

PR IN PRACTICE

Making Organic Newsworthy

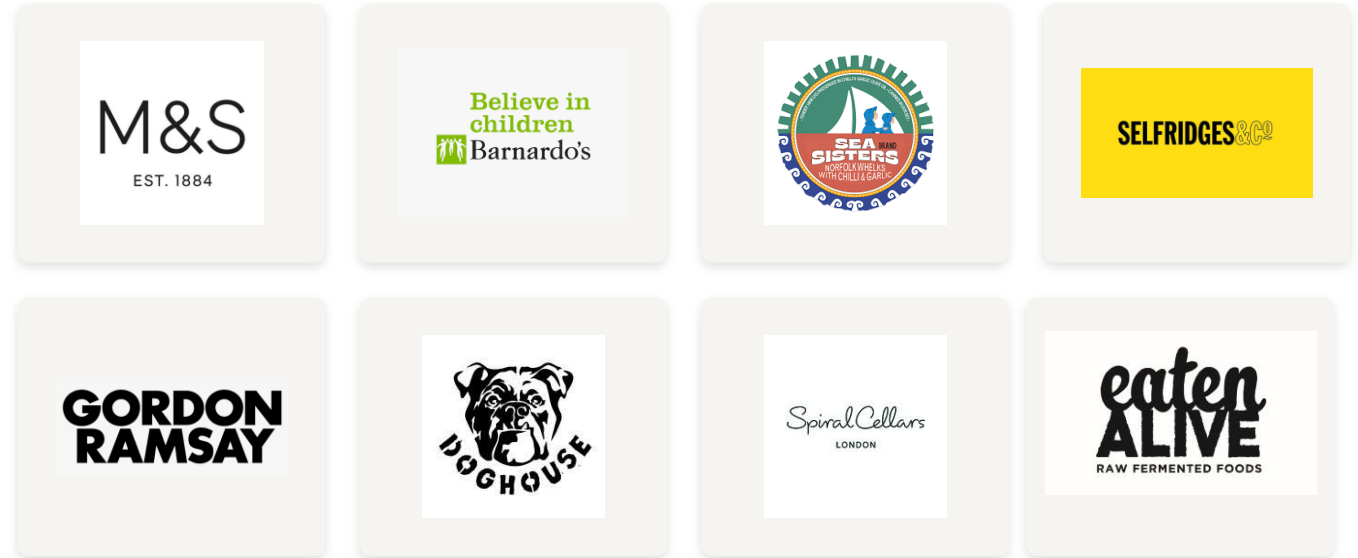
How to turn a good product into a story journalists want to write.

Liz Williams



My Background

- Experience Across Sectors
- From Global Retailers to Growing Challengers
- A Mix of Big Brands and Ambitious Start-Ups
- *Still the same approach...*



Organic is having a moment.

- Sales
- Retailers
- Consumers
- Media

M&S cuts prices on organic food in battle with Waitrose

Marks & Spencer is slashing prices on more than 50 organic products, hoping to capture more of the weekly shop



'Quality really matters': why the organic food market is booming again

Greater awareness of healthy diets and concerns over 'trusted' food mean sales are growing at fastest pace in two decades



PR v Marketing

PR sits in the marketing mix — but the approach is very different.

PR

Main Goal

Earn trust, credibility and a positive reputation.

Audience

Journalists, media outlets, stakeholders, customers and the wider public.

How It Works

Builds relationships, shares newsworthy stories, handles issues and manages reputation.

Level of Control

Lower — you can't control what (or when) others say about you.

Typical Results

Media coverage, thought leadership, brand trust, long-term reputation.

MARKETING

Main Goal

Generate leads, increase sales and drive short-term results.

Audience

Target customers and specific market segments.

How It Works

Uses advertising, content, social media, email and campaigns to reach the right people.

Level of Control

Higher — you control the message, creative, timing and channels.

Typical Results

Website traffic, leads, conversions, sales and short-term ROI.

WHERE THEY ALIGN

Same objectives

Same key messages & brand values

Same target audience

What Is a Press News Story?

01 Not an advert

02 What works for advertising messaging won't always work for press

- 20% more berries — but does that mean you get your RDA of vit C?
- Bigger box — is it made of a new sustainable material?
- Reduced the price — but still paying farmers a premium?

03 Take the key messages and put them in a press-worthy style

04 Is it genuinely something you'd talk about?

05 Two important things to consider next...

Media Calendar

Media has a schedule

Calendar moments that we'll all be interested in...

- Christmas
- New Year — health resolutions
- Summer – holidays, beauty, weather
- September — back to school

How does it fit with that?

...Key organic activity

- OMR
- Wake Up to Organic
- Organic September



Where Do You Fit?

Business story? Feature? News piece? Be realistic about your audience.

How I Made It: Lucy Jewson, founder of Frugi



Lucy Jewson couldn't find outfits that fitted over cloth nappies — so she created her own (Jim Wilman)

Emma Broomfield

Sunday December 28 2014, 12:01am, The Sunday Times

< Share Save

HER big-bottomed baby inspired Lucy Jewson's first clothing line 10 years ago. The new mum was struggling to find babygrows that would fit over her son's cloth nappies, so she looked for help online.

"I couldn't find a single company offering a solution," she said. "Instead I found all these cloth nappy online forums with other mums in the same situation and from there my idea was born."

With a combined £60,000 from a bank loan and remortgaging her home, Jewson started Cut4Cloth, later rebranded as Frugi, an organic baby clothing brand, from her living room in Constantine, Cornwall.

Founder Story

HOW I MADE IT

Coconut and chocolate face masks were sweet salvation for Laura Rudoe of Evolve Organic Beauty



Laura Rudoe says being short of cash can spur innovation

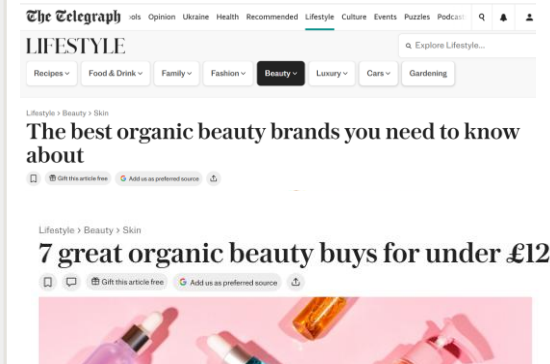
Founder Story

How to buy organic food (and wine) — by nutrition experts and chefs

As a controversial weed killer used on UK crops makes headlines, Giulia Crouch looks at the organic food boom and what's worth buying



Expert Roundup



Best-Of List

Become the News

You don't have to lead with 'organic' — the story can.

Riverford Organic warns of vegetables shortage as drought intensifies

Heatwaves leave crops wilted, shrivelled and in short supply, warns fresh produce retailer

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Tom Haynes
Senior Business Reporter
Show biography

Published 13 August 2026 6:35pm BST

One of Britain's biggest organic farmers has warned of vegetable shortages as drought worsens across the country.

Riverford Organic said the heatwaves and drought threatened to leave produce wilted, shrivelled and in short supply, with potentially devastating effects for farmers

Advertisement

THE TIMES | Monday April 14 2025



Brands get on board with chess boom

I may have originated in India about 1,500 years ago, but rather than showing its age, chess appears to be more popular than ever (Andrew Ellison writes).
Spurred on by high-profile television series and a new generation of young players, between six and nine million Britons are now estimated to be playing.

The result is chess fever hitting the high street, as retailers report unprecedented demand for all things chess-related — from sales of luxury chess boards to chess-inspired fashion and interiors.

Selfridges says sales of chess boards are up 260 per cent year on year and, such is the game's growing cultural significance, that it now has a window display dedicated to it.

Other high-profile brands have been jumping on the bandwagon. Burberry has produced chess-inspired bags, including one with a metal charm in the shape of a knight. The menswear brand Daily Paper with a chess-print linen shirt and trousers, which is listed by Sue Perkin and pits 12 rising stars against each other, pulled in 800,000 viewers for its first episode.

Interest in the game has also been inspired by celebrity players, including the model and actress Lily Cole, the boxer Anthony Joshua and the actor Will Smith. The most popular chess influencer is Levy Rozman, a 25-year-old American player, a 23-year-old

Influencers such as Andrea Botez, the 'Chess player by day, DJ by night' and a BBC chess programme hosted by Sue Perkins, all have raised interest in the game.



Canadian who has nearly a million followers on TikTok. She describes herself as a 'chess player by day, DJ by night' and often posts pictures of herself online, many featuring a chess board.

Younger British players, such as Simon Williams, also goes by the name GingerGM, and Caitlin Reid, who appears in Chess Masters, have tens of thousands of followers.

The most popular chess influencer is Levy Rozman, a 25-year-old American player, a 23-year-old

referred to as 'the internet's chess teacher'. His YouTube channel, GothamChess, has more than six million subscribers, and his most popular video has been watched 6.1 million times.

These players have helped to inspire record numbers of young people — and in particular girls — to take up the game. This year's National Schools Chess Championship had more female entrants than any previous tournament.

However, the overwhelming majority of

players play online. About 1.5 million Britons play on Chess.com, where users can remotely compete against each other. The website now has more players in the UK than any other country except the US and India.

Emily Derrick, the head of concepts at Selfridges, said: 'Chess is really having a moment, and just for its strategic allure but its aesthetic qualities too, from the craft of the board and the pieces through to chess-inspired fashion and accessories.'

News

Valentine gifts don't get any cheesier

Traditional chocolates and flowers are being outwitted by high-end dairy products and fish, writes Andrew Ellison

Roses may be red and violets blue but when it comes to Valentine's Day, a side of salmon or a wheel of weddy cheese might be more to the point. Forget flowers or chocolate, instead fish and cheese are becoming the unlikely gifts for romantics, according to Selfridges.

The department store chain said sales of luxury, artisanal, premium cheese have risen 30 per cent in the lead-up to Valentine's Day this year and it had to double its supply to meet demand.

Selfridges claims that last year's sales of cheese were up 10 per cent on the same day in 2024. It is the 'best-seller' brand, with sales of £1.5m in the week before Christmas.

Going forward, fish is a gift in its own right. For Valentine's Day, the retailer reported that sales of salmon were up 85 per cent in the weeks before Christmas.

The trend is being driven by online influencers and celebrity chefs. The TikTok account @dinnerwithdave has more than 45,000 followers and has earned £1m in the last 12 months. One recent post on @dinnerwithdave, which was by Marcus Cook, showed him serving a salmon and cheese terrine to his wife.

Selfridges says that last year's sales of salmon were up 85 per cent in the weeks before Christmas.



Candlelight, roses and... a cheesecake, smoked fish and mouth-burn. Valentine's Day is more serious than most. But not this year. Not even close.

as John Plummer are featuring turned fish — on cheese — which is a new twist on the classic cheese and fish terrine. The 'cheesier' Valentine's Day gifts are also being promoted by influencers. One recent post on @dinnerwithdave, which was by Marcus Cook, showed him serving a salmon and cheese terrine to his wife.

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Forget coals to Newcastle: we sell Bourbon to Americans

A London distillery is taking on the likes of Jack Daniels with its southern-style whiskey, writes Andrew Eames

Donald Trump may be keen to levy tariffs on British products but that has not stopped our enterprising London distillery from going toe-to-toe with America's biggest whiskey-makers.

Doghhouse Distillery in Battersea is launching Britain's first 'grain to bottle' Bourbon whiskey in an effort to steal market share from the likes of Jack Daniels and Southern Comfort.

The new spirit is produced using authentic Bourbon production methods, which require the drink to be made from at least 51 per cent corn and aged in virgin, charred American-oak casks for a sweeter taste.

By contrast, Scotch whisky is traditionally made of a single malt of 100 per cent barley and is aged in used barrels. The other important difference between Bourbon and Scotch is that Bourbon must mature in the barrel at 62.5 per cent alcohol content, stronger than most Scotch, although both drinks are usually diluted to a strength of 40 per cent in the bottle.

Braden Saunders, Doghouse Distillery's founder, has named his Bourbon 'Debt Collector' in homage to America's prohibition era when Bourbon came to the fore.

He says that he can get away with making a British Bourbon because he is Australian.

He explained: 'I have no whisky tradition, and that makes it a little bit easier. If I was Scottish and started

making corn whisky in London, I'd probably be shot by my family.'

But there is no reason we cannot make it here. We can make any type of whisky, as long as we've got the know-how — it's just taste, trials, investment and understanding.

Last year the UK exported 132 million bottles of Scotch to America, making it the biggest export market by far. Its popularity across the Atlantic means spirits are Britain's fourth-largest export to the US after cars, plane parts and medicine.

However, the value of British whisky exports to America fell last year and there is concern that the market will fall further if President Trump decides to reintroduce the 25 per cent tariff he imposed in his first term. Whisky shipments dropped by 25 per cent before the levy was repealed under Joe Biden's administration.

The threat of tariffs does not deter Saunders, who believes his Bourbon will beat any of the big American players for taste.

'I'm not going to run around saying mine is the best Bourbon in the world because it's young having been aged in the barrel for only three years.'

Why wouldn't you support an English whisky that sounds amazing? It's a bit like the Aussies selling Scotch back to the UK, it works. Being English gives us a unique selling point.'

Only whiskies made in the US can be legally be sold there as Bourbon, however, so Debt Collector will be marketed as 'Bourbon-like' or 'American-style'.

Bourbon is thought to have originated in Bourbon County, Kentucky, in the late 18th century, when it was distilled by British and Irish farmers using corn. It was shipped down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, and by the mid-19th century the name had become widely used to describe this type of spirit.

Saunders intends to produce about 20,000 bottles of Debt Collector from the first 50 barrels he has laid down but intends to increase that to 100,000 if all goes well.



Doghhouse Distillery's Debt Collector has 'a bit of burn', says Braden Saunders, an Australian entrepreneur who founded the company with his wife, Katherine

At 50 per cent alcohol content, Saunders' Bourbon is less diluted than the big US players, giving it 'a bit of burn'.

He is confident that Debt Collector will sell well in the US. 'Initially, I don't think there'd be a market there but I was over in America in September and everyone went, 'Bourbon? That sounds amazing. It's a bit like the Aussies selling Scotch back to the UK, it works. Being English gives us a unique selling point.'

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Creating the 'Hook'

T

Topical Of the moment, timely, new and something people are talking about. Stats.

R

Relevant Relevant to the specific audience.

U

Unusual Not what people already know or expect — something that will surprise. Is it the first? The biggest? The smallest?

T

Trouble Show how you're solving a problem. Why is the brand doing this? Stats.

H

Human Interest What's in it for people? What impact will it have on your customers or readers?

Organic wine boom behind soaring popularity of pesticide-free food and drink

Sales of organic wine increased by 47 per cent as retailers including Waitrose and Aldi sold new drinks to please nature-friendly shoppers

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MailOnline

Now Gen Z ushers in 'organic living': TikTok influencers are fuelling the trend for eco-friendly diets as study reveals nearly half of young people want healthier produce

The Soil Association Certification surveyed 2,000 adults in the UK

By ALANAH KHOSLA, SENIOR LIFESTYLE REPORTER
UPDATED: 08:00, 12 September 2024

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Millennials and Gen Z are increasingly ditching unhealthy foods for organic produce, a new study has found.

Non-organic pre-packed food items have long dominated UK supermarket aisles, with many shoppers opting for frozen snacks, tinned items, and ready meals to feed themselves.

It's a way of living that the younger generations are reportedly turning their backs on, instead choosing organic produce with the hopes of boosting their health and happiness, as well as serving the environment.

'I ate only organic food for a month - this is what impact it had on my health'

Our writer swapped everything in her diet to organic for a whole month, this is how she got on



View 5 Images



YOU / YOU DRINK

Drinks: Charlotte's Organic September sips

M+ Editions

Tick List

01 WOW FACTOR

Is it genuinely interesting?

02 PROOF

Do you have strong stats?

03 SOCIAL PROOF

Do you have strong social media examples?

04 TIMING

Can you link it to a recent event, news story or trend?

05 OTHER EXAMPLES

Who else supports it — a restaurant menu? A big retailer?

06 CELEBRITY LINK

Have they been seen drinking it, wearing it or posting about it?

The Press Release

1

Partners

Would a partner strengthen the story?

2

Endorsement

Can a charity, NGO, expert or spokesperson support it?

3

Quote

Is the quote well worded — not fluffy?

4

Easy to Use

Make it easy to write.

5

Journalist Fit

Have they written something similar?

Organic September successes

Huge potential to build on for next year's campaign



Hero launch “moment”

M&S cuts prices on organic food in battle with Waitrose

NEWS

Sainsbury's launches half-price Nectar deals on organic produce

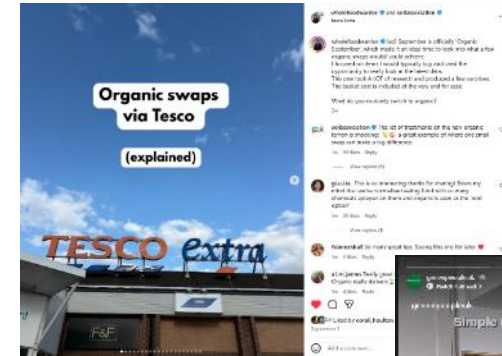
By Kate Mathews | 9 September 2024

Available from Thursday 10 September to Sunday 13 September, the half-price deals will roll out in selected supermarkets and online

Sainsbury's is rolling out half-price offers on selected So Organic produce with Nectar Points in the first of four weekend promotions (running throughout September)



Retailer engagement



Influencer & brand collaborations

Annual organic moments



Using consistent moments across the year to drive greater awareness



Capitalise on time of year to position organic as a choice for better health
"You are what you eat, and what you eat, eats"
Highlight care for soil, plants, animals, people within organic principles

January – health



Organic Market Report Launch
Annual report on growth of market
Features consumer insights
Opportunity to use stats to bolster brand or product press activity

March – OMR Launch



Wake up to organic
Brighter mornings
Positioning organic as an easy and nutritious start to the day
Incorporate dairy as key time for sector – Spring Flush
Opportunity for beauty/textiles brands – "get ready with me" style content

May – breakfast/dairy



The UK's largest campaign dedicated to growing the organic market
"Organic: a shortcut to better"
Tapping into shopper overwhelm and label fatigue to position organic as the easy option to get all you need, and nothing you don't

Organic September '27



SOIL ASSOCIATION Q&A

Let's Talk.

Working with the marketing agenda

Build a bigger picture together

Brand partners

Data

Independent credibility

Liz Williams

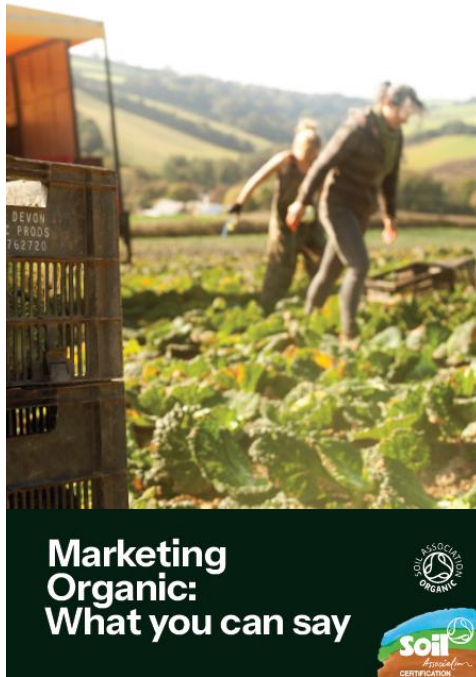


liz@lwpr.uk



What's next?

Upcoming opportunities to drive awareness



'Marketing Organic' launch



PR Opportunities – Christmas gift guides



Organic Market Report '27 – have your say

Let's keep talking

Join us and fellow brands to network and to discuss ways to collaborate and build our own marketing & PR organic action plans!

Martini Bar
Barbican
4–5pm
First drink on us!

