

## Biography

## Marge Ainsley Marketing, Press & Research

Marge began her career within the arts sector in 2002, having previously worked as Regional Business Executive for Cadbury Schweppes. In September 2008, she went freelance and now works with a variety of organisations to provide both strategic and tactical support with media relations, marketing, audience development, PR and research projects.

### Her current and previous clients include:

- **Arts Council England:** Assessment of Arts Council/DCMS 'A Night Less Ordinary' free theatre ticket applications.
- **Arts about Manchester:** Project management of Dataculture, a northwest arts audience benchmarking project. Included an audit of research ability and capacity at northwest visual arts organisations, assessing additional CPD support required by individuals in order to be self-sufficient with audience research. Was contracted as Renaissance Partnership Manager on a freelance basis with Arts About Manchester and Renaissance NW, to disseminate and advocate the region's research intelligence.
- **National Museums Liverpool:** Research for an audience development and engagement strategy for refugees and asylum seekers.
- **L&R Consulting:** Marketing strategy for a capital bid submitted to NWDA/Sea Change/HLF to renovate a Victorian theatre in Morecambe.
- **Audiences Yorkshire:** Project co-ordination of NI11 (engagement in the arts) local authority target, in Yorkshire & Humber. Course development and delivery of strategic marketing workshops.
- **Preston Museums Group:** Online/PR management for a NW Renaissance funded family audience development project; Preston Hands on Gang [www.prestonhandsongang.com](http://www.prestonhandsongang.com).
- **The Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester:** PR management of various programmes/exhibitions.
- **Blackpool Council Arts Service:** PR management of an oral history project, now archived with Blackpool Library and the Northwest Film Archive.
- **Harris Museum & Art Gallery:** Audit of education research programme. Plus various PR for the temporary exhibitions programme, including *Plastic Culture*.
- **Contact Theatre:** Freelance media relations works.
- **Arts Marketing Association:** Promotion of ADUK events and hosting of workshops in Manchester.
- **2012 Cultural Olympiad:** Stories of the World: Marketing and PR support for the northwest's *Global Threads* project.

From 2002–2006 Marge coordinated a series of successful marketing campaigns and events at the award-winning Sheffield Galleries & Museums Trust (now Museums Sheffield).

She worked with colleagues at the V&A, Tate and National Portrait Gallery to develop joint marketing campaigns during national strategic partnership exhibitions. These comprised The Biggest Draw (V&A), Gerald Scarfe (NPG) and Tate Sculpture (Tate). She also worked closely with various partners in the city and region such as the city libraries service, Odeon Cinema, Sainsbury's, Audiences Yorkshire and Yorkshire Tourist Board to produce joint-marketing initiatives. She was also a marketing committee member for the bi-annual contemporary art festival 'Art Sheffield', working in partnership with a variety of organisations in the city.

She worked closely with the development team to co-ordinate and manage a series of events for members, sponsors and potential prospects. Marge also managed market research at the Trust and commissioned various agencies including Audiences Yorkshire and Morris Hargreaves McIntyre to work alongside her.

In 2006, she joined the University of Salford to manage their postgraduate marketing campaigns. Whilst there, she launched the first postgraduate eprospectus in the UK. She also managed the postgraduate printed prospectus and championed the postgraduate brand.

Marge went on to join the Senior Management Team at the Harris Museum & Art Gallery in 2007. As Marketing Manager she managed press and PR, marketing, audience development and visitor research - and led on the Harris' contribution as part of the Preston Museums Group, Museums and Galleries Month and Cultural Olympiad celebrations. She worked with an external consultant to conduct an audit of internal communication and closely co-ordinated the roll-out of the resulting recommendations.

Marge launched 'research champion groups' to ensure research was used strategically within the organisation. She also worked with an external agency to create and implement a new visual identity for the museum. This provided a stronger, clearer and consistent message for visitors and began to develop a higher level of recognition and perception of quality.

As a member of the Senior Management Team she was responsible for contributing to various strategies, policies and plans. These included the overall museum strategy, audience development plan, HLF Stage 1 application, NW Renaissance Hub business plan, Industrial Powerhouse 'Raising the Game' proposal to the NWDA and the Acquisitions and Disposals policy. She played a key role in leading on the development of the Harris' Mission, Vision and Values statement, the first phase in creating a new museum strategy.

Specialising in marketing, audience development and project management, her experience has involved all aspects of the marketing mix, including product development, event management, brand management, copywriting (for print and web), commissioning and sponsorship of high quality design and print, media buying (outdoor, web and press advertising), signage, e campaigns and social media, promotions, direct mail, and print distribution.

Marge was awarded a Distinction in her MA Arts & Heritage Management from the University of Sheffield and also holds a 2.1 BA (Hons) English Language and Art History. She is the northwest member representative for the Arts Marketing Association and is a Member of the Museums Association. She is also a member of the Northwest Federation of Museums, and the Yorkshire and Humberside Federation of Museums.

Marge is an Associate Member of the Market Research Society and therefore works within the MRS Code of Conduct. Marge has previously lectured to sector professionals and students at the Northwest Museums Federation, Audience Alliance, Sheffield Hallam University and The University of Sheffield.

Marge completed the National Arts Fundraising School in May 2007 and was a finalist in the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board 'Young Tourism Manager Award' in the autumn of that same year. She successfully completed CACDP Level 1 in British Sign Language in July 2008, and CACDP British Sign Language Level 2 in June 2009. Marge is now working towards her Level 3 qualification.

# Client Comments

**Helen Corkery**, Strategic Research & Marketing Manager,  
Arts About Manchester June 2009

'We approached Marge to work on our Data Culture project earlier this year. The project involved identifying and recruiting performing arts organisations to our Vital Statistics arts intelligence system, managing all the contractual requirements, identifying reporting requirements, liaising with our suppliers and regional partners; and, as an additional piece of work, undertaking an audit of visual arts organisations across much of the region. The project had stalled and needed someone with strong research and project management skills, a real knowledge of the sector and who could engage organisations of all shapes and sizes. Marge instantly came to mind. She has taken a somewhat ill defined and complex project and delivered it on time, within budget and with greatest effect. Working with performing and visual arts organisations across the Northwest she has steered and championed the project, liaised over technical details, managed the contract negotiations and provided us with clear and workable outputs.

I would have no hesitation at all in contracting future projects to Marge or recommending her to others – I know with Marge that if there is a way she will find it and with her flexibility, intellect, experience and patience – she will always be a preferred consultant to AAM.'

**Ronan Brindley**, Programmes Manager, Harris Museum & Art Gallery  
(Ronan is now Principal Manager: Learning at Manchester Art Gallery)

'Marge is adept at identifying the core elements of a brief and identifying, with the client, the best way to go about a project. Her work is unmistakably top quality and deadlines, even tight ones, are always met. She adds the ability of combining the professionalism of a client-consultant relationship with vital elements of team work and co-operation.'

**Claire Will**, Head of Marketing and Communication,  
Contact Theatre

'Marge not only covered the basic media relations work we were expecting from a freelancer but developed new relationships and secured coverage over and above her remit. Marge came to Contact with a wealth of marketing and media knowledge, worked quickly and accurately and with the flexibility needed in a fast-paced arts environment.'