



A strong voice for print

Lobbying in support of members' interests is a key function for the BPIF

/// A strong voice for Print"

continues to feature as one of the central priorities in the new three-year BPIF Strategy 2011-14 Shaping the Future of Print (see p34).

At its meeting on 5 October, the BPIF's Government and Industry Committee reviewed how we can build on our recent publication "Priorities for Print" to lobby Government, EU, CBI, Intergraf, Trade Unions, Suppliers, other Trade Associations and the media to support our members' interests.

The Committee considers that our lobbying priorities can be best addressed by:

- Engaging members in developing lobbying positions and voicing concerns in relation to the issues set out in Priorities for Print
- Ensuring members are briefed on current issues so that they can help articulate key concerns to external audiences
- Adopting a proactive lobbying agenda to respond quickly to proposals made and actions taken by Government and other external decision makers
- Securing funding opportunities for BPIF and making members aware of these
- Assisting member companies to bid for public sector contracts.

The Committee proposes that our work programme should include the following activities:

- Publishing lobby briefs, papers and updates on key issues to inform member companies and the All Party Parliamentary Print Group (APPG)
- Promote the economic importance of our industry and its sustainability and effectiveness as a modern print medium
- Improving communications between the central team and

- staff in the field on lobbying issues
- Engaging members in providing relevant information to assist our lobbying efforts, and seeking their input to identify priorities
- Holding meetings of larger group companies twice a year
- Keeping the APPG apprised of lobbying positions, representations made and current concerns; holding two APPG meetings per year in addition to the annual APPG Reception
- Providing an online platform for print suppliers to interface with OGC Business Solutions (and other purchasing agencies) using a technology solution that will enable more SMEs to bid for public sector contracts.

We also held a meeting of larger member companies on 15 November 2010. At this, we sought their input to help develop priorities and policy positions in relation to the various external influencers, policy-makers and decision-takers that we need to inform, specifically Government, customers, suppliers and unions. We discussed how we could engage more closely with larger member firms, and how the BPIF could work more effectively with them to influence key external audiences. Priorities that these companies wished to see the BPIF focus upon were:

- Assisting companies to lobby their local MPs, especially if jobs are at risk
- Promoting print, with active support given by BPIF to the PrintPower campaign in the UK (see www.printpoweruk.co.uk)
- Funding apprenticeships and incentives to train
- Enhanced grants for

- investment and R&D, particularly where the company is undergoing business transformation e.g. adding new services
- Building links with academic centres of excellence regarding knowledge transfer, innovation, and technology research projects impacting on print, to engage more UK companies
- Improving the industry's image with the public and with younger people (e.g. through schools' industry links and curriculum/teaching support)
- Opposing taxation changes that would impact adversely on print companies, particularly new 'green' taxes
- Improving access to finance and encouraging new sources of lending.

The larger companies felt that the BPIF should work in partnership with other organisations, to make common cause and increase the strength of the industry's voice with target audiences. Different lobby groupings would be needed according to the issues at hand. These would include creative sectors, paper-based products, manufacturing and cross-sectoral (e.g. CBI, FSB, IoD etc).

At its next meeting on 11 January 2011 the Government & Industry Committee will receive an update on progress in relation to Priorities for Print. It will also determine lobbying priorities for 2011-12, in light of the views received from the larger companies and from other members.

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"A STRONG VOICE FOR PRINT" CONTINUES TO FEATURE AS ONE OF THE CENTRAL PRIORITIES IN THE NEW THREE-YEAR BPIF STRATEGY"