

# The use of technology

A vital industry working with automation



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It is widely recognised that the Cleaning and Hygiene industry is suffering a “severe” staff shortage, with the British Cleaning Council (BCC) warning “that the recruitment problems within the sector could hamper the nations recovery from Covid-19”.

In January 2022, OCS took part in a survey conducted by the BCC along with other service providers, the survey results indicated that vacancies have increased by 252% in a six-month period.

One of the biggest issues was employees moving to different sectors or leaving employment because they were foreign nationals returning home. The cleaning and hygiene industry has long been reliant on employees of all nationalities and overseas workers.

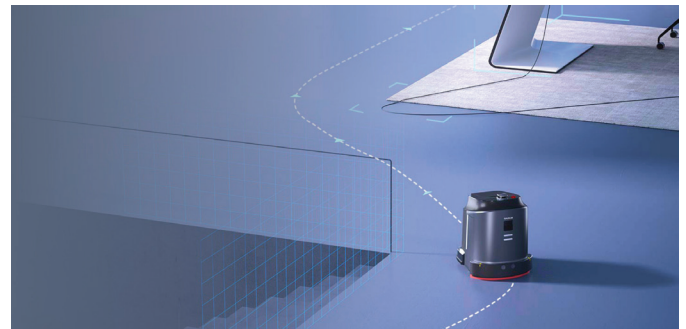
The impact of Brexit planned changes to immigration rules and Covid has put a large strain on our industries resources. The scale of the problem can vary from region to region. The labour force survey published through The Office for National Statistics in 2019 indicated an average 37% of the cleaning and hygiene industry workforce were from overseas, but in fact in the London region alone that actual figure is 62%.

The cleaning and hygiene industry has proven, during the Covid-19 pandemic, that we can react and implement changes to process and procedures quickly, enabling businesses to continue operating in safe, clean environments as the return to workplaces continues to ramp up.

As an industry, we must maintain the pressure on our government to recognise the level of skill required for the role, align with the essential role that our industry provides across all business sectors. There also are things our industry can do to alleviate the staff shortage pressure.

## Let’s talk about Robotics.

The future of cleaning lies in working smarter not harder, carrying out cleaning work is physically demanding with largely repetitive tasks. The market for autonomous robots is growing with all the main manufacturers either having robots in their armoury or at least developing one.



## Automation is a way in which you can streamline your staffing structure.

Based on market research that was published by the BCC in 2021 only 5% of people working in the cleaning industry were aged under 25, with 29% of our workforce over the age of 55. This clearly shows we have an ageing workforce and if action is not taken to introduce younger people into our industry, then we will need to rely on robotic automation to deliver cleaning services.

The need to embrace robotics can be costly so ensuring you get the most benefits out of your investment is pivotal to drive efficiencies. By having robots as part of a solution it can increase productivity, improve retention of a vital workforce, and can improve health and safety. By no means should we sell the use of robots to reduce labour, they need to become an integral part of the cleaning team, like I have said they are ideal to take on the repetitive and physically demanding tasks to remove the strain on an ageing workforce therefore moving the human workforce to do the more detailed tasks that create a bigger impact.

The robots of today also have a large impact on the environment by using approx. 50% less water and the technology in new age batteries also allow longer runtime and reduce the recharge time saving of up to 60%.



Most robots come integrated with a fully functional telemetry system and this data is valuable not only for ensuring their optimum performance but to improve productivity and deliver a consistent service.

This can also assist sales teams in choosing the right solution for bids that require more advanced technology and helps cleaning teams to increase efficiency, optimise operations times, reduce expenses, minimise the fleet size and to play a pivotal role in health and safety and provide a consistent delivery.

Robotic technology can enhance a company's brand by positioning them as an industry leader and it highlights their desire to improve process, increase sustainable practices and streamline operations.

OCS partner with the worlds leading manufacturer of Robotics, Gausium. Gausium distribute through our equipment supplier ICE, who are the Gausium's sole UK distributor.

As with everything, technology moves on. From the very first scrubber drier Robot back in 2014, manufactures have reviewed all repetitive tasks undertaken by a cleaning operative and produced large- and small-scale scrubber driers, vacuum cleaners and external/internal large sweeper.

This October will see the launch of the Phantas, the latest member to join the ICE Co-Botics family – a compact 4-in-1 machine that sweeps, vacuums, scrubs and dries.

**GAUSIUM**

# Phantas

All in One One for All

ISSA SHOW 2022 PRODUCTION AWARDS INNOVATION OF THE YEAR  
red dot winner 2022

**AT A GLANCE**

- + 4-in-1 floorcare solution
- + Most compact machine on the market
- + Floor type recognition
- + Self-mapping
- + Remote management
- + Service station - charges, empties, cleans and refills

The Phantas is a small machine with a 30 cm cleaning width that cleans right up to edges and corners, guaranteeing complete cleanliness. It is highly efficient and can clean effectively in tight spaces, narrow aisles and even under tables.

Along with hassle free mapping, smart obstacle avoidance and automated real time map updates the Phantas is able to identify different types of flooring and automatically adjust the cleaning mode required as well as connecting with the IoT system of a building enabling it to autonomously take elevators across floors.

OCS have obtained a full range of the ICE Co-botics, that are used solely for trials on OCS contracts, if you're interested in trialling any of the robots then please contact your OCS representative who will be happy to assist.

**ICE CO-BOTICS**

- + ICE Mini Bot - robotic vacuum with a charging hub that can charge up to 8 vacuums at one time.
- + Eco Bot 50+ - a compact scrubber dryer with water recycling capabilities, cloud based reporting, a self-dock charging system and a productivity rate of 1,500m<sup>2</sup>/h. Available in combi or sanitiser models.
- + Eco Bot 75 - a scrubber dryer with a water recycling system that reduces water usage by 70%.
- + UV Bot - an ultraviolet and fogging sanitising autonomous machine.
- + Eco Vac 40 - a robotic vacuum cleaner with a self dock charging system.
- + Eco Sweep 111 - a large sweeper for industrial and outdoor environments

In summary, as an industry facing staff shortage challenges, we are turning more to technology to provide the answers. We are also looking at technology that delivers on demand cleaning and replenishment as well as environmentally friendly products that removes the need for human intervention.