

Making a mark on the international fuel distribution market

How, in a matter of weeks, did the UK's fuel distribution market meet the demands of the first change to fuel marking rules in two decades?

John Hogg Technical Solutions – in conjunction with public relations partner, Metamorphic PR – ensured the market was both engaged and ready for regulatory change.

The Europe-wide change in regulations for marking fuel needed an operational and communications campaign to inform, educate and engage the B2B fuel distribution market in the final weeks of 2023.

Though the EU had announced revised regulations for a new fuel marker two years before the January 2024 deadline, the UK approach – governed by HMRC and likely to be affected by the Windsor Framework for Northern Ireland – was still awaiting confirmation in late 2023.

John Hogg – a market leader in fuel marking technology and solvent dye manufacturing – was already supporting fuel distribution companies in the EU to switch to the new fuel marking regime. And, with HMRC's permission, it could inform the UK market of a potential change to the marking system, while highlighting its ability to support companies with the change.

James Page, Marketing Manager at the company said: "We wanted to be the leading voice informing and educating the market about the imminent change to the Euromarker regulations, while reinforcing our visibility and credibility as the industry thought leader."

A media strategy

To support this goal, John Hogg engaged Metamorphic PR – public relations and communications agency specialising in complex industries – to devise a simple but effective communications strategy.



Jon Clements, Metamorphic PR Director, explained: "This needed a two-stage media strategy, incorporating a news story and an in-depth, advisory article closely targeted to the key audience of UK

fuel distributors ahead of the regulatory deadline in the EU and the UK."

The news story – under the title "Fuel distributors to prepare for possible fuel marker change" – highlighted the imminent Euromarker change, while signalling an upcoming announcement from HMRC to confirm the UK's position.

The story, which featured in key industry publications including Fuel Oil News, also emphasised the operational actions needed for companies to be ready for any change and summarised the services and products available from John Hogg to help this process.

Advice and expertise

While HMRC formulated its policy and scheduled an announcement for the UK's updated fuel marking regulations, Metamorphic PR worked with John Hogg to create the framework for an in-depth, advisory article. This needed a fast turnaround for factual accuracy once new UK legislation was finalised and HMRC made it public.

The final article – "A changing of the guard in the UK fuel marking regime", published exclusively in Fuel Oil News – provided a definitive guide to UK businesses marking fuel for rebate and suppliers of rebated fuel.

This explained the new fuel marker – Accutrace Plus – and offered technical guidance for the range of fuel marker types and quantities required for compliance, along with implementation advice and the key deadline dates for companies to comply with the new regulations.

The article added insight into John Hogg's experience with EU companies and country regulators along with information about the company's new product range designed to meet the new regulations.

Achieving regulatory compliance and driving business

The Euromarker campaign had the desired impact: helping the fuel market meet new regulations and developing new business opportunities for John Hogg.

Both articles created by Metamorphic PR in conjunction with John Hogg were the top two viewed pages on the company's website from September 2023 - January 2024, along with significant website traffic driven by searches relating to Accutrace Plus.

The positive market response to the articles resulted in enquiries for John Hogg's new products from members of the UK and Ireland Fuel Distributors Association (UKIFDA) and companies' successful implementation of new products before the deadline.

James Page added: "One customer, seeing the extent of our PR activity about the Euromarker, asked if we had acquired our main competitor as they had been silent on the subject. The communications campaign helped to reiterate our position as the market leader for these products and the experts that are here to help.

"Implementing the new marker products by the January deadline was a significant challenge and wouldn't have been possible without the campaign and the engagement that it generated."

For further details visit johnhogg.co.uk and metamorphicpr.co.uk

