

TRADE
UNION
COMMS
AWARDS

2024

TUC



05



09



12



14



17



19

CONTENTS

04 Welcome

05 Best union journal
WINNER *Frontline* | CSP

09 Best recruitment and organising communication
WINNER *Student to Newly Qualified Midwife conversion campaign* | RCM

12 Best campaign communication
WINNER *Save Ticket Offices* | RMT

14 Best media story
WINNER *Teachers reject government pay offer* | NEU

17 Best use of social media
WINNER *#SaveTicketOffices* | RMT

19 Best communication from a smaller union
WINNER *Off Course: a sideways look at life at sea* | Nautilus International

WELCOME



The Trade Union Comms Awards is always an inspiring moment in the TUC's calendar. It's a chance to look back over a year of campaign activity from our 48 unions. Helping our members' voices be heard by employers and politicians. Equipping our reps and

activists with the information they need to be effective. Union communicators and campaigners have risen to every challenge.

And we have new challenges for the coming year. A new government, a New Deal for working people, and a new chance to grow and strengthen all our unions. The potential is exciting for everyone that wants to see real change. And I'm confident that our movement's communicators are equal to the task.

I'd like to thank our judges for their efforts in evaluating the entries and giving us the benefit of their collective professional experience across many different communications disciplines.

And finally, I'd like to acknowledge the generosity of our colleagues at College Hill Press for supporting the printing of this booklet.

A handwritten signature in red ink, which appears to be 'Paul Nowak'.

Paul Nowak
TUC general secretary

JUDGES

Matthew Butcher

Communications director
at NEON

Sam Jeffers

Founder at Join Together
and Who Targets Me

Luke Menzies

Communications director
at ITF

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Former TUC publications
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CATEGORY 1

BEST UNION JOURNAL

Union journals are a crucial part of the communications offering for many unions. A regular chance to get the union's message into the hands of every member, they are often seen as a membership benefit in their own right. Journals vary hugely, published in print, digital, or both. And they might convey a broad range of topics or a tight professional focus. There are many common factors though in designing a magazine that will engage the union's membership, and judges looked for quality design, strong content, and creative presentation..



WINNER

Frontline CSP

Frontline is a big-budget journal for a professional audience, supporting significant commercial advertising. A bright and fresh colour palette helps the design and the layout is clear, making content very legible. February's edition had a focus on CSP's LGBTQ+ membership, which was well woven throughout the issue. Content is strong overall, and the journal foregrounds key features on pay disputes and rehabilitation well. Reader feedback is given space and recognition, and members' lives and opinions are well reflected throughout. There's also a strong emphasis on learning and networking.

Stage Screen & Radio

THE JOURNAL OF BECTU
A SECTOR OF PROSPECT
Autumn 2023 £2.50

Camera trainees
Survey for DoPs

Post-production sound
Open letter to employers

London theatres
Demands for change

Big Autumn Gathering
Register now

WGA, SAG-AFTRA strikes

GLOBAL FALLOUT

HIGHLY COMMENDED *Stage Screen and Radio* Prospect/Bectu

Judges enjoyed the eclectic mix of subjects covered by this issue of Bectu's magazine. Reflecting the breadth of professional expertise represented by the union, it features everything from inedible crew lunches to regulating Web 4.0, camera robots, courses in sign language, and the UK effects of the US writers' and actors' strikes. The design is solid, though judges felt it could sometimes stretch a bit more visually to do the content justice.



COMMENDED *Scottish Education Journal* EIS

Companion to the printed journal, this fully online version lets members choose their preferred delivery format. It works well across different devices, with easily navigable features and news pages. Stories are well signposted with thumbnails, with expanded content easily reachable.

My Accord Accord

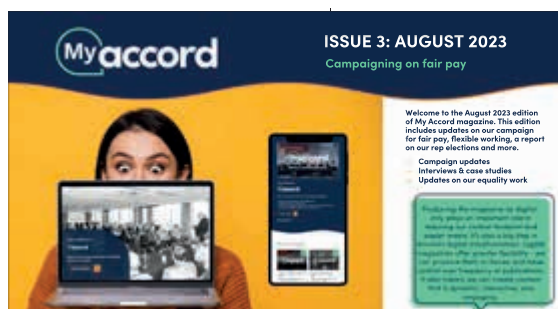
A digital-only web magazine using large format pictures, interviewee quotes and signature colours to attractive effect. Plenty of news and practical advice. Judges thought it could benefit from a touch more human-interest material.

ASLEF journal ASLEF

This journal is jam-packed with information about branches, campaigns, retired members and disputes, and is good value for its budget. But judges felt the style could be updated in places, and the volume of content means the layout is often crowded.

Equity magazine Equity

Equity's bold retro styling and unusual colour palette evoke the heritage of the union and their industry. The striking design could be marmite to some but it's good to see the union consulting members and incorporating feedback. And the content is wide-ranging, provoking, and even multilingual.



Firefighter Fire Brigades Union

Wide-ranging and always interesting, this journal covers a lot of ground, from station news to trekking to the South Pole. As such it is strong on human interest, and its clear presentation supports the content. A good model for a union journal.



Public Service Magazine FDA

The design of the printed magazine is great, with long-read features, feedback and news. The taster email that promotes each issue to members is a interesting idea that looks to be working,

though judges felt the online extracts were sometimes a little dry and may benefit from stronger pictures.

Leadership Focus NAHT

An attractively produced, if sometimes a bit wordy, journal, with fresh colours and consistent design. The news and feature pages are comprehensive and well-written. Judges would have liked to see some more original photos, to balance the use of stock illustrations.

Probation journal Napo

This academic journal is a dense read for probation professionals interested in the theory and practice of justice and has grown an international reputation. This kind of publication is very intensive to produce but getting it free becomes a tangible membership benefit within the profession.

Teaching Today NASUWT

A print magazine for members, available by online delivery instead for members who opt in. This has a range of professional news, union updates and feature stories, though judges felt it would benefit from spending more on design, to better differentiate different types of content.



Telegraph Nautilus International

A journal for the community of international seafaring union members, this feels warm, democratic and considerate of members' concerns. The long format suits members who are often away from home, though the sheer volume of content may mean strong features don't get enough space to tell the full story.



Educate NEU

A well-targeted magazine that aims to inspire members in a challenging profession. There are good pieces on pay, workload and crumbling schools but it is the features with their bold photography that stand out. Pages can feel cramped though and would benefit from a design with more white space.

PCS People PCS

Led by industrial news and strike activity, PCS People positions itself firmly as defending members' jobs. Pages are packed with information and feature enthusiastic testimonies from young members. The design reflects this optimism, but pages are sometimes too full and need more 'air'.



Gate Lodge POA

This journal benefits from a neat, authoritative design with plenty of varied content to keep members engaged,

including world news and interesting features. Gate Lodge is a strong product that keeps improving.

RMTnews RMT

RMT's journal is comprehensive in its coverage of strikes and disputes and has some great member support pages. It's decently designed, with many photographs of members. But it still feels a little dry at times and could benefit from more human interest features.

Landworker Unite

A visual feast, packed full of great pictures of farm animals, landscapes, trucks and tractors, and drag queens! The words are great too, conveying a richness to countryside life that you mightn't expect to find in a union mag.



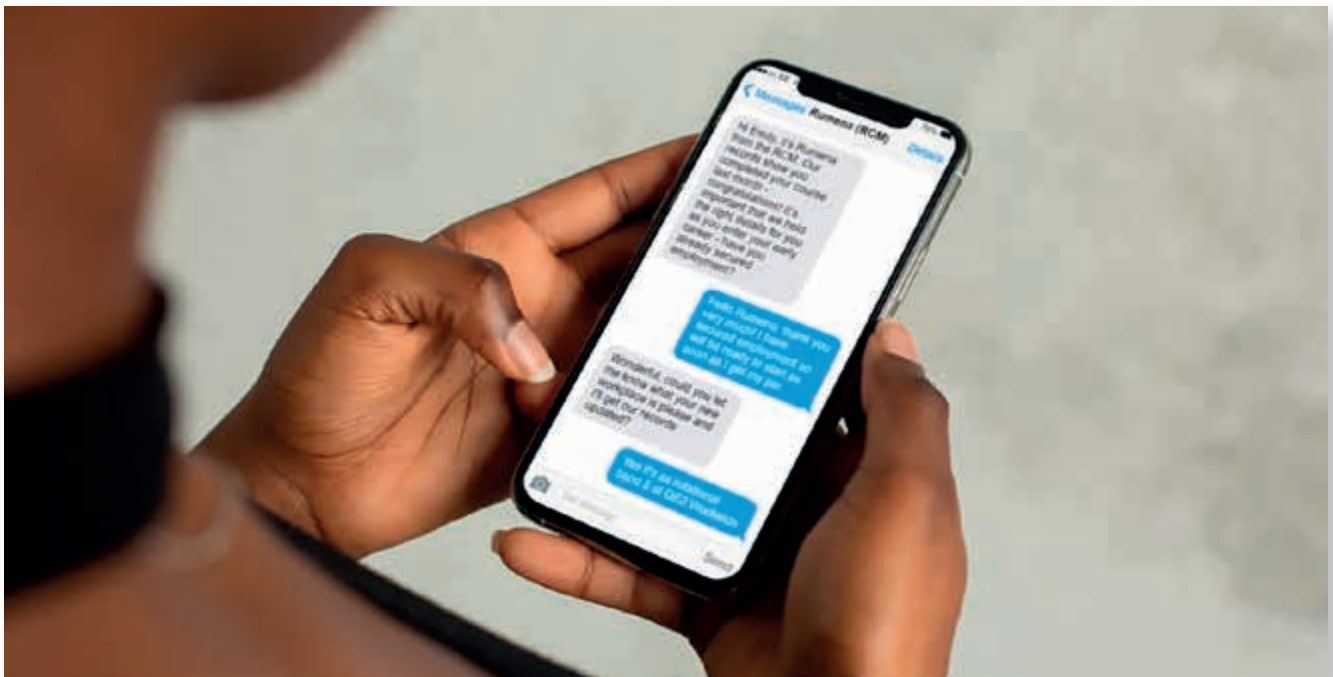
Arena Udaw

Sticking with the tried and trusted A5 booklet, Usdaw pack a lot of content into the small format. Less industrial and more consumer in content and styling than many others, it works well.

CATEGORY 2

BEST RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISING COMMUNICATION

This category focuses on how the outcomes from communications in general can build stronger unions, rather than looking at work of any one particular format. From peer-to-peer SMS to online video and print resources, the entries demonstrate the many creative ways unions are approaching the communication challenges around recruiting new members and supporting them to organise.



WINNER

Student to Newly Qualified Midwife conversion campaign | RCM

A strong favourite with the judges, this excellent organising campaign used new communications technologies to let organisers efficiently conduct personalised one-to-one conversations with graduating student members. The campaign used the most appropriate channel, SMS, and had a clear strategy and ladder of engagement, resulting in a good response from members. Judges particularly liked the union's active engagement in members' career development, and the use of handwritten notes, which will be memorable.

Being pregnant at work

We call on employers to:

Respect

our confidentiality – it is up to us whom to tell and when

Protect

our safety – organise safe working for pregnant women

Preserve

our dignity – arrange support and rest facilities for expectant mothers

Facilitate

don't punish us for attending antenatal appointments

Value

our labour – don't deny us pay or promotion on grounds of pregnancy

neu.org.uk/maternity



Join us
neu.org.uk/join-now



NEU3154/1722

HIGHLY COMMENDED *Maternity Matters series* NEU

10,000 NEU members take maternity leave each year, so this highly detailed series of resource packs sets out to provide in-depth and practical support across a huge range of maternity-related scenarios. Well designed and branded, this initiative helps members, their reps and their schools, and likely supports ongoing retention if members feel cared for as they return to work.



COMMENDED *UniteExtra Education Special* Unite

This new online presentation for Unite's training offer is an effective way for reps to understand their options within union education and to find next steps for their activism. Judges were impressed by the combination of real stories about reps and excellent, contemporary photos centred on members and workplaces.

What Accord has done for you recently in LBG? **Accord**

Using online animation services can be a way to vary communication styles on a budget, and this in-house video was timely in using HeartUnions Week to inform members of a wide range of Accord's achievements. However stock music and image formats can sometimes drag on longer videos.

Section 28 stories **ASLEF**

An important historical topic, well-illustrated with compelling personal stories, across a range of formats. Judges would have liked to see clearer entry points for readers into contemporary activism.

Equity all-member newsletter **Equity**

A cleanly designed member news email, that has clear calls to action to support other members in struggle. Well-written headlines help skim the content, with links for more information. Judges liked that it promotes active digital campaigning widely to membership.

Firefighters' Manifesto **FBU**

This communication had very rich and detailed content, offering lots of supporting evidence. It would definitely reward members who take the time to read in detail, but this could maybe have been made a little easier with more layout differentiation.

Fast stream recruitment campaign **FDA**

FDA targeted potential members in relevant careers using LinkedIn ads showing union successes and joining offers. The technique raised awareness of the union and directly recruited members at a good cost. This could be a good initiative to repeat regularly.

Better Deal on Behaviour **NASUWT**

This entry featured comprehensive content on an important issue for members, with multi-format resources used to promote it. Judges would have liked to see more creativity and structure in its presentation, to help members engage more easily.

Ballot-ready journey **PCS**

A clear set of instructional content aimed at making the most of PCS' strong data tools, by supporting reps to complete tasks towards a national ballot campaign. Developing these in-house is cost-effective and has allowed PCS to be responsive and flexible to reps' needs in working with the union's tech.



Join landing page **Prospect**

A new design for the union's online joining pages clearly highlighting the benefits of membership. Conducting A/B testing on their changes helped Prospect understand and measure the results. Small wins in this kind of work can add up to significant gains over time.

RMT recruitment calling card **RMT**

This calling card featuring a QR code to the online join form is a simple, but creative initiative that empowers members to be active recruiters for the union. Judges felt the pitch and landing page could maybe be more informative, particularly on the collective benefits of membership.

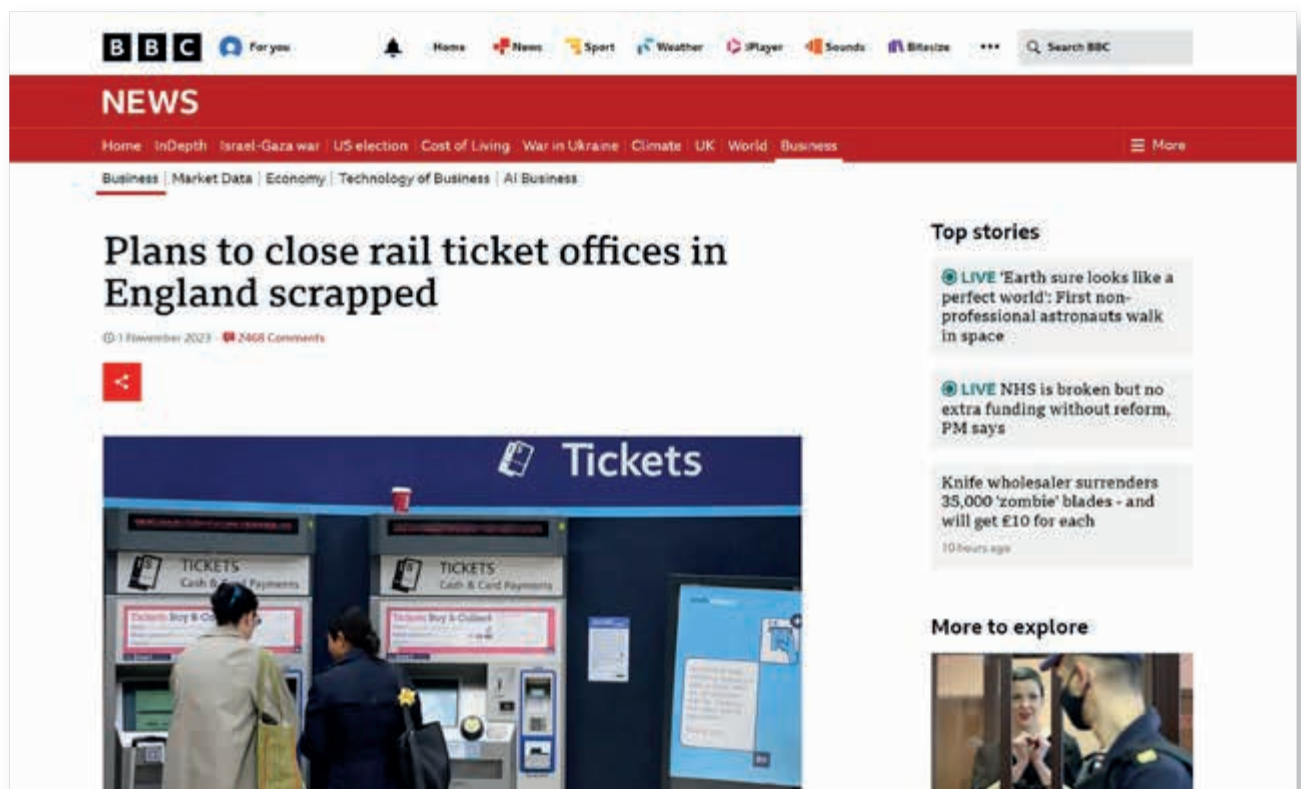
Network **Usdaw**

A bi-monthly magazine for reps, with high production values and a considerable investment in content. It recognises reps well through personal stories from reps and many photos of reps and their activity. Also good were help and training resources on a variety of topics. Union feedback shows it's well appreciated by activists.

CATEGORY 3

BEST CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATION

We had a small but strong pool of entries for this category, though judges picked a clear winner in the RMT's campaign to keep ticket offices open. A variety of campaigning tactics were on show across the entries, with good examples of community-building, direct communications, and digital tactics for leverage.



WINNER

Save Ticket Offices | RMT

This was a well-executed campaign that achieved huge participation and a great result. As such it was a clear choice for the judges. Simple materials with a clear call to action made good use of the increased name recognition that RMT have won in recent years. Working with disability action groups brought in allies with strong stories to tell, and supporters were encouraged to share photos and stories, which were well integrated into the campaign. Lots of excellent PR work helped RMT achieve favourable coverage across the media by demonstrating to outlets the impact the closures would have on their own readerships.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Freedom From Fear Udaw

This campaign adopted a broad multi-channel approach, with consistent communication across print materials, direct email, social media and contact through reps. Materials were cleanly designed, with good repetition of core messages on the issue of violence against their members. Usdaw effectively communicated the actions their members needed to take to contribute to the goals. Securing political support, potentially leading to changes in the law, will be a real and meaningful impact.

Time for a Limit NASUWT

NASUWT 's campaign against unfair workloads aimed to support members facing the issue, as well as seeking policy change. The campaign had great depth and authority in its content, though would have benefited from clearer signposting of priorities and ways for members to engage.



Stop Fire and Rehire at Steam Packet! Nautilus International

A solid campaign to overcome an impasse in a difficult dispute. This involved direct lobbying and public pressure from online campaigning. Strong local press work helped mobilise community support as leverage, leading to an excellent win for members when they needed it.

Keep BBC Local Radio Local NUJ

A simple and clear design for this campaign, coupled with good use of well-known voices, effective coalition building and local angles, helps make the issues resonate. Without a hub for the campaign, though, it might feel a bit diffuse to people new to the journal.

CATEGORY 4

BEST MEDIA STORY

The tumultuous politics of the last year have meant that breaking into the news has been challenging at times. But union media specialists have still managed to pull this off regularly across broadcast, print and online channels, as the variety of entries to this category demonstrate. Whether seeking to establish awareness of a campaign issue, or reacting swiftly to the news cycle, union press specialists have used the media to get members' voices heard.



WINNER

Teachers reject government pay offer

NEU

NEU co-ordinated a media moment around the outcome of their consultative national pay ballot, to demonstrate their members' readiness for action and put pressure on the government. Broadcasting live on their social channels gave them control of the narrative, whilst trailing it as a moment for broadcasters ensured national media were in the room. The strategy converted into a major press hit, with national broadcast coverage and 1,850 media monitoring mentions, building crucial momentum in the wider dispute.



HIGHLY COMMENDED Writers Guild of America Global Day of Solidarity WGGB

Despite limited resources, the union achieved wide coverage for their day of solidarity with the Writers Guild of America, leveraging this to discuss issues facing their own members in the UK. Foregrounding well-known members boosted this well-coordinated and timely media intervention. The solidarity was well appreciated by the WGA, and the publicity recruited new members for WGGB.



COMMENDED Respect for Shopworkers' Week 2023 Usdaw

Part of Usdaw's long-running campaign against violence towards shopworkers, this media story used figures from the union's recent survey alongside personal worker testimonies. Usdaw coordinated over 60 local spokespeople, giving them case studies for local media in every region. The story received good print and broadcast coverage as a result.

Historic trade union recognition is a first for Scotland's independent schools

EIS

EIS's effective media work built a high profile for their strike at a well-known independent school, which helped members retain pension rights and gain union recognition. The union achieved wide press coverage for key moments of the dispute, winning over parents and local people.



Enough is Enough: value civil servants

FDA

FDA targeted and landed media across range of outlets, raising the profile of the union's core messages across the political spectrum. Reporting from conference also portrayed mass action and broad support. Coverage helped lead to tangible results, with government agreeing to talks – a big payout from the strategy.

Behaviour in Schools

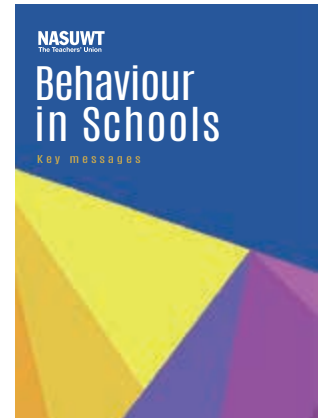
NASUWT

NASUWT gained good coverage for its research report about abusive pupil behaviour in schools. The press team worked effectively with Channel 5 to publicise the issue on broadcast and social media, as well as securing national and regional press.

Wandsworth Prison escape

POA

Following a prison escape, the POA reacted quickly and effectively used the moment to gain wider profile for the issues facing their members. General secretary Steve Gillan took advantage of a BBC News interview to clearly establish the union's demands and call for a royal commission.



CATEGORY 5

BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

First featured in the awards in 2023, entries to this category continued to reflect innovative ideas for communications. Some entries sought to connect with their own members on the channels they are more likely to use and share amongst colleagues. Others used public social media channels to reach new audiences and to help set the news agenda. Whatever the aim, judges were looking for evidence of impact as well as appropriate and high-quality content.



WINNER

#SaveTicketOffices

RMT

This was a great cross-platform social media campaign, running off the single idea that ticket offices are still popular, despite government claims. Celebrity tweets helped, and momentum built as the public got involved. RMT kept the campaign agile and responsive, such as exploiting the narrative around outages on the Trainline ticket app. The social media work created enough visibility to really contribute to the union's wider campaign.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

The POA Podcast

POA

A podcast is a big investment, but potentially a high reward channel for a membership that would value highly specialised content. The judges were impressed with the content in this podcast, pitched appropriately for POA members. Episodes were brief, consistent and engaging. The format of interviewing of expert officers and encouraging less-involved members to become active worked really well.

Using Instagram as a design change maker

Equity

Equity recently rebranded and has now brought their Instagram output into line, seeking to better connect with campaigning goals. Designs are strong and content is easily read and consistent, which helps build engagement. Wider use of Reels and Stories could maybe help messages spread further on the network.

Industrial Action 2023

NAHT

A neatly woven together campaign on X that combined video, vox pops, graphics and animations to encourage school heads to reject the government's 2023 pay offer. A bonus was the sharing of member-created photos.

Action Short of Strike Action

NASUWT

The campaign succinctly summed up the issues for members in a series of short Facebook reels, a

format well-suited to sharing in teachers' groups. Judges would have liked to see more originality, which relied heavily on stock video and text.



HeartUnions Week - join Nautilus

Nautilus International

HeartUnions Week was a good launchpad for this celebration of the union successes.

Messaging was clear and inspirational, and had a coherent design, though sometimes a little busy for small screens. And content was well-calendared over the campaign.

National Retail Workers' Day

Udaw

Designs for this campaign across Facebook, Instagram and X were solid and videoing shop workers themselves was clearly a good idea. Engagement levels were well recorded, demonstrating good engagement from members and supporters.

CATEGORY 6

BEST COMMUNICATION FROM A SMALLER UNION

The breadth of unions represented within the TUC means those responsible for communications work in different unions can have very different experiences. For this year, the awards sought specifically to celebrate the great work that gets done in smaller unions, often with much more limited budgets and specialist staff to draw on. Judges were looking for cohesive communications campaigns, with objectives met creatively and cost-effectively.



WINNER

Off Course: a sideways look at life at sea
Nautilus International

A very professionally put together podcast, hosted by an in-house team with real enthusiasm. The format allows the union to go deeper on specific topics and involve a much wider range of interesting voices. And the landing page is well-designed, to help users sample before they subscribe. Overall a strong communication product that deserves a greater audience.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Equality Representatives - an introduction
RCP

The Royal College of Podiatry has made good use of video, written materials and in-person activity

to help move people through the process of becoming an equality rep. The format was straightforward and the content clear and well-scripted. The union has achieved a lot here with a limited budget.

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