

## Creating a servitization thought leader through PR

## At a glance

**As the UK manufacturing industry rises to the challenges of Industry 4.0, one precision engineering business has already positioned itself as an industry leader following a six-month strategic PR and marketing campaign that has resulted in a key trade magazine visit, over £15,000 worth of trade press coverage, two award nominations, and more than 200 new and relevant social media followers.**

MNB Precision has made an extraordinary impact on the UK manufacturing sector, telling its servitization story through industry PR specialist Bridge PR & Media Services. As a result, the company's director has been asked to speak on the subject for a number of high level industry events, and the business is starting to diversify its services into vibrant new markets.

Established over 35 years ago, MNB Precision is a family run business based in Coventry, which provides manufacturing and precision engineering services to world leading companies across the oil and gas, power generation, rail, aerospace and other manufacturing industries.



**Engineering future manufacturing:** MNB Precision has been working with Bridge PR & Media Services to become a thought leader in servitization and Industry 4.0.

### Objectives:

- To position MNB Precision as a servitization thought leader.
- To raise the company's profile in sectors including rail and engineering.
- Build relationships between MNB Precision and its key target media.
- Grow MNB Precision's social communities and engage with key manufacturing influencers online.

### Challenges:

- Raising awareness of the MNB brand for the first time.
- Utilising multiple media platforms to successfully reach a diverse audience.
- Educating the engineering sector about servitization and the benefits it can deliver.

### Results and benefits:

- Achieving over £15,000 worth of press coverage in key publications.
- Two exclusive features in *The Manufacturer* magazine.
- Press coverage in a wide range of manufacturing and vertical publications.
- More than 200 new social media followers, and many more since.
- Helping MNB Precision become finalists for two prestigious awards.

Specialising in precision engineering, the company was one of the very first UK manufacturing businesses to embark on a servitization programme with Aston Centre for Servitization and Research, and one of a handful of companies to come out the other side having realised notable benefits from the transition.

### **Gaining press attention with a service-based approach**

Servitization is the term coined for the transition from a product-led business model towards a service-led business model. It involves firms developing the capabilities they need to provide services and solutions that supplement their traditional product offerings. In the drive for the UK manufacturing industry to compete in the age of the fourth industrial revolution, a servitized business model can result in greater customer loyalty, stronger market differentiation and a more diverse revenue base that is less reliant on new product sales.

For MNB Precision, servitization made the business look very closely at the services it offered its customers in order to ascertain how providing additional services would make the business more effective. A specialist in CNC machining, jig boring, spark and wire erosion and grinding, MNB was already offering an impressive range of services to its customers. But in order to strengthen this further, it identified some of the services it was having to outsource in order to bring a complete machining capability in-house, all under one roof.

The business invested heavily in new premises, moving from four disparate locations to one single factory and eliminating all the issues regarding communication flow that this brought.



**Transitioning to a service led business model:** As part of its servitization strategy, MNB Precision relocated from disparate premises to one single site.

It embarked on a programme to upskill its existing workforce to equip them with the skills they need to operate new machinery and deliver new services. Experienced professionals at Bridge PR quickly identified that MNB's story offered a different take on servitization that many businesses were not even exploring; the idea of servitizing a business model at the beginning of the customer journey, rather than adding advanced services on to the end of it.

As an industry specialist agency, Bridge prides itself on both the team's ability to identify a new industry story, and the strong relationships it has with key media in the sectors in which it operates. The business pitched MNB's story to The Manufacturer magazine and hosted a visit by the publication's Web Editor to the new premises so they could hear first-hand about MNB's servitization journey.

The editor was so captivated by the company's story, that the magazine ran two individual features on the company in both the printed edition and online; one focusing on the company's move to larger premises and the other looking in depth at the company's approach to servitization.



**Hitting the headlines:** Bridge arranged for *The Manufacturer* to visit MNB Precision to meet the team and hear all about their great servitization success story.

**A story which fueled many more news angles**

For MNB Precision, servitization is more than just a premises move; it's a philosophy which is ingrained into the culture of the business and one which is helping the business to continue to evolve its services to customers. It also triggered a change in thinking throughout the organisation.

A family-run business now in its third generation, the company had traditionally focused most of its efforts on the oil and gas sector, but the recent downturn in oil and gas and subsequent drop in prices was making it difficult to grow the business through this sector alone. As a result, the company started looking at other markets that it could service, viewing PR and marketing as an effective way to promote the MNB brand in new sectors.

The business had already started working with Clayton Equipment, one of the oldest locomotive manufacturing businesses in the UK, and was keen to associate itself with such a strong brand in the rail sector.

A press release angled around MNB Precision's move into the rail sector and how its business model suits companies in this industry was featured by a number of publications, including *Engineering Capacity* and further coverage in *The Manufacturer*. Additional news articles on the company's apprenticeship scheme and a unique prototype it created for the climbing market also found coverage, worth over £14,000 in advertising cost equivalent. This gave a consistent brand presence for MNB Precision across trade publications including *Industrial Director*, *Production Engineering Solutions*, *Engineering Specifier* and more.

**Generating topical conversations on social media**

Key to the success of MNB Precision is the culture that the business has. It invests in its people, and proudly claims to have a team of world class precision engineers; the Barcelona FC equivalent in engineering. But it's not been an easy journey to reach Champions League level. Like many manufacturing businesses, MNB is constantly facing industry challenges and few quite as problematic as the industry-wide skills gap.

The company does have its industry champions though, people such as Manmeet Bhandal, who is the fourth generation of his family to complete an apprenticeship at Midland Group Training Services and later go onto a career in engineering.

His story is not typical of the education system, however. Manmeet grew up within a family of engineers, with the career promoted to him as a viable and exciting one. The majority of engineers in education are from different backgrounds and rarely is a career in the sector advocated by teachers and academics.





Luke Benton  
Managing Director at MNB Precision Ltd

Following

### Why education is causing a problem in engineering

Mar 11, 2016 | 2,828 views | 33 Likes | 11 Comments | [in](#) [f](#) [t](#)

**Starting conversations:** Utilising LinkedIn Pulse, Bridge helped MNB begin interesting conversations about the skills gap in engineering, drawing comments from fellow manufacturers and even academics.

Bridge PR put together a LinkedIn article for MNB Precision's Managing Director, sharing his thoughts and opinions on the state of engineering skills coming through the education system, and sharing his opinions on how to improve the situation. The resulting post attracted over 2,800 views, drawing comment and opinion from other manufacturing leaders, students and even a head teacher.

In fact, MNB Precision's social media profiles were boosted significantly from the six-month campaign. As the manufacturing and engineering community continues to embrace social media channels, more and more businesses are using platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter to voice their views. Bridge made a conscious effort to keep MNB's social media profiles regularly replenished with fresh and industry relevant content throughout the six-month campaign.

This, together with targeted community following and the media focus around the company helped to grow MNB's Twitter followers by over 220 within the first four months of the campaign.

### Award winning PR and marketing campaigns

It's clear that MNB Precision enjoyed a number of tangible benefits from its PR and marketing campaign, but what was the effect on the overall brand? As one of few engineering businesses to come out and tell its servitization story and reveal some of the tangible business benefits that the company achieved, the business quickly became viewed as a servitization thought leader. Hennik Group, the business behind *The Manufacturer* magazine, even asked the company's Managing Director to tell his story at two of its flagship industry servitization events.

In addition to this, support from Bridge on two awards applications resulted in MNB Precision being named a finalist for both. As well as being nominated for the Supply Chain Excellence category in the National Export Excellence Awards, MNB was also named a finalist for Training and Apprenticeships in the Insider Made in the Midlands awards, two prestigious honours for the business.

Luke Benton, Managing Director at MNB said: *"We needed a company that is world class in the industry of PR. We teamed up with Bridge PR. Their approach certainly has synergy with how MNB like to go about things, they have the same philosophy. Bridge offers a personal approach that is proactive and knowledgeable. The dedicated team delivers on time and with a quality that regularly surpasses expectations. Bridge have opened doors for MNB that we didn't even know were available to us."*