

HCA

HEALTHCARE
COMMUNICATIONS
ASSOCIATION

Building for change



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Introduction

“ The Healthcare Communications Association (HCA) now represents the majority of pharmaceutical companies and consultancies operating in healthcare communications. Those who were at the Special HCA Members’ Meeting on 8 January heard how the organisation has undergone a fundamental review of its future strategy, key priorities and operation, in light of widespread consultation. This was further consolidated through interactive group sessions held during the meeting.

A key aspect of the newly refined focus is the strategic decision to develop a louder voice in debates that affect the membership and its activities. The HCA will work to convey the valuable role that healthcare communications plays in aiding informed treatment decisions in the interest of best patient care. It will also ensure that members are fully equipped to consistently answer ‘difficult’ questions with confidence. In this context we are pleased to be collaborating more closely with the ABPI going forward, including participating in the organisation’s PR Forum and other key initiatives supporting the pharmaceutical industry.

A number of the pivotal core membership offerings, such as the annual benchmarking and training programmes, will remain, but going forward a number of new activities will also be introduced. These are all designed to engage as many individuals from member companies as possible in activities which are both topical and which help provide much-needed support in the current and future environment. So, a programme of events is planned throughout the year which will allow members to learn and debate the pressing issues of our time, and network with colleagues as never before; the outputs from which will be shared with the entire membership. Plus more aids to best practice will be produced in a shorter, sharper, quicker format.

In parallel to the evolution of membership activities in 2009, will be further evolution in the HCA organisational structure, with increased paid-for support, allowing voluntary input – for which we are indebted – to be harnessed in a more creative and productive fashion.

So, more membership engagement, more two-way dialogue, more accessibility...more reasons than ever to get involved and reap the benefits that can only come from joining together with industry colleagues. ”

Sarah Matthew

Chair

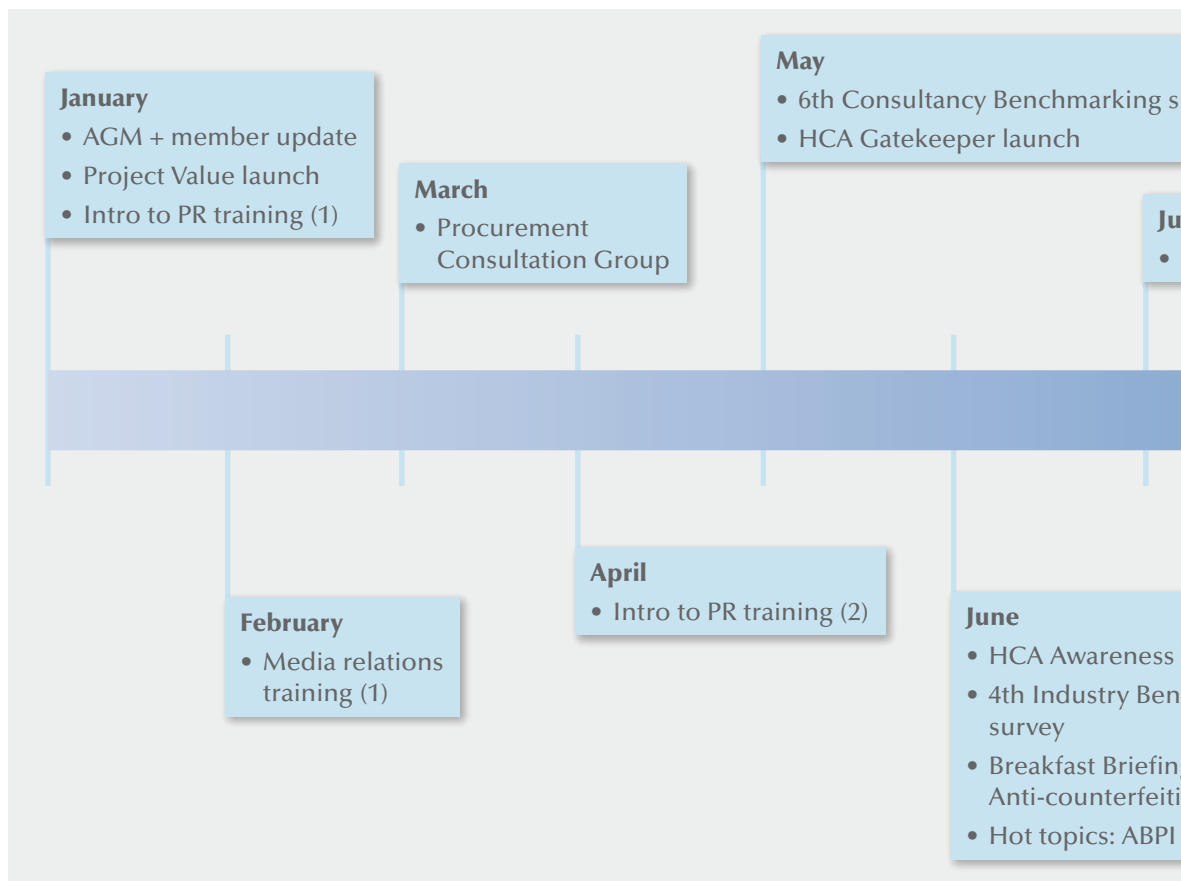
Julia Cook

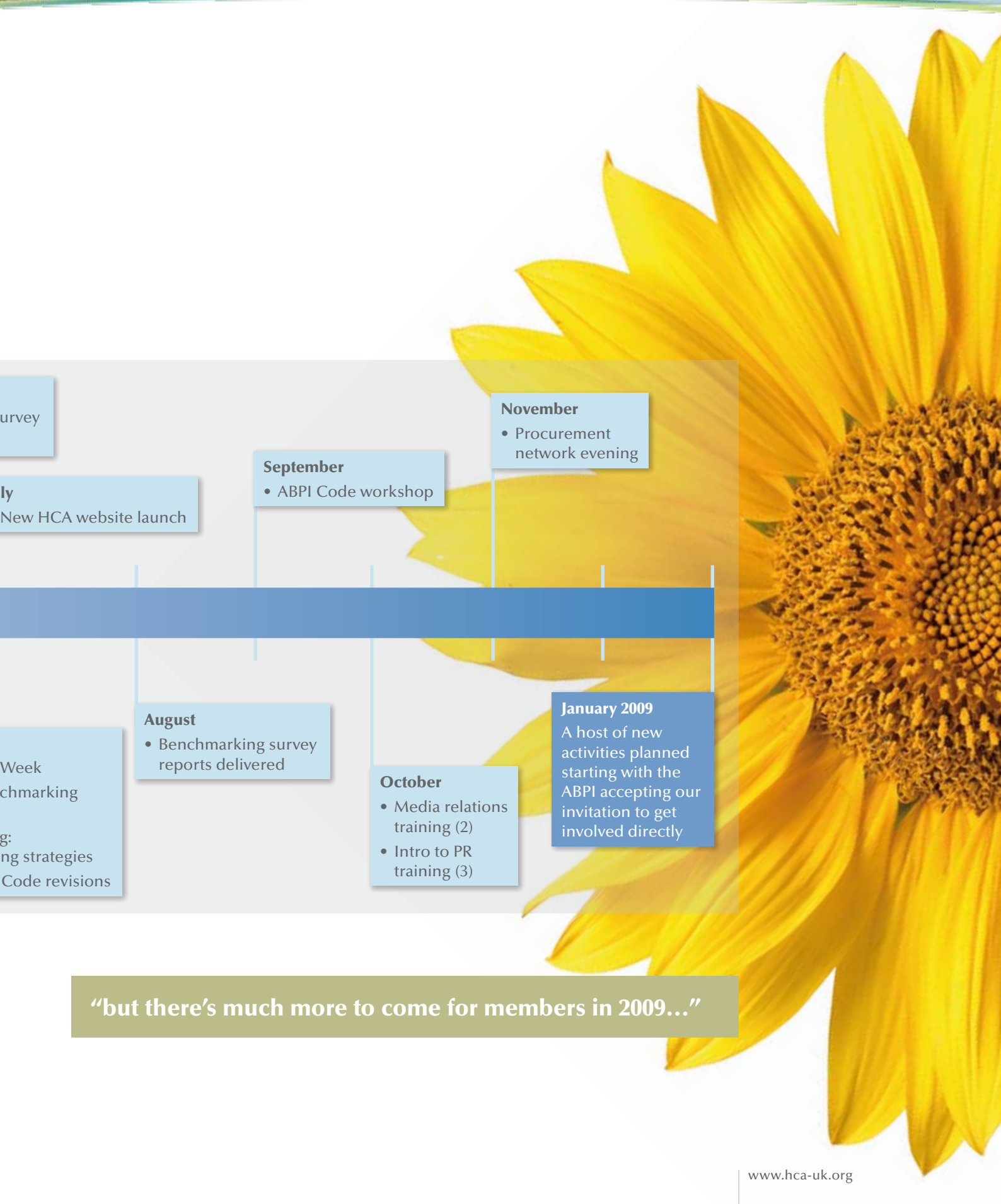
Deputy Chair

The HCA was very busy last year...

Key HCA achievements in 2008

- Membership increased by nearly 20%
- 119 delegates (representing 39 companies) attended a training workshop
- 11 new benefits for members
- 35 companies participated in our benchmarking surveys in healthcare communications





Survey

ly
New HCA website launch

September
• ABPI Code workshop

November
• Procurement network evening

Week
chmarking
g:
ng strategies
Code revisions

August
• Benchmarking survey reports delivered

October
• Media relations training (2)
• Intro to PR training (3)

January 2009
A host of new activities planned starting with the ABPI accepting our invitation to get involved directly

“but there’s much more to come for members in 2009...”

How far will you go this year?

Training developments in 2009

In direct response to members' feedback, the HCA training programme has been updated and revised to reflect the needs and priorities of our members. We have stuck to our remit of providing high quality, excellent value industry- and practice-specific training that is just not available elsewhere. We will continue to provide our ever-popular introductory level courses with updated content and a host of new speakers and presenters, but are also introducing some new workshops.

- **NEW for 2009**
 - Advanced Media Relations will enable more experienced practitioners to refine and hone their skills
- **NEW for 2009**
 - 'An Audience With...' briefings will provide a forum for HCA member to hear the perspectives of, and discuss hot topics with, journalists spanning a range of media
- **NEW for 2009**
 - Updated contents for all courses including content and speakers with a medical education focus
- **NEW for 2009**
 - HCA core and new educational materials adapted for in-house use – content will be tiered and priced accordingly for members allowing more people to benefit from current and new workshop material in the convenient setting of their own organisation. Further details will be posted on the HCA website and sent out to members

Interactive training workshops (e.g. Introduction to Healthcare Communications) for new and improving communicators are also available regularly throughout 2009. Visit www.hca-uk.org for more information or email training@hca-uk.org.

“Our 2009 training programmes are designed to deliver on the needs of healthcare communications people – whether brand new or hugely experienced.”

Membership benefits

Membership allows industry and consultancy to work together to improve healthcare communications standards.

Benefits include:

- Preferential rates at all HCA training courses leading to a better trained, more effective workforce
- Exclusive free access to the HCA Interactive Evaluation Toolkit, helping to improve confidence in the key area of evaluation
- Exclusive free access to the HCA Good Practice Guides
- Opportunities to share knowledge and to participate in discussion forums



HCA special events and forums

Debate the pressing issues of our times and network with colleagues as never before. Our new programme is designed to get people from across the membership, and within member companies, involved.

- **NEW for 2009**

Discussion Forums on:

- The State of the Industry (featuring ABPI President Chris Brinsmead)
- Web 2.0 + Social Networking (boost your digital prowess)

The rest of the year's programme is yet to be defined and dependent on further membership input. Let us know your ideas by emailing info@hca-uk.org.

- **NEW for 2009**

- The HCA is joining the ABPI PR Forum and participating in the new Trust Strategic Imperative – helping drive the agenda on all issues relating to healthcare communications

- **NEW for 2009**

- A Special Summer Meeting to supplement and build on the Special Members' Meeting in January. Keep a lookout for further details including a date confirmation announcement

“This year's HCA forums and events will allow members to learn and debate the key issues at the right times and network with colleagues as never before. What we have planned will deliver much-needed support for members in the changing current and future environments.”

Other key activities in 2009

- Access to up-to-date informed analysis of key issues and developments affecting the healthcare industry
- Access to the password-protected members-only section of the HCA website, which includes useful core resources and a contacts database system that allows you to ensure HCA communications reach the right people in your organisation
- The opportunity to display the HCA logo on advertising and promotional literature – agency membership of the HCA is denoted in the Communiqué directory
- Membership benefits programme, negotiated discounts and free trials with suppliers and services

- **Careers University Ambassadors programme**
 - HCA member companies to send a junior colleague back to their university to talk to careers advisors about the opportunities available in healthcare communications
- **Building on our benchmarking programme**
 - Focus will be extended to an external benchmarking programme to establish the developing needs of external stakeholders



Delivering the goods

In 2009 the level of paid-for support for the HCA is being extended, with a Central Co-ordinator being brought in. Designed to both complement and augment the existing core support functions, this will be pivotal in helping ensure that the HCA delivers on time, and on budget, on the activities and services that really matter to the HCA membership and so to the wider provision of healthcare communications.

STOP PRESS!

As from 1 March we will be using the consultancy services of Romilly Cook on a part-time basis to carry out the new role. Romilly has previously worked at a senior level in various healthcare communications agencies and will be known by many in the industry. We are delighted to have her on board.

Getting more involved

More membership engagement, more two-way dialogue, more accessibility... more reasons than ever to get involved.

Contact info@hca-uk.org with suggestions of how the HCA can best help you – and vice versa.

We need:

- Suggestions for discussion forum topics
- Members to help organise forums on the subjects of their passion – a short-term commitment but an opportunity to really make a difference
- Thoughts on areas where the HCA could provide useful further guidance on best practice

Contacts

Members of the HCA – an independent, not-for-profit group – comprise healthcare communications agencies, freelance communications practitioners and companies involved in making and marketing pharmaceuticals and associated products.

On top of the many benefits, inside track discussions and unique networking opportunities provided for members, the HCA serves the sector as a credible, influential and high-profile representative in negotiations, shaping opinion and leading debate.

Make the most of your association this year, as it grows from strength-to-strength. To get involved (opportunities vary from sub-committee seats to short, low-commitment projects), contact:

Healthcare Communications Association
PO Box 828
Richmond
TW10 6WH

Email: info@hca-uk.org
Tel: 0844 770 0145

[HCA website](http://www.hca-uk.org)
www.hca-uk.org