

Panton McLeod



The Client

Panton McLeod is a respected water quality engineering specialist. It supplies products and services to the UK drinking water industry, primarily for use in the inspection, cleaning and maintenance of drinking water structures.

These structures include supply pipelines, water treatment works and service reservoirs, which are large underground water tanks that are virtually unknown among the public they serve.

The drinking water sector is more heavily regulated than the nuclear power industry, so professional reputation is vital to the specialist firms which have access to the public supply.

Brief

Panton McLeod approached Holyrood PR in 2004 as a last throw of the dice, having worked previously with two other PR agencies which failed to achieve any media coverage.

The challenge was to raise the profile of the company among a very niche audience – professionals in the drinking water sector who commission cleaning, inspection and maintenance services.

While it was clear that earning coverage in the specialist drinking water media would be crucial, it was also agreed that reputationally-sensitive water companies were responsive to positive coverage in the regional and national media.

From a standing start it was agreed to begin an immediate profile-raising in trade media – while also trying for the ‘Holy Grail’, by achieving positive coverage in the general media, widely seen as indifferent to water utility stories.

What we did

Instead of focusing on Panton McLeod’s cleaning products and services in a crowded market, we sought to differentiate the company by catching the public imagination. We did this by:

- Launching a ‘mission to inform’ the public about the nationwide network of huge water tanks hidden underground – including some service reservoirs the size of cathedrals



- Focusing on the remotely controlled robot – the only one of its type in the UK – which enables Panton McLeod to clean tanks without disrupting supplies to homes and businesses.
- Pointing out the cleaning robot’s likeness to popular Disney-Pixar character Wall.E – and providing side-by-side comparison images

In a sector seen as uninteresting to the public and heavy with technical jargon, this approach proved refreshing and resulted in extensive coverage in all target publications.

It also provided a platform for a far wider diet of stories, including contract wins, emergency jobs caused by flooding or fresh water mussel infestations, and profiles of key staff.

We also enabled Panton McLeod to diversify into new sectors, by highlighting how its services were available to industries where water cooling towers are widely used. In fact, our coverage generated business leads from the nuclear, petrochemical and food processing sectors.

Results

Panton McLeod has grown consistently since 2004, with the executive team crediting positive media coverage as a vital element in opening doors to win business with water companies across the UK.

To date we have secured at least 349 significant items of media coverage, including:

- 161 articles in specialist water press
- 112 pieces of local and national press coverage
- 35 pieces of business press coverage
- 41 pieces of other coverage (including BBC Online)

Sample signed-off
media release



Panton McLeod

Media Release ... Media Release ... Media Release

PANTON MCLEOD USES WALL-E ROBOT TO KEEP WATER ON TRACK IN DUNOON

A Scots firm has pioneered an innovative robot with an uncanny resemblance to Disney's Wall-E character to keep water supplies safe.

Borders-based firm Panton McLeod has been working with Scottish Water and using the innovative machine – known as a VR600 – in order to clean a network of huge underground tanks located across Scotland.

The facilities are part of a network of water structures, often hidden from public view, that are involved in delivering drinking water to millions of homes and businesses throughout the country.

Despite being out of sight, the large water containers have to be maintained to the highest standards. Traditionally such tanks could only be closely inspected or cleaned if they were emptied to allow experts inside - a time-consuming process that can prove costly and increase the risk of customers being left without water for short periods.

But by using the revolutionary robot, Panton McLeod is able to carry out the cleaning work without any need to take the tanks out of service or with any risk of interrupting supplies to consumers.

In its most recent job, the firm, which is the UK's leading water cleaning engineer, used the remotely-operated robot to clean a total of six service reservoirs across Argyll & Bute.

The facilities in the Dunoon area included service reservoirs at Rashfield and Bishop's Glen, where the VR600 was used in order to reduce manganese levels in the structures and ensure that the purity of the water continued to be exceptionally high.

Graeme Connor, Scottish Water's operations team leader in the Dunoon area, said: "We were delighted to work with Panton McLeod as part of our efforts to tackle the problem of manganese in the network."

"We chose to work with them because of their expertise in tank cleaning and because this novel way of carrying out the work helped minimise disruption to our customers in the area."

"The tank cleaning has now been completed and we are very pleased with Panton again."

Paul Henderson, Operations Director with Panton McLeod, added: "We regularly carry out work for some of the biggest water firms across the UK, and we often use our underwater robots to ensure these big storage tanks are clean."

"We've been using the VR600 machine for a number of years but it was only after the Disney film came out last summer that people started referring to it as our WALL-E robot."

"Now, whenever we've used it to clean service reservoirs across the UK, we get people from the water companies coming up to us commenting on the likeness – and we've even been called the 'WALL-E guys' by some of them. It's also gone down really well with our kids, who love the fact that their dads have a WALL-E robot at work."

"WALL-E was a waste management robot, so in that respect our machine is very similar and we try promote the same environmental message that the film does. The VR600 prevents wastage, as we treat all of water on site and return it into rivers, so the only thing left to dispose of is the condensed sludge that comes out of the tanks."

"In this instance, the tanks in Dunoon could not be taken off-line easily, which meant there was no chance of sending in a team to drain and manually clean the tank with chemicals."

"However, our technology means we can carry out a thorough clean while ensuring the supply through the reservoir is totally unaffected. We remotely control the VR600 and it cleans the tank while the water is still in use."

Panton McLeod, which has offices in Nottingham and the Scottish Borders, is one of the best-known names in the industry, working with the biggest water companies on the inspection, cleaning and repair of drinking water structures.

The firm's VR600 robot is a large-tracked machine that is manoeuvred along the floor of a service reservoir and cleans away any sediment or impurities in the water. It can also be used to inspect the condition of the water tanks, including checking the walls and pipework for corrosion or damage.

The unit is remotely operated and fitted with camera and lighting equipment, which allows staff controlling the sub to assess the interior of the tanks. It is also meticulously treated to ensure it can be safely used in the public water supply, and Panton McLeod conducts rigorous tests before and after each inspection.

ENDS

Issued on behalf of Panton McLeod by the Holyrood Partnership. For more information, contact Adrian Mather on 0131 561 2244 or info@holyroodpr.co.uk

