



It's all about the passion

Inspired by the title of a Michelle Pfeiffer movie, Dan Sager replaced one letter to create a name for his new business – The Fabulous Biker Boys. Here he reflects on establishing the new company and the changing face of industry public relations over the last 25 years

I joined Oxford Products as a trainee manager in 1989 and by 1992 had become a director, in charge of the day-to-day running of the business. Things were moving very fast and it was a really steep learning curve – the company was expanding into Europe, developing new product lines and recruiting extra staff. As a result, I was a jack-of-all-trades, a bit of finance, personnel, quality assurance, customer services, marketing and so on. There was one part of the job I really enjoyed, but rarely had time for, and that was dealing with the press.

That's when I had the 'Eureka!' moment. I realised that most wholesalers and distributors in the motorcycle industry were, and still are, managed by the owner. They didn't have a marketing department and public relations tended to be done sporadically. Paying someone to take care of that side of the business – ensuring that press releases went out regularly and products were placed with journalists to review, etc – would make sense. By charging an affordable flat fee, and reporting back monthly with the results, clients quickly saw they were getting great PR and value for money.

Armed with a mobile phone,

new-fangled word processor, a desk in the spare bedroom and my father's old Nissan Micra, I launched the new venture in 1996. Oxford Products signed up straight away, Watsonian Sidecars employed my services to promote Malaguti scooters, which they had just started to import, and Acrybre Products, manufacturers of screens and bodywork, completed the initial line-up.

Many clients and brands have been represented by Fab-Biker

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over the years – Peugeot scooters, Royal Enfield motorcycles, GlobeBusters motorcycle tours, Infinity Motorcycles, Knox and the Dirt Bike Show to name a few – and I served for three years on the board of the MCIA too. Twenty-five years later, Fab-Biker PR handles an even more diverse line-up of companies, including two who have been there since the outset; Watsonian Sidecars and Skidmarx, which bought Acrybre Products. Other

current clients include UK manufacturers, such as Venhill Engineering, international brands, such as OptiMate and Sena communications, major clothing and accessory distributors, (The Key Collection, Motohaus Powersports and LS2 Helmets), mail order specialists (Nippy Normans), retailers (Moto Corsa Motorcycles), motorcycle manufacturers (Ducati) and even a TV production company, (Henry Cole Associates).

That diversity reflects the range of services on offer, which has evolved over the years to meet the changing ways in which PR needs to be performed.

When we started, PR was analogue. Press releases were printed out and posted to journalists, or faxed if they were urgent. Photographs took days to be developed and social media didn't exist. We've embraced new technology and now, in addition to press releases and

Above: The Fab three (from left) Phil Turner, Dan Sager and Helen Chapman

product placement, we help with email newsletters, social media management, digital advertising, web design, market research, video production and much more besides.

Two people who have made a significant contribution to Fab-Biker's success are Helen Chapman and Phil Turner. Helen, the former PA to MCN's editor, provides account management services, liaising between clients and media contacts, while Phil, who previously edited *Motorcycle Sport & Leisure*, brings his journalistic skills to play with copywriting for press releases, social media, blogs and more. Their support with day-to-day tasks, and ability to operate independently, helps the business to manage a substantial number of projects at the same time.

One of Fab-Biker's most successful campaigns resulted from a press release highlighting a surge in sidecar sales to hipsters, who were constantly in the news at the time. The story was picked up by the *Mail on Sunday*, and was subsequently spotted by a researcher for the *Jeremy Vine Show*, quickly leading to an interview with Watsonian Sidecars managing director on Radio 2's flagship programme.

One stand out moment was being disqualified from the BDN Industry Awards in 2005. We'd won the Best Trade PR & Marketing award for the previous two years in a row and then-editor Roger Willis said that if we won it for a third time people would suspect we were bribing the judges, so we were honourably disqualified."

Long-term client David Gath of Motohaus Powersports is clear about the reasons for retaining Fab-Biker's services; "Two things come to mind. First, the occasion when Dan was being discussed (behind his back, I should add) and one well-respected media man commented that he was the only PR guy in the industry worth engaging with. The second is that he is so good, why would I want

to tell my competitors! Seriously though, apart from him and his team being really good at what they do and thinking two steps ahead, Dan himself is, above all, a seriously nice guy."

After 25 years, what does the future have in store for us? Our business plan is based around sustainable growth – ensuring that we continue to deliver a high-quality reliable service to our loyal clients, while bringing exciting new brands into the fold. And continuing to enjoy what we do, so we can communicate our passion for the companies we represent.

The Fabulous Biker Boys
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Dan Sager and Helen Chapman welcome Rhys Lawrey home after his record-breaking trip

FAB-BIKER BOYS TIMELINE

- 1994 Dan Sager registers The Fabulous Biker Boys name
- 1996 Starts a public relations business
- 1998 Moves to offices in the West End (of Witney)
- 2002 Organises the Guinness World Record for a motorcycle and trailer, when MCN test rider Kevin Smith reached 139.5 mph at Millbrook, pulling a Squire D21 trailer behind a Kawasaki ZZ-R1100
- 2003 Wins BDN Award for Best Trade Marketing & PR
- 2004 Wins BDN Award for Best Trade Marketing & PR
- 2005 'Honourably Disqualified' from winning BDN Award for Best Trade Marketing & PR
- 2013 Moves to newly opened Witney Business & Innovation Centre
- 2015 Secures a Triumph Tiger 800 for Rhys Lawrey, who became the youngest rider to circumnavigate the globe on a motorcycle, also visiting the most consecutive capital cities in the process, setting two new records in one epic trip
- 2020 Moves to bigger offices in the Hexagon Business Centre in Witney