



Category: Issues, Crisis or Reputational Management

Company: Acceleris

Entry title: Securing the future of the UK maritime industry

Explanation of issue/crisis and objectives:

Since 1975 the number of seafarers active in the UK has fallen by 75 per cent and the nation now stands at number 20 in the global rankings of ship registrations. As a result, the United Kingdom is in danger of losing its place as a global maritime leader.

Acceleris was tasked by Nautilus International - the maritime professionals' trade union - to promote the issues faced by the industry and its workers, raised within the union's Charter for Jobs (which covers an SOS of support, opportunities and standards).

The campaign aimed to:

- Protect and promote jobs for UK seafarers and maritime professionals on shore
- Protect and enhance skills and training provision
- Ensure standards including minimum wage requirements and conditions at sea are maintained both now and after Brexit
- Affect real legislative change to benefit members and the wider industry

Research, planning and strategy:

Acceleris worked with Nautilus to define the campaign's key messages and develop a suitable tone of voice as appropriate for a campaign of political nature. Acceleris delivered media training to all members of the Nautilus senior management team to ensure they were comfortable with the campaign messaging and their roles as spokespeople.

We devised a campaign closely aligned to the political agenda, tailoring communications activity in line with Westminster developments to create interest and relevance to ongoing issues. The integrated campaign spanned media, social, animation, video and events.

Acceleris built up strong relationships with key national and trade journalists capable of generating awareness of the issues identified in Nautilus's Charter and motivate genuine change by mobilising the public, key stakeholders, politicians and maritime professionals themselves.

In addition to developing a strong media list, Acceleris created a database of target coastal MPs. With issues affecting constituents in these areas, engaging with these politicians would target those most likely to take Nautilus's cause forward in parliament.

Tactics and their implementation, including creativity and innovation:

Acceleris' multifaceted campaign included media relations, digital marketing, video production and events, including:

- Drafting a series of press releases tapping into the news agenda and positioning senior team members at Nautilus at the heart of the debate around issues outlined in the Charter
- Distributing 15,000 campaign postcards to 15,000 members, seafarers and interested parties to send to their local MPs raising awareness of issues and calling for change
- Creating an animated version of the postcard so that MPs could also be directly contacted electronically
- Developing a series of animations for use on social media channels, communicating the industry's complex issues in accessible format to a consumer audience in The Netherlands and the UK
- Creating, editing and promoting videos of key Nautilus personnel discussing Charter issues, showcasing the client's range of experts and to help further communicate the campaign's messages
- In September, to coincide with London International Shipping Week (LISW), Acceleris and Nautilus launched a leaflet explaining 'What seafarers do for us', which showed how far everyday items travel before hitting UK shops and homes. The leaflets proved very popular – especially with those who work to explain the importance of the maritime industry to young people – and a further 1,000 were printed in January 2018.
- At LISW, Acceleris organised for a juice bar to accompany Nautilus's activity. The bar served fresh juices containing ingredients only available in the UK thanks to seafarers. The juices served as a unique talking point for visitors to LISW and complemented the leaflets to stimulate further conversation about the importance of maritime professionals to the UK.

Demonstrate how negative impacts were avoided, positives achieved and improvements made:

Given the political nature of much of the campaign, Acceleris worked with Nautilus to adopt a suitable tone of voice to ensure political neutrality, especially with regards to Brexit, which is a highly emotive subject within the industry.

It was also important for the members of Nautilus to be regularly included in communications to avoid questions about the Union's activity and to showcase what Nautilus is doing for them and to demonstrate value for money for their membership fees. Using Nautilus's industry newspaper and website as well as other industry publications, we were able to communicate directly with them.

Acceleris worked with the client to devise a social media strategy and suitable responses to negative comments on its social media platforms. This allowed Nautilus to appear authoritative, consistent and positive to its members and to provide reassurance that the Union is working hard to achieve positive change for their benefit.

By media training Nautilus's senior management team, key personnel were well prepared to deal with any negative feedback from members.

Measurement and evaluation:

- Campaign activity resulted in 363 pieces of trade, national and regional coverage, delivering 2.4 billion opportunities to see
- Animations and videos reached 110,000 people
- Social media activity led to a 20% increase in Twitter followers and an 11% increase in Facebook page likes
- More than 15,000 industry leaders attended London International Shipping Week, during which Nautilus held its event and juice bar

Between June 2017 and June 2018, Acceleris helped Nautilus to achieve significant wins across each focused area of the Charter:

SUPPORT:

- Efforts in continually raising awareness of declining funding for seafarer training were rewarded in February 2018 when the government agreed to double the annual SMarT (Support for Maritime Training) budget to £30m, a significant win for the Charter campaign.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- The direct lobbying of politicians resulted in meetings with six high-level decision makers to discuss the issuing of Certificates of Equivalent Competency (CECs) to foreign seafarers and secured a major win when the Government agreed to call for a review of the system, which would increase working opportunities for UK seafarers.

STANDARDS:

- Campaigning for the upholding of the National Minimum Wage helped the crew of a Panama-registered vessel who had been paid as little as \$0.85 an hour. Having suffered atrocious conditions, Acceleris and Nautilus's work helped repatriate the crew and secure the payment of almost \$74,000 in owed wages.

- In March, the Charter campaign secured payment of £440,000 unpaid wages to more than 40 workers on an abandoned superyacht of Indian tycoon Vijay Mallya, following the vessel's arrest in Malta.