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Christian Österle

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Industry 4.0 finds increasing application in production

Digitalisation is the key to networked, flexible production of the future

The implementation of Industry 4.0 is an ongoing process that involves challenges, but also offers great potential for the automation industry – Festo recognised this at an early stage. The key elements of industrial digitalisation are the individual components, which communicate with each other within the overall system and can control and regulate themselves. The tasks of the human employee are also changing from merely operating machines to solving complex problems. In shaping the production of the future, Festo is therefore strategically concentrating on a triad comprising new technologies, state-of-the-art training and further education, and the human at the focus of attention.

For manufacturing companies in high-wage countries, Industry 4.0 provides an opportunity for remaining competitive on a global scale. “Especially in Germany, the merging of production technology and IT can be made highly efficient. This country not only holds a great deal of knowledge and innovative power; with its public funding of research activities, the political sphere is helping to secure success for the transformation being brought about by Industry 4.0,” says Dr. Eberhard Veit, Chairman of the Management Board of Festo AG & Co. KG.

“Plattform Industrie 4.0” provides orientation

Close cooperation between the industrial associations and the spheres of industry and politics is ensured by “Plattform Industrie 4.0”, a consortium established to create a basis for a uniform understanding of the concept of Industry 4.0. Technological standards are being developed here, along with business models and new forms of cooperation that will strengthen the global competitiveness of the industry. “In interdisciplinary groups, the participants in ‘Plattform Industrie 4.0’ are carrying out intensive work on the future topics of standardisation, research and safety, but also regarding aspects of new working worlds and training,” explains Dr. Veit. “We are talking here about the transformation of industrial manufacture into a fully networked, flexible production system. To remain competitive, we must take the initiative with our characteristic spirit of inventiveness and give shape to this new development.”

Digitalisation is the basis

This transformation in the world of production is founded on digitalisation, a crucial element in the merging of the virtual and real worlds. Dr. Claus Jessen, Board Member Product Supply at Festo, sees great potential here: “Digital refinement will give rise to increasingly intelligent products. In future, the individual elements of an overall system will be able to communicate with each other and autonomously control and regulate

themselves. They are the core of industrial digitalisation and support the production process through enhanced functionality – from self-sufficient energy supply up to condition monitoring.” Festo is working in close collaboration with its customers to develop new concepts and business models – from the development of communication-capable components with decentralised intelligence, to their integration into superordinate automation environments, up to new service models.

Industry 4.0 for in-house production

The automation specialist is relying on Industry 4.0 not only for its products, but also for its own production processes. Pilot projects have already been initiated at the new Technology Plant in Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, and there is ample room for future innovations and implementation. In this way, new relevant technologies can be put into practice to keep abreast with developments in the industry.

Qualification as a success factor

The human operator is and will remain to be the key element of modern production, but will be assigned more and more new tasks. “The role of the human within the industrial value creation process is now being transferred from that of a machinery operator to a problem-solver. New requirements will arise, for which employees will be prepared by means of appropriate education and training measures. To an increasing extent, education is becoming the key success factor,” explains Dr. Jessen. The topic of learning also plays a central role at the Scharnhausen Technology Plant. This is a matter of great importance to Dr. Jessen, who played a leading role in creating the new factory in his role of Board Member for Product Supply: “We have integrated a Learning Factory into our plant where we can convey teaching content in a practical way, directly on location.”

Press Images



Industry 4.0 at Festo

With Industry 4.0, Festo is adopting an integrated approach to factory and process automation that takes into account technologies, the human operator and education to an equal extent.

About Festo

Festo is a global player and an independent family-owned company with headquarters in Esslingen am Neckar, Germany. Festo has set standards in industrial automation technology and technical education ever since its establishment, thereby making a contribution to sustainable development of the environment, the economy and society. The company supplies pneumatic and electrical automation technology to 300,000 customers of factory and process automation in over 35 industries. Digitalization, AI and the LifeTech sector with medical technology and laboratory automation are becoming increasingly important. The products and services are available in 176 countries. With about 20,600 employees in over 250 branch offices in around 60 countries worldwide, Festo achieved a turnover of around €3.45 billion in 2024. More than 8% of this turnover is invested in research and development. In this learning company, 1.5 % of turnover is invested in basic and further training. Festo Didactic SE is a leading provider of technical education and training and offers its customers worldwide comprehensive digital and physical learning solutions in the industrial environment.