

MATTHEW CUNNINGHAM

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SUMMARY: A gifted, creative communicator and ambitious, innovative leader looking for opportunities to effect change. Excellent relationship management skills, with an instinctive approach to identifying and sustaining effective partnerships. Engages strategically with the big picture, but pays great attention to detail. Tech savvy and a consummate team player.

CURRENT ROLE:

Morley College London

Chief Marketing and Engagement Officer, 2020-present

Morley College London is the capital's largest Institute of Adult Learning. A merger with Kensington and Chelsea College in early 2020 means the college is comprised of three teaching centres in North Kensington, Chelsea and Waterloo.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Senior lead on external and stakeholder relations, internal communications and culture change, partnership development, alumni relations, and marketing.
- Strategic and operational responsibility for Morley Radio, Morley Exhibitions and Morley Gallery Waterloo and North Kensington.
- Member of Senior Leadership Team and attends Governing Board meetings.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS (see also www.matthewcunningham.co.uk for visual highlights)

- Implemented the first phase of a **new industry-standard ecommerce platform** for student enrolments in June 2023, contributing to a 25%+ increase in course sales for fee-paying short courses over the subsequent summer period. Significant internal stakeholder engagement (with management information, finance, IT, etc), expedited benefits realisation, and intensive support to customer services staff have defined this project. The remaining portfolio of courses will transition to the new platform in early 2024.
- **Led the relaunch of Morley's fully refurbished North Kensington Centre for Skills** in the first half of 2023, following a year-long £13m refurbishment. Multi-strand approach included intensive staff and stakeholder engagement (especially significant given the highly political nature of the site and its status as a Grenfell legacy project) including with local MPs and councillors, and a series of pre-launch and launch events delivered in November 2022, January 2023 and reaching a crescendo in May 2023 with discrete events for a Minister, VIPs, students and local community members.
- Originated the ongoing **X of Morley campaign**, an external communications narrative that sits alongside core product marketing, enabling Morley to describe its unique selling points and promote unique student experiences such as *The Artists of Morley* and *Performers of Morley* event seasons, Morley Radio and Morley Gallery. Also allows for a focused approach to promoting the breadth of this offer and accommodates significant EDI thematic calendar dates such as LGBT+ History Month, International Women's Day and Black History Month.
- Led a **brand refresh** project, designed both to streamline the college's external identity (visually and by refreshing brand narratives) and support internal culture change through engaging staff post-merger. Refreshed brand rolled out from September 2022.
- Oversaw a **fast-track expansion of the college's events programme**, both in terms of media (leading to events being broadcast online, or via Morley Radio) and in scope and ambition, particularly in relation to a new collegewide Morley Awards ceremony that took place in July 2023, unifying celebrations of student, staff and stakeholder success at a central London venue.

- Brought a **systematic and strategic approach to internal communications**, including deploying a new intranet (*My Morley*), implementing weekly email staff bulletins, coordinating and hosting a monthly filmed All-Staff Briefing, and founding a new internal communications group (*INTERCOM*) designed to provide a direct line between senior leadership and staff at large.
- **Relaunched Morley Gallery Waterloo** after a delayed renovation project. This included recruiting a completely new team to lead on delivering an expanded exhibitions programme for the new Gallery (which is double the size of its predecessor) and ensuring the capital project itself delivered an effective specification compatible with longer term aims including achieving Arts Council accreditation. Since reopening in January 2022, the Gallery has enjoyed extremely well-attended Private Views, footfall that comfortably exceeds pre-pandemic levels, and artwork sales of almost £50k.
- Ongoing responsibility for leading the college's **commemorations of the Grenfell tragedy (2017)** as part of stakeholder engagement and reputation management of the Morley brand in West London. In 2021 I forged a partnership with Illuminated River and the lead contractor on the £13m North Kensington renovation leading to an illuminated façade for the duration of the Grenfell memorial weekend. In 2022, I commissioned a 36m-long North Kensington 'Green Wall' designed by a local resident and painted by local street artists. In 2023, a major component of the North Kensington Centre relaunch campaign paid tribute to those affected by the Grenfell Tower tragedy.
- Coordinated Morley's **rapid response to the Covid crisis** in the immediate term, including regular communications with governors, staff and students, and a *Coronavirus Information Hub* on the intranet. In the medium term, expanded this to include communications aimed at restoring morale, including notably a 10-minute film called *Teaching During a Pandemic*, and secured GLA funding for a Content Creation Manager to support tutors in moving their teaching to online or hybrid delivery. Coordinated longer-term interventions, including commissioning snapshot market and desk research to ascertain the changing nature of the learner market, and adapting marketing tactics accordingly to minimise the collateral damage of learner number decline in the wake of Covid leading to a 30%+ increase in enrolments overall in 2022 vs 2021.
- Delivered **two annual staff conferences and staff awards ceremonies, and two student award ceremonies**, in a Covid-sensitive hybrid mode e.g. a combination of pre-recorded, live broadcast and in-centre workshop content, and led two Youtube-broadcast Christmas quizzes to encourage staff to come together at a time when doing so physically was not possible.
- **Fully restructured an ailing marketing and communications function** that was ill-prepared for post-merger operations. Including spinning off comms/stakeholder management to create capacity for an enhanced focus on marketing the expansive core product offer at a time of Covid recovery (ranging from provision to 16-18 year olds to Higher Education to fee-paying evening and short courses), and making the business case to bring key services (design, web development, videography) in house. Marketing strategy endorsed by Governors in February 2022.

RECENT/ONGOING PROJECTS (since 2020):

DDMIX Trust

Founding Trustee, 2020-ongoing

Founding trustee on Dame Darcey Bussell's dance/fitness/schools outreach project, DDMIX, and have been working with her inaugural team to establish the Trust, including applying for charitable status, preparing case for support materials and advising on rollout plans to schools throughout the UK.

Anthropy

Member of Arts and Culture Panel, 2021-ongoing

Invited to join John O'Brien's organising committee for the inaugural Anthropy, a major three day gathering at the Eden Project in November 2022, which grew out of the idea for a UK 'Davos'. Responsibilities pertain to supporting the curation of arts and culture content across the event more broadly, and hosting various events at the gathering. I am repeating my involvement in 2023.

Dance Teacher Web Conference and Expo, Las Vegas

Volunteer, 2017-2019, 2023

I volunteer at this international event, maintaining links with the arts world developed during my years at Royal Academy of Dance. Responsibilities include general event management, as well as occasional emcee and interviewer duties. In 2023, I was invited by the organisers to create a new vlog series “An Englishman in Las Vegas” leading to the creation of a series of video clips documenting the convention.

British Ballet Charity Gala

Programme Designer and Production Assistant, Jan-Jun 2021 (with the possibility of a future event in 2024)

Designed the printed programme for this major event, which attracted national press coverage as one of the first events to take place at the Royal Albert Hall after the Covid lockdowns of 2020 and early 2021, including organising a print sponsor (Mount Street Printers). Volunteered backstage on the day and evening of the event itself, providing direct support to the event organisers and performers.

Nina Dolan: A Journey Through Abstraction

Promoter and Project Manager, Jan-Apr 2020

Worked with professional artist Nina Dolan to mount, promote and publicise a two-month exhibition of 50 paintings in Chelsea, London. This included events management for a Private View that attracted over 100 attendees and resulted in sales of £45,000, print and digital marketing, website renewal including the creation of a digital 3D virtual exhibition, social media management, PR and overall project management.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: *(see also www.matthewcunningham.co.uk for visual highlights)*

Royal Academy of Dance

Director of Strategic Development and Fundraising, 2014-2019

Interim Director of Marketing and Communications (maternity cover), 2013-2014

The Royal Academy of Dance is the world's most influential dance education organisation, with offices in 36 countries and over 13,000 members worldwide. A quarter of a million students take RAD exams annually.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Executive Board member with individual responsibility for voluntary income generation, events, development of new business, and collective responsibility for reputation management and strategy.
- Management of the relationship between RAD and President Dame Darcey Bussell, plus other high-profile ambassadors and allies.
- Executive Producer of the flagship *Genée International Ballet Competition* (10-day annual event) hosted since 2013 in Glasgow, Antwerp, London (shortlisted for 2015 Walpole British Luxury Awards), Sydney, Lisbon, Hong Kong and Toronto.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Led the **development of *Silver Swans*** – a commercial/charitable initiative championing dance provision for the over-55s – as a response to research on the wellbeing benefits of dance and to capitalise on the policy emphasis on lifelong wellbeing. Piloted in the UK, US, Australia and Hong Kong from May 2017, with worldwide rollout from April 2019 – by early 2020, there were 1,000 Licensees. Recruited presenter Angela Rippon CBE as the Ambassador for *Swans* in the UK, and actress Caroline O'Connor in Australia. *Silver Swans* is now the RAD's primary source of media coverage, with HRH The Duchess of Cornwall a regular participant and project patron.
- Created a partnership with The Queen's grandson, Peter Phillips, that gave 300 RAD dancers and 90 RAD stakeholders a lead role at ***The Patron's Lunch***, the official street party celebration on The Mall to mark Her Majesty's 90th birthday in 2016. TV and media coverage reached 142 million people on a single day. Deployed Seenit crowdsourcing video technology to capture footage of the day.

- Orchestrated a multi-strand activity programme to **celebrate RAD's Centenary throughout 2020**; comprised of ten 'landmark projects' including *100 events in 100 places* (in over 25 countries), a major collaboration with the V&A Museum (year-long jointly curated exhibition in London), a new outreach programme in Portugal, a commemorative hardback book, and a comprehensive content strategy.
- In partnership with the CEO and Board of Trustees, **led a series of changes to the RAD's flagship *Genée International Ballet Competition***, including reforming the business model for the competition in order to improve its financial performance through emphasising increased donations/sponsorships/partnerships and reducing the financial burden on RAD members and *Genée* participants, and developing its audiences through implementing a series of 'fringe' events in parallel with the core competition.
- **Developed and launched a £3.5m capital campaign** – chaired by former Director of The Royal Ballet Dame Monica Mason – in support of the RAD's move to a new global headquarters. Early successes included securing a gift from the Sainsbury family, and a successful bid to the GLA Good Growth Fund; the building opened in March 2022 with the majority of funding in place.
- Implemented **new revenue fundraising strategies** – working closely with multiple stakeholders including senior Trustees and the Chairman via a newly-formed Development Committee – focused on relationship building with individual donors, major events, bids to trusts and foundations, and corporate partnerships.
- **Launched *Project B*** – a three-year global campaign to celebrate and inspire boys to take up dancing, particularly ballet – in June 2017. An engagement programme with a commitment to inclusion/diversity, a response to business need (under 5% of RAD's customer base in examinations is male), and a prelude to the Academy's 2020 Centenary campaign, *Project B* featured events, masterclasses, financial support, provision of professional development for teachers, and the placement of high-profile 'male dance ambassadors' as role models.
- **Initiated a partnership between RAD, Marylebone Cricket Club (Lord's) and British Council India** to challenge gender stereotypes in Indian schools through the provision of blended dance/cricket teaching in a project entitled *Changing Moves Changing Minds*. Following an early 2018 pilot involving ten schools in Delhi and Kolkata, the project was commissioned for rollout throughout 2018/19.
- Developed enduring and **commercially-minded partnerships** in support of the Academy's objectives, including with Nyetimber (English sparkling wine), Spencer House, Mandarin Oriental Hotels Group, Diptyque and Walpole.
- Originated a series of high profile '**pop up**' performance events to give the Academy a new promotional platform for dance. Venues included Birmingham New Street station, Canary Wharf, London King's Cross, Leeds Trinity Shopping Centre, Darling Harbour (Sydney), and Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong.
- Reshaped the awarding of the RAD's most prestigious accolade – the ***Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Award for Services to Dance*** – to drive both profile enhancement and fundraising revenue. Ceremonies honouring The Royal Ballet at Claridge's (2014,) Sir Matthew Bourne at Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park (presented personally by HM Queen Elizabeth II in 2016,) Carlos Acosta CBE at Spencer House (2018) and Karen Kain C.C. at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts in Toronto (2019; first time ever outside the UK) are both notable moments in the cultural calendar and an opportunity to engage funders.
- Masterminded the **2013' virtual launch 'of new RAD syllabus content**, using a multi-platform approach (video, social media, events in 22 countries) to directly reach over 50% of the global membership in a single day. Project was highly commended for best use of the web at the Charity Times Awards 2014.

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

Director of Communications and Marketing, 2010-2011

UCAS is the UK's centralised admissions service to higher education, each year supporting 750,000 people to access university, and providing a range of ancillary services including analysis of trends in HE.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Initial design and ongoing leadership of Marketing and Communications department – responsible for 32 staff, with 7 direct reports and £3.5m budget.
- Member of Senior Management Team with specific responsibility for strategic leadership of media relations, online provision and marketing, and collective responsibility for corporate strategy and Government relations.
- Strategic adviser to the Chief Executive on all matters of marketing and communications, including during crisis situations (e.g. the delivery failure of UCAS systems in 2011) and to support longer term media positioning of UCAS.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Invited by CEO (previously Director at QCDA) to take up role at a time of major internal and external change for the company and within the sector.
- Pioneered the “UCAS Connect Digital Hub,” a highly-branded physical and online space used during the ‘media circus’ of A-level results day. Resulted in high profile national media coverage.
- Reshaped internal communications to support organisational change.
- Formed in-house digital communications team, helping to position UCAS as an internet-driven business, and winning the 2011 Customer Contact Association Award for best use of social media.
- Led frequent media/public affairs briefings to enable senior colleagues and external partners to respond appropriately via media and stakeholder channels, including during UK universities ‘clearing’ period in summer 2010 and 2011 and in support of UCAS’s *Admissions Process Review* in 2010.
- Various appearances in the broadcast and print media (including BBC local and national TV and radio) as part of crisis media handling during the outage of UCAS systems in 2011.

Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA)

Head of Communications for 14-19, Skills and Curriculum, 2007-2010

QCDA was the government agency for the development of the curriculum, reform of qualifications and delivery of assessments (functions since integrated into the UK Civil Service).

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Lead on all communications strategies related to 14-19 (secondary) education qualifications reform, and adult skills/vocational qualifications frameworks.
- Strategic advice to policy colleagues on all communications and reputation management matters.
- Management of the relationships between QCDA and its partners, including key Government departments (education and business/skills), public sector agencies (e.g. sector skills bodies) and employers.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Developed content strategy to support nationwide implementation of Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), featuring a wide range of tactics, including extensive use of then-new digital channels.
- Commissioned 3D illustrators to create a 5-minute animated video to explain complex policy concepts behind the Framework; one of a series of video resources created as part of the wider project.
- Chaired multi-agency group to coordinate QCF communications; membership included senior communicators from national Government departments, employers, and academic institutions.

- Created a visual representation of the complex wider qualifications reform package that was later used by the Department for Education in their promotional and policy collateral.
- Worked with an external media partner to develop third party communications in support of our agenda, including originating national 'Diploma Awards' to celebrate successes by schools and colleges.

Connexions Norfolk

Communications Manager, 2002-2007

Connexions was the nationally-branded, locally-delivered guidance service for 13-19 year olds, covering all issues from careers to nutrition to sexual health.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Management of all communications requirements associated with the business.
- Major role in working directly with young people to ensure their voice was heard at SMT / Board level.
- Member of Senior Management Team.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Project-managed company relocation from two legacy facilities to a brand new office space.
- Secured funding for and developed online prospectus for the region's learning provision for 14-19 year olds; website (helpyouchoose.org) is still live, despite Government and education policy changes.
- Overhauled ageing publications suite by introducing new customer-appropriate formats e.g. credit-card sized 'Portable Information Guides' (PIGs) vs traditional bulky publications.

EDUCATION:

University of Cambridge (Trinity College)

B.A. Hons Social and Political Sciences – class 2:1 – 1997-2000

- Papers on social theory, the media (including music as a social text), globalisation, politics of the EU, politics of North America, methodology in social sciences
- Elected Communications Officer and vice-President of the Trinity College Students' Union
- Relaunched the Trinity College student magazine (Travisty)
- Rowed as part of the College third team (third boat out of ten)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Founder member of the Institute of Directors Advance programme – 2016
- REMIX Summit London: Culture, Technology, Entrepreneurship – 2014
- Common Purpose London “ –The Know: leading beyond authority” – 2008
- Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) – Advanced Certificate in Public Relations – 2003

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- 2012: spent on sabbatical in Melbourne, Australia
- Accomplished pianist and founder member of RAD's staff choir (2018)
- Passions include performing arts, design, architecture and civil engineering, travel, cultural differences, the impact of communications technologies on human lives, contemporary politics
- Languages: French – conversational; Russian – rudimentary