

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN **PUBLIC RELATIONS 2020**



Best Corporate Communication

Best B2B Campaign



Pictured at the official opening of the Cork office was Steve Demetriou, Chair and CEO, Jacobs. Photo by Julien Behal Photography.

Campaign

Building the Jacobs brand in Ireland

Description of Campaign

Jacobs is a leader in project delivery for advanced facilities, environmental and infrastructure clients. In 2019, the company marked 45 years in Ireland by setting an ambitious growth plan. Edelman was appointed to devise a B2B programme to drive a 12% year-on-year sales increase – with no ATL support.



Public Relations Consultant

Edelman

Jacobs

Client

Jacobs

Background to the Campaign

Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, Jacobs works at the coalface to solve some of the world's most critical problems. It leads on the design, project management and delivery of large-scale infrastructure projects and advanced facilities, including pharmaceutical and biotechnology manufacturing plants, data centres and semiconductor manufacturers. In Ireland, Jacobs is one of the country's largest project delivery firms, employing more than 1,100 people.

In 2019, Jacobs had a 45-year legacy of delivering transformative projects in Ireland. Now it is accelerating: the company doubled its Irish footprint between 2014-2019, fuelled by growth in new service offerings. However, there was low awareness of Jacobs' end-to-end capabilities.

To continue to grow in a competitive and highly-fragmented market, Jacobs needed to address two key challenges:

1. Deepen client and other stakeholder understanding of its full-service Engineering, Procurement and Construction Management (EPCM) solutions. This integrated project delivery approach is relatively new

for clients who tend to partner with multiple contractors, rather than appointing a single source of responsibility for all aspects of the contract. Jacobs needed to educate clients about the benefits of integrated project delivery – reduced risk and increased value for money – to ensure it was being considered for full-service EPCM projects.

2. Expansion into Europe and The Nordics was a core aspect of Jacobs five-year growth strategy. As such, reaching international prospects to promote how Jacobs Ireland can execute and deliver EPCM projects globally was a priority.

Jacobs had not previously engaged in public relations activity in Ireland, so media and stakeholder relationships were underdeveloped. Edelman's Dublin team was engaged to support profiling across key global industry media as well as domestic platforms. With no scope for above-the-line activity, the campaign would rely solely on earned prominence.

Statement of Objectives

The brief to Edelman was clear: develop a B2B programme to differentiate Jacobs in the market and increase brand consideration, with a view to driving a minimum 12% year on year increase in sales. The 2019/2020 programme had to positively impact RFP invitations, contract wins and cross selling. The campaign should positively influence C-suite decision makers and procurement managers, leading them to consider Jacobs for multi-million-euro infrastructure and advanced facility projects in both government and the private sector.

The team knew that a clear demonstration of Jacobs' capabilities and credibility was key to achieving this. It would necessitate clear storytelling, showcasing Jacobs' diverse work for existing clients. The job to do was not just to increase top of mind awareness of Jacobs with audiences, but to capture attention long enough to explain what makes Jacobs unique in the marketplace. This was to be achieved by:

- Increasing Jacobs story placement in relevant media titles by 100% (Irish and international trade & tier one national media). Validated by 25 pieces of earned coverage in targeted print & online publications consumed by C-Suite Decision makers and procurement managers.
- Reach an audience of 8 million through earned media.
- Raising the profile of Jacobs executives relevantly with the audience evidenced by four executive profile opportunities (media or events) in venues relevant to target audience.
- Devising a strategic thought leadership platform to showcase Jacobs' safety culture and engage industry stakeholders on the topic of construction safety – engaging at least 20 clients.
- Leveraging Jacobs' Cork office opening to maximise positive perceptions of Jacobs among existing clients, prospects, and industry partners. This required engagement from a minimum of 12 clients, plus one opinion forming national media placement.

Programme Planning and Strategy

Our primary objective was to influence C-suite and procurement managers' purchasing behaviours. For the latest insights into B2B buyers' motivation, the team assessed the findings of an ongoing Edelman-LinkedIn study of over 3,000 global business decision-makers, which showed that:

- 89% of those surveyed believe that thought leadership is effective at enhancing their perceptions of an organisation.
- 59% say an organisation's thought leadership is a more trustworthy basis for assessing its capabilities than its marketing materials.
- 49% agree that quality thought leadership positively influences their purchasing decisions.

Armed with insight, Edelman collaborated with Jacobs to devise a multi-layered B2B programme to cut through to the audience. This combined direct customer engagement, mainstream and trade media, executive profiling, and stakeholder events – all to position Jacobs as informed and insightful thought leaders.

Our strategy leveraged the study truths to inform our approach:

1. Strong thought leadership must be closely mapped to customer needs

Edelman began by working with the senior leadership team to define a brand position and core narrative for Jacobs Ireland, that was rooted in a genuine understanding of their clients' challenges. We used our proprietary PRISM tool to generate ideas and establish content. The resulting narrative captured Jacobs' technical excellence and market-leading customer value proposition. It also responded to Jacobs' clients' focus on sustainability by highlighting the company's social impact. The same process-driven approach was applied to content development. Edelman engaged with Jacobs' subject matter experts through a series of Technologist Workshops, to tease out and establish the burning issues across client verticals. Objective analysis helped us translate information and insights into topical thought leadership content.

2. Decision-makers want to know where their industry is going

Jacobs helps clients to solve complex challenges that are often yet to be defined. To showcase these credentials, Edelman worked with Jacobs to bring their thought leadership ambition to life through a robust profiling programme combining project storytelling and technical thought leadership in tier one trade media and industry events. Having researched and shaped our key narrative messages, we were able to connect Jacobs' experts to credible Irish and international forums. This included prominent speaker placements at:

- Future in Pharmaceuticals (Dublin, May 1st, 2019).
- The Construction Industry Federation Safety Summit (Dublin, October 2019).
- Lean Construction Ireland (Dublin, October 3rd, 2019).
- Data Centres Ireland (Dublin, November 19th-20th, 2019).
- Beyond IoT conference (Cork, January 20th-21st, 2020).

Bylined articles were placed in Irish and international industry titles consumed by our target audiences – contractors, project owners, engineers, architects & government regulators – including:

- Engineering News Record.
- Construction Europe.
- Contract Pharma.
- Irish Building Magazine.
- Pharma Manufacturing.
- Pharmaceutical Engineering.

We also ensured prominent amplification of Jacobs' industry awards achievements, including Engineering News Record Project of the Year, ISPE's Facility of the Year Awards and Irish Construction Excellence Awards – underlining Jacobs' success at the cutting-edge of project delivery.

3. Being a trusted source is key to driving thought leadership engagement

To engender trust, we needed to humanise the brand. As Jacobs had not engaged in communications activity before, there was an opportunity to reveal the stories of people explaining ground-breaking projects. Edelman worked alongside Jacobs to identify a cross-section of storytellers - from national leaders to Irish colleagues working internationally and recent graduates. By shaping and promoting their stories, we were able to achieve multiple earned placements.

The 45th anniversary of Jacobs Ireland and the launch of its newly refurbished Cork office gave us a real opportunity to share Jacobs' growth narrative and deepen trust across the stakeholder base. Edelman collaborated with Jacobs to devise an event attended by over 120 including clients, industry representatives, political stakeholders, and media. Minister Michael Creed joined Jacobs Chair and CEO Steve Demetriou to officially open the Cork office and announce the creation of 200 new jobs, followed by a technology showcase to bring Jacobs' work to life.

Edelman targeted a Sunday Times profile with the Jacobs CEO as well as an on-the-day interview on RTÉ Morning Ireland with General Manager of Jacobs Ireland.

This set the scene for considerable on-the-day and next-day media coverage.

There were five broadcast placements, while the press release, featuring quotes from Minister Creed and the IDA, was widely carried, resulting in four national print pieces and 26 online hits including 'Most read article on Independent.ie'.

The announcement drove strong organic social traction including posts from the American Chamber, Daniel Mulhall (Ireland's Ambassador to the USA), the IDA and Construction Industry Federation. Key messages from Jacobs' newly developed core narrative featured prominently throughout coverage.

Earned coverage reached more than 20 million – marking a step-change in how Jacobs was seen, trusted, and understood across Ireland.

4. Capitalise on White Space

Edelman had to find opportunities to differentiate the Jacobs brand and lead timely conversations. In addition to ongoing industry thought-leadership activity, Jacobs recognized the opportunity for a marquee platform to engage stakeholders: a safety symposium that would advance safety standards throughout the industry.

To bring this ambition to life Edelman and Jacobs worked hand in hand to devise and deliver a concept, in the form of the company's inaugural Safety Symposium. This attracted 165 attendees, with representation from 32 Jacobs clients, along with a diverse mix of industry stakeholders. Dr. Sharon McGuinness, CEO of the Health & Safety Authority was secured as keynote speaker, followed by a panel chaired by Matt Cooper and featuring Jacobs' global health & safety lead, Catriona Schmolke, Mayo County footballer and Jacobs Culture Manager Tom Parsons, and Jacobs client Tideway.

With the Symposium bringing the industry together to elevate safety standards, positive coverage was achieved in the Irish Independent and industry trade publications, with a combined reach of over 800,000 further strengthening Jacobs' position as a safety thought leader. The positive response from stakeholders included immediate requests from Jacobs' clients for follow-up engagement, to help strengthen their own safety practices.

The event concept will be rolled out in other markets in due course.

By focusing our efforts around these four clear drivers, the 12-month integrated B2B programme delivered both its primary objective and all communications KPIs.

Measurement

Business objectives

Primary Objective: Drive a 12% year on year sales increase by positively impacting major RFP invitations, contract wins and cross-selling.

- **Result:** Exceeded. Delivered 20% year on year sales increase.

Communications KPIs

Objective: Increasing Jacobs story placement in relevant media titles by 100%. Validated by 25 pieces of earned coverage in targeted print & online publications consumed by C-suite decision makers and procurement managers.

- **Result:** Exceeded by 120%. Delivered 55 pieces of earned coverage in target media.

Objective: Reach an audience of 8 million through earned media.

- **Result:** Exceeded by 277%. Achieved total reach of 30.1 million across national, local and specialist media during twelve-month period.

Objective: Raising the profile of Jacobs' people relevantly with the audience, evidenced by four executive profile opportunities.

- **Result:** Exceeded by 300%. Delivered 12 profile opportunities across specialist trade media and events and top-tier national news and business media.

Objective: Devising a strategic thought leadership platform to showcase Jacobs' safety culture – engaging at least 20 clients.

- **Result:** Exceeded by 60%. Devised and delivered Inaugural Safety Symposium event with attendance by 32 clients (165 attendees in total). Additionally, delivered positive story placement in the Irish Independent and targeted outlets including Irish Building Magazine, Construction News and Engineers Journal.

Objective: Leveraging Cork office opening to maximise positive perceptions of Jacobs among clients, prospects and industry. Engagement from 12 clients, plus one opinion forming national media placement.

- **Result:** Exceeded. Delivered stakeholder event with attendance by 20 clients, exceeding KPI by 66%. Additionally, positive story placement secured in 16 national media outlets, including profile interviews in Sunday Times and on RTÉ Morning Ireland.

KANTAR

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