26 **PRWeek** 30 June 2006

Nita Shah, 29

Director, Shahrp PR

CV 2004, Shahrp PR; 2002, corporate affairs manager, Henderson Global Investors; 1999, account exec, Citigate Dewe Rogerson

'I wake up and can't wait to see what the day will bring,' says Nita Shah, who at the age of 27 set up her own PR firm, Shahrp, having earned her stripes at Citigate Dewe Rogerson and Henderson Global Investors. Clients range from estate agency Petermans to the Indian Wedding Exhibition 2006, which she helped position as a two-day extravaganza, attracting media and more than 9,000 visitors.

Shah is a furious networker, attending CIPR Corporate & Financial and Diversity Committees, and other client-building events. As one of the few Indian PROs in the UK, she says she is 'pleased to be part of the profession's move away from its predominantly white, middle-class roots'.