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# Meet

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# David Bass

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Group Director of Communications, Plxsur

**Having previously worked at a PR agency covering clients in a number of different sectors, what appealed to you about moving to focus solely on RRP?**

Working at a global PR agency early on in your career offers many benefits; the opportunity to be exposed to clients in multiple sectors and to develop a range of skills, from crisis and issues management to financial communications, media relations and profile raising campaigns.

During my time in agency roles, I advised companies, countries, and individuals, from the private sector through to FTSE 100s. But the clients I enjoyed advising the most were always fast growing entrepreneurial businesses.

Plxsur is the largest and fastest growing group of independent vaping companies in the world, and it was the opportunity to work with each of the businesses in our group that appealed to me most.

I'm a former social smoker, now a vaper. The switch to vaping transformed my life and my physical health; my running improved dramatically – I now run 10k most weekends – and I was able to get back on the river and start to row again, which had been my passion at university. I understood the journey of a smoker making the transition to vaping and the positive impact it has, so a role in the RRP category felt like the natural fit.

## Where does your passion for the sector lie; where do you think Plxsur is making the biggest impact?

What excites me most about Plxsur is seeing the commitment across the group towards responsibility. Responsibility is at the core of everything we do, and it runs through all the interactions I have with our founders, from their focus on delivering safe and innovative products to their customers, to safeguarding the environment through recycling schemes, encouraging consumers to switch from disposables to rechargeable devices and their focus on embedding people, purpose, and culture within our businesses. This is so important. Plxsur would be nothing without the people across our businesses. They are more than just our people, they are our partners.



...we are firmly dedicated to providing science and quantitative research to the healthcare community and consumers.

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## What do you see as the biggest opportunities and challenges for the category and what is Plxsur doing differently to help address these?

By far the biggest opportunity for the category is quantifying the real positive impact that vaping has on public health and society at large. We can show the number of lives, and money, saved, by national health services around the world. The maths is complex, but I'm looking forward to identifying a formula, cracking the code and being able to tell this story to the world!

The biggest challenge is being able to convince health practitioners of the benefits of vaping. Many doctors here in the UK are yet to be convinced, and many consumers still believe that vaping is more harmful than smoking. To rebut some of these myths we need more data-led research and scientific evidence. Plxsur has a role to play here, and we are firmly dedicated to providing science and quantitative research to the healthcare community and consumers.

**Negative perceptions of the vaping category, particularly in the media, are often cited as one of its biggest challenges. What role can vaping companies, particularly their communications, play in helping to address this?**

When I joined Plxsur our CEO, Nigel, warned me that the media sentiment towards vaping was akin to a swinging pendulum. One day the media would extol its virtues, the next it would claim that vaping was more harmful than smoking. It's a constant battle but one that, armed with my crisis and issues management helmet on, I was prepared to face.

We all too often see the same spokespeople, science and data being quoted and cited in the media. I'd like to see some new voices. Vaping companies, either through industry associations such as UKVIA or IEVA or independently, need to be heard and this involves sticking heads above parapets and being bold in the messages they communicate. But for the narrative to be compelling and credible, the messaging needs to be backed by science and data-led evidence.



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**If the work of responsible vaping companies such as Plxsur can only take the industry so far, what other stakeholders need to engage to help raise the standards of the industry? Are there any partnerships that you think could be game changing?**

Healthcare departments and clinicians, parliamentarians, the media, trading standards and convenience store retailers are just some of our key stakeholders. As the world's largest and fastest growing group of independent vaping companies, Plxsur has earned the right to have a seat at the table and to help shape the future of vaping. It's critical that we continue to engage these stakeholders.

A partnership with retailers to put in place a licensing scheme with strict penalties – like the scheme we see Italy – would be a game changer and, enable us as an industry to ensure that vapes do not end up in the hands of young people.

**Plxsur has had an impressive growth trajectory in its first two years, where would you like to see the business in the next five?**

As we continue our strategy of 'build, grow and drive' our seat at the table will come with greater levels of responsibility and scrutiny. Beyond the financial growth, I would like to see our credibility, reputation and recognition in the industry grow in tandem and, over time, for Plxsur to be seen as the most responsible vaping company in the world.