



Category: Low Budget Campaign

Company: The McOnie Agency

Entry title: Will Robots steal our jobs?

Brief and objectives:

Robots are stealing our jobs and machines are taking over the world... that's according to recent headlines. According to the news, Britain's future labour market is full of doom and gloom, particularly within the manufacturing sector, where levels of automation and robotics are rising significantly. A story running in January 2017 reported that MEPs were calling for regulation to ensure the safe and ethical application of robots across the EU.

However, the Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors (CIEHF) and its members working in international organisations such as BAE, Rolls Royce and Amazon, does not think this is the case. CIEHF believes Human Factors and Ergonomics (HF&E) can improve robotic design, upskill employees and deliver a more efficient business.

But, along with the CIEHF, HF&E are less well known and our brief was to overcome that.

Our aim was to raise awareness of CIEHF and ensure UK businesses and manufacturers were including Human Factors (HF) in their planning processes and on their boardroom agendas.

The CIEHF wanted a smart campaign that sought to:

- Raise awareness of the CIEHF and HF&E
- Lead debate that promotes HF and robotics in the workplace
- Position the CIEHF as THE expert in HF&E
- Encourage businesses, particularly manufacturers, to consider HF&E within their design processes
- Engage with CIEHF members and stakeholders, and demonstrate PR value
- Deliver content for multiple communications channels eg social media, e-marketing, newsletters, and national events.

Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:

We commissioned research into automation within manufacturing and how robotics were perceived. We targeted 30,000 executives working in the manufacturing sector. We identified that there was limited positive information available, which provided an opportunity to lead debate and present a new side of the story.

We needed solid evidence that would gain national attention. Whilst the CIEHF boasted a number of HF experts in the manufacturing sector, the institute needed to justify its belief that the scaremongering headlines were dubious, and that HF can increase the benefits that

automation and robotics bring to workplaces. We also aimed to arm the CIEHF with fresh information that could be presented at the Institute's manufacturing conference, to reinvigorate members and engage with stakeholders.

With low brand awareness, we suggested CIEHF collaborate with a well-known brand to provide credible endorsement and increase media interest. Budgets were limited, so the partnership had to be mutually beneficial.

Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:

We wanted to make people question the national headlines. A clear solution was to establish first-hand experiences of those working in the manufacturing sector. What did they think? However, the CIEHF couldn't afford to conduct its own research and so our team researched UK brands that had access to a manufacturing database.

We approached CV-Library, one of the UK's largest job sites and an established brand of 16 years. The business owns the UK's largest CV database, containing more than 11.6 million registrants, and had the potential to target over 406,000 manufacturing workers at all levels.

We negotiated a survey collaboration that provided CIEHF with sole use of the resulting data, providing CV-Library was cited. CV-Library was so keen to be part of the project that it also agreed to conduct the survey free of charge, utilising its own database, software systems and in-house teams.

Implementation of tactics:

The research was conducted at the end of February 2017. Our team devised the survey, strategically selecting response options such as multiple-choice, yes/no answers and free text replies. This provided full control of the results, ensuring responses could be easily analysed and cross-referenced, whilst still including open opinion.

Over 1,000 manufacturing professionals responded and confirmed the CIEHF's beliefs; robots are not stealing UK jobs. We analysed the data, created a compelling narrative, and liaised with national newspapers to secure an exclusive story. To ensure the CIEHF was ready for media interviews, we also produced a full data report and briefed spokespeople in advance. The week before we released the results of our survey, a story appeared in the national news claiming that robots are stealing jobs – our results provided the perfect counterbalance to this argument with hard data to support it.

We prepared a compelling press release for broader distribution, Q+As for press enquiries and tailored statements for national, regional and trade media.

To support stakeholder engagement, a record of PR activity and research results were provided to the Institute's Trustees, clearly demonstrating ROI.

The survey results delivered so much detail that we were able to exceed client expectations by delivering three additional storyline suggestions, maximising the longevity of the project. The additional stories are due to run under the CIEHF's retainer activity in the coming months, adding significant value to both the annual PR campaign and client/agency relationship.

Measurement and evaluation:

- 39 pieces of coverage were generated, reaching an audience of over 10 million

- Coverage was achieved in a range of national, regional and sector titles including The Daily Telegraph, Virgin.com, Business Insider, The Manufacturer, Gas International, Recruitment International and The HR Director
- Quality was measured through a gold, silver and bronze ranking system that we devised, ranking media in importance to the client. The aim was to secure 50% of coverage in gold and silver publications; we achieved 65%
- Twitter alone generated over 11,250 page impressions with new followers from influential sources such as the CIPD (93,500 followers). Engagement improved in the manufacturing and engineering communities
- Trust between CIEHF members and our agency increased – academics at the Institute respected the team's tenacity and thoroughness of our research
- The client/agency relationship was strengthened
- The campaign was instrumental in communicating a different perspective on automation in manufacturing and placing HF and the CIEHF on the media map.

Budget and cost effectiveness:

- The total project cost was £3,150 - all PR fee, no 'bought in' costs
- Advocacy of our team, PR and communications from CIEHF members and stakeholders was strengthened
- Three additional PR stories were provided for the CIEHF's annual PR campaign
- The CIEHF was able to utilise content and data across a multitude of marketing disciplines
- The CIEHF has full ownership and rights to all survey results for their entire lifetime.