

Keynote Speech

Title: *Rebuilding Great British Manufacturing*

Speaker: Prof. Dr Maurizio Bragagni Esq OBE

Event: Made in Britain Impact Awards 2025

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, fellow makers, innovators, problem-solvers and of course, those who came this morning for the free breakfast!

It's a real honour to be here celebrating Manufacturing Excellence — or as we call it at Tratos, that magical moment when everything finally works and you pretend it was planned all along.

Now, let me start with a story.

In 2017, I had the honour of meeting His Majesty King Charles III.

When I told him, proudly, “Your Majesty, I’m an industrialist... in the UK.”

He paused — and said, “In the UK?... Why?”

It was a fair question.

At the time, being an “industrialist in the UK” sounded almost exotic, like I’d said, “I raise unicorns in Yorkshire.”

Back then, few believed in the British industry’s comeback.

Factories were closing, investment was shrinking, and everyone seemed to want to build apps instead of turbines!

If you said you worked in manufacturing, people looked at you as if you’d just confessed to owning a fax machine.

But I believed — and I still do — that Britain can make things again.

That’s why at Tratos, we built not one, but two factories here.

And yes, people said,

“Maurizio, are you mad? The weather! The regulations! The tea breaks!”

And I said, “Yes — but the spirit of the people is unbeatable.”

Manufacturing isn’t just about machines — it’s about character.

It’s about people who wake up early, fight with suppliers, argue with engineers, and still go home proud because something real came out of their day.

At our Knowsley factory, if a machine stops, five people appear in five seconds.

Four to fix it — and one to put the kettle on.

That’s teamwork, British style.

Now, let me share something personal.

I wasn't born British — I chose Britain. Because this country doesn't just make things —It makes a difference.

Britain saved Europe — and the world — from the Nazis. It saved my family — my grandmother and her brothers — from tyranny and fear. And decades later, when some of my relatives lived in Argentina, Britain once again stood for its values during the Falklands conflict.

So yes — Britain saved my family twice. The least I could do... was build a factory here! It's cheaper than building a statue

Now, rebuilding British manufacturing isn't about nostalgia.

We don't want black smoke and noisy mills.

We want smart factories, green energy, and young people who think engineering is cooler than TikTok!

But to get there, we need three things:

First — Education that inspires makers.

We need fewer professional PowerPoint readers and more power-cable experts!

Second — Policy that rewards production.

Because you can't run a country on speculation.

Eventually, someone has to make the screws.

Third — Pride.

In Italy, if you build a Ferrari, people cheer. In Britain, if you build a factory, someone complains about parking.

The Made in Britain mark isn't just a logo — it's a promise.

It says: "This was built with skill, integrity... and probably a lot of tea."

When we export our cables to Japan or Brazil, and they see Made in Britain, they trust it.

Because they know — if something goes wrong, a British engineer will fix it while politely apologising for the inconvenience.

I'm an optimist.

The next industrial revolution is already here —green, digital, slightly AI-flavoured.

But remember — Artificial Intelligence without human intelligence is just a fancy calculator.

We still need the wisdom of our workers — the ones who can fix a 30-year-old machine using only a hammer and a sarcastic comment.

Manufacturing isn't about technology alone — it's about people with purpose.

At Tratos, we often say, "We don't just sell cables — we connect people."

And everyone in this room is doing the same — connecting Britain to its future.

So, if I meet His Majesty again, and he asks me once more, “Why manufacturing in the UK?”

I'll say, “Because, Your Majesty, Britain once saved the world — and now, through its manufacturers, it's doing it again.”

Through innovation.

Through sustainability.

Through excellence.

And — let's be honest — through sheer British stubbornness.

Because if there's one thing stronger than British steel... it's a British engineer who's just been told something can't be done.

Thank you.

Long live British manufacturing,

long live the makers, and long live the tea breaks that make it all possible! 🇬🇧 ☕