

## Case Study:

# FEDERATION OF PILING SPECIALISTS

## A Louder Voice and Lobbying Success

The Federation of Piling Specialists (FPS) was formed in 1964, and during its 50+ years it has provided all the functions normally associated with a trade association, namely, setting standards for the piling and geotechnical sector, facilitating communication between Members, providing information to both Members and the wider construction sector, lobby on behalf of the Membership and the wider sector, as well as championing the commercial interests of specialist subcontractors. Although Membership of the organisation has consistently been less than 20 companies, the Federation is relatively well known. In comparison with many larger Associations representing specialist trades, the FPS is considered to generally punch above its weight.

Having plateaued in its achievements, the FPS set a number of objectives for itself, including membership growth, to be known for more than just 'piling', but primarily exert greater influence on the piling and wider construction industry, as well as engage with various stakeholders on issues that interest or impact the Federation.

Jooce was invited to propose a number of solutions to help the Federation achieve its objectives, in addition to providing general media, PR and marketing support functions. Its proposed ideas were accepted and Jooce was appointed [in 2013] to action its proposal.

Jooce's first task was to identify the key issues facing the Federation and set about building a

series of messages that could be sent out to the media. Typical issues included fair payments, skills shortages, and the free-movement of labour, an issue that became more pertinent with the UK voting to leave the EU as a result of the so-called 'Brexit' vote.

Having identified the key issues, Jooce established a schedule of regular press releases, by-lined article and response features, all designed to increase the weight the FPS was placing on these issues in comparison to other trade bodies. In fact, following the implementation of the campaign, the FPS was considered by many in the media as leading the conversation on such issues, such that during the campaign the FPS was invited to give evidence at the All Party Parliamentary Group for Excellence (APPGE) in the Built Environment Report. The APPGE was established to examine the impact of Brexit on the future skills needed in the construction industry, recommending measures that need to be put in place to address them.

The increasing voice of the FPS and what it represents, was fundamental to it having input on this inquiry and reflected its growing influence since appointing Jooce on the wider construction/and political stage.

In addition, with one of the FPS' aims to increase membership, given the limited number of possible 'pure' piling companies, Jooce suggested establishing an Associate Membership level, which would open the Federation up to suppliers, manufacturers and those working in the wider geotechnical sector. This initiative has been extremely successful, with the FPS having secure many new members through this route.

The general PR and marketing support provided by Jooce has also seen the FPS grow in status, as well as being seen as the voice, not only for the piling industry, but also for the wider geotechnical sector and specialist contractors.

