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60 Minutes PROGRAM ALARMS PUBLIC WITH INACCURATE REPORT ON THE ROBOTICS INDUSTRY

SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA, February 28, 2013 - - The familiar tick...tick...tick that opens each broadcast of the iconic 60 Minutes TV news magazine has earned a resounding tsk...tsk...tsk in the robotics world. In fact, so little time was devoted to accurate reporting in the show’s 13-minute-plus segment on robots and employment (or as they called it, “technological unemployment”), that the program deserved to be renamed “60 Seconds”.

If inaccuracies and false controversy constitute the price that a so-called news show must pay for generating higher ratings and boosting advertising rates, then reporter Steve Kroft, on behalf of “60 Seconds”, surely footed the bill…and then some. As a result, the disservice Mr. Kroft and company did to the public, as well as their lofty reputation, earned them (as learned and enlightened judges unanimously decided) the 2013 ‘Media’s Most Inaccurate Depiction of Robotics’ Award.

Here are just a few of the key facts that the “60 Seconds” segment chose not to report:

- A recently published study conducted by the market research firm Metra Martech entitled, “Positive Impact of Industrial Robots on Employment,” found that growth in robot use over the next five years will result in the creation of one million high-quality jobs around the world. Their belief is that robots will help to create jobs in some of the most critical industries of this century: consumer electronics, food, solar & wind power, and advanced battery manufacturing, to name just a few. In addition to the million jobs expected to be created by the increase in robotics, the report’s authors also noted that saving these manufacturing jobs also results in saving additional jobs throughout the community. The study concluded that one million industrial robots currently in operation have been directly responsible for the creation of close to three million jobs.
John Dulchinos, President and CEO of Adept Technologies, who was interviewed for the “60 Seconds” story, has provided plenty of data over the years that has been featured internationally, and supports findings similar to the Metra Martech study. However, none of these facts made it into the aired piece:

“It’s about increasing productivity.” explained Dulchinos. “In 1900, about 50 percent of the U.S. population was in farming. One farmer fed 2.5 persons. Today, less than five percent of the population is in farming, yet thanks to the growth of automation, one farmer can feed 155 people. Robots replace functions, but not jobs. For example, on average, a hospital nurse walks about seven miles a day, and one hospital, before using Adept’s autonomous mobile robot (similar to the functions of the reported TUG robot), moved 75% of specimens from collection to reporting within 75 minutes. After the robot installation, collection-to-reporting times dropped to 50 minutes 90% of the time.” Dulchinos has also emphasized downstreaming, citing a study published in Manufacturing Executive Leadership Journal which shows that as smart manufacturing advances, the employment multiplier significantly increases by indirectly creating
jobs that supply, support and service smart manufacturers. For Intel Corp. in Oregon, that translated to a 4.1 job multiplier, meaning that every 10 jobs at Intel supported another 30 jobs in other sectors of Oregon’s economy, and at above average wages.

- In a recently published article entitled ‘Robots Don't Destroy Jobs; Rapacious Corporate Executives Do,’ William Lazonick, a professor of economics and director of the UMass Center for Industrial Competitiveness, explains that, “It's easy to blame technology, especially the automation that supposedly displaces workers. But that’s not the real story. The fact is that automation creates jobs. It's the misuse of corporate profits that is destroying them.”

The bottom line is that there should be zero tolerance for the kind of distinctly shoddy and misleading reporting exhibited by “60 Seconds” in their aired robotics story.

To view a well-researched, accurate news story on robotics and employment, check out John Markoff’s article: “Robots don’t take away jobs, they create better paying ones.”
