



Category: STEM Campaign

Company: Stone Junction

Entry title: Putting the rise of the cobots in context

Brief and objectives:

Over 1.7m new industrial robots will be installed between 2017 and 2020. Collaborative robots (cobots), machines that work harmoniously alongside humans, account for 3% of this market, but will reach 34% by 2025. The robotics industry is changing, and distributors must prepare.

TM Robotics distributes Toshiba Machine's robots outside Asia. Toshiba Machine does not manufacture cobots — but cannot ignore the changing market.

Objectives:

1. Undertake a survey to produce a Global Robotics Report, achieving an above average 10% response-rate from distributors in at least 20 countries
2. Raise TM Robotics' media profile, generating 66 trade press clippings between July 2017-June 2018, one clipping per £100 media relations spend
3. Promote TM Robotics' partnership with RARUK Automation, a cobot distributor, generating nine clippings about partnership, between March-May 2018
4. Deliver sales leads from whitepaper downloads, using Google AdWords to deliver price-per-click below £1.32 industry average
5. Improve digital marketing, growing Twitter/LinkedIn followers by 500 and achieving e-mail open-rate above 18.1% industry average

Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:

Questions for the Global Robotics Report were sent to 210 robot distributors. The results identified current challenges in the market; Industry 4.0 (the term used to describe digitalisation in manufacturing) and cobots.

Key findings:

- 55% believe 'Industry 4.0' is influencing how customers choose robots

- 79% don't believe manufacturers understand cobot safety requirements
- 52% of manufacturers biggest concern about Industry 4.0 is smart factory implementation, followed by cobots at 28%

We also conducted interviews with the Robotics Industries Association, Grabit, a US start-up using robotic technology and several robotics journalists.

Secondary research:

- Executive Summary World Robotics 2017 (International Federation of Robotics)
- Annual Manufacturing Report 2017
- UK Economic Outlook report (PwC)
- Cobots Market Forecasts from 2016-2021
- Readiness for the Future of Production (Worldwide Economic Forum)

Combined with external research, the Global Robotics Report formed the campaign themes — the politics of automation, Industry 4.0 and cobots.

Cobots were an essential topic, TM Robotics' sales argument is this type of robot isn't necessary for every application. However, because TM Robotics had formed a partnership with cobot distributor, RARUK Automation, we needed to promote the partnership, without tarnishing collaborative robotics through content.

Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:

The campaign was split into four phases.

Social media and e-mail marketing, delivering monthly news to TM Robotics' existing distributors, were used throughout.

1/4: Global Robotics Report (July-September 2017)

Before determining themes for the campaign, we collated answers to 22 questions from robotics distributors around the world.

2/4: Content (October 2017-March 2018)

After identifying the themes, we wrote seven thought-leadership articles to generate clippings in the UK and US trade media. Titles included:

- 'Industry 4.0: dispelling the myths'
- 'Before you buy a cobot'
- 'Should robots be taxed?'
- 'Robots will set us free' (real-time response to Britain's Industrial Strategy, distributed on day of announcement)

3/4: RARUK Automation partnership launch (March-May 2018)

Partnership announcement press release was distributed to trade media. Journalists were invited to a press conference hosted by both companies. Journalists that couldn't attend were invited for one-to-one meetings with TM Robotics.

4/4: Generate sales leads (May-June 2018)

Feature articles were re-used to create downloadable assets for TM Robotics' website.

A 'Politics of Automation' whitepaper was informed by the Global Robotics Report results. Media relations, a landing page, SEO and Google AdWords were used to encourage whitepaper downloads.

Implementation of tactics:

1/4: Global Robotics Report

- Survey sent to 210 robotics distributors using SurveyMonkey
- Three e-mail follow-ups sent via MailChimp
- Results collected in four weeks, providing time for analysis
- Six distributors selected for interviews, providing qualitative comments

2/4 Content

- Seven feature articles written
- Articles placed in UK and US trade media, leading to several commissions, interview requests and additional coverage
- Five press releases for product launches/show previews

Articles were uploaded to company website. Using a MailChimp RSS, all articles automatically sent to TM Robotics' distributor network.

We also created social updates for Twitter/LinkedIn and monthly e-mail newsletters for distributors.

3/4 Partnership launch

Press conference held on 10 April at TM Robotics stand at MACH 2018, attracting 15 journalists.

- E-mail invitations sent to journalists two-months in advance, including partnership announcement release
- Core journalists followed-up with calls. Seven separate meetings were arranged for those not attending
- We provided PR support/media training at conference

4/4 Generating sales leads

- 'Politics of Automation' whitepaper written and designed
- Whitepaper uploaded to landing page, with SEO to drive traffic using searchable keywords; industry 4.0, collaborative robots, robot technologies, industrial robots, robot tax
- Landing page included sign-up form to collect e-mails
- Google AdWords campaign encouraged visits
- We advised AdWords budget and maintained campaign

Measurement and evaluation:

Objective 1: Undertake Global Robotics Report

- 14.2% response-rate for survey (exceeded target by 4.2%)
- Responses collected from 22 countries (exceeding target) — including key markets UK, US, Russia, South Africa, Canada, France, Italy, Germany
- 37.4% open-rate (exceeding Mailchimp industry average 18.3%)
- 11.6% click-rate (exceeding Mailchimp industry average 2.1%)

The Global Robotics Report enabled the creation of thought-leading, authoritative content, used for rest of campaign.

Objective 2: Raise media profile

167 clippings: 31 print, 125 online (253% of target)

- 143 UK clippings, 24 US clippings
- 18 print clippings of full-page or more
- 207,130 online views across UK and US, according to CoverageBook
- Coverage highlights: The Times, The Manufacturer, Industrial Technology, Control Engineering Europe and US, Assembly Magazine, Automation World

Objective 3: Promote partnership

- Seven pre-arranged journalist meetings held with TM Robotics managing director
 - Adam Offord, Manufacturing Management
 - Michelle Lea, Process and Control
 - Andy Pye, Controls, Drives and Automation

- Suzanne Gill, Control Engineering Europe
- Paige West, Design, Products and Applications
- Jon Severn, Machine Building
- Neil Mead, Automation
- 15 additional journalists attended press conference because of e-mail invitations
- 17 RARUK clippings generated over 4-weeks (188% of target)

Objective 4: Generate sales leads

Politics of Automation whitepaper was made available to download 14-May 2018. These figures illustrate 2-weeks following launch:

- £0.53 cost-per-click from Google AdWords (59% lower than target)
- 3.77k impressions
- 73 clicks-throughs to landing page
- 8 whitepaper downloads, 4 were actionable sales leads (average lead for TM Robotics is worth £15k-£200k)

Objective 5: Improve digital marketing

Twitter:

- 121,612 impressions, 4,955 profile visits
- 633 new followers (132.6% of target)
- 73 click-throughs to website

LinkedIn:

- 71,786 impressions
- 529 new followers (105.8% of target)
- 669 click-throughs
- Four articles posted, generating 322 views, 84 comments, 14 shares

E-mail:

- 36 campaigns sent, 6,140 e-mails in total
- 32.1% average open-rate (exceeding 18.1% target)
- 5.5% average click-rate (exceeding 2.1% industry average), equating to 283 clicks, each one to be followed up as a lead