End to end industry 4.0 solutions

At the 2016 SPS IPC Drives show, global power and automation giant ABB showcased solutions for the fields of flexible automation, economic engineering and the food & beverage industry. Morten Wierod, Managing Director of the global Business Unit Drives and Controls, Discrete Automation and Motion Division in ABB, explains that their recent innovations in these categories are targeted at creating an environment in which all devices can be constantly monitored, resulting in a more efficient production process.

A Swedish-Swiss multinational corporation headquartered in Zürich, Switzerland, ABB is best known for its expertise in robotics and the power and automation technology areas. ABB has operations in around 100 countries, generating more than 35 billion USD in revenue in 2015. The company prides itself on its reputation as a pioneering technology leader, says Mr. Wierod. "We have opened the door for an exciting future for our customers, for our employees and for any stakeholder group that is in touch with us."

The ABB business unit Mr. Wierod is in charge of, Drives and Controls, is heavily focused on industrial automation. In this space, the company recently launched a smart sensor that can be attached to any motor in a customer's plant. "This sensor then delivers information about the health of the motor so that maintenance actions can be taken before the motor fails and causes production downtime," Mr. Wierod explains. He additionally highlights the new ABB Ability™ platform, which is a place where all digital solutions come together. "By having all of them based on the same platform, ABB is capable of offering end-to-end solutions to our customers in all industries we serve making our customers' lives easier."

For the food and beverage industry, ABB recently introduced a new stainless steel encapsulated (SSE) motor which is targeted at wash-down applications. "With its high ingress protection level and fully encapsulated windings, the motor can last much longer than a standard product in tough, humid conditions. With this motor downtime and maintenance costs can be reduced and plants will enhance the food safety of their products," says Mr. Wierod. Innovation in this space is indeed driven by world's demand for more, better and safer food, he adds. "We can help our partners reduce the downtime of their equipment and improve the process efficiency and output. This we do by early detection and prediction of equipment failure, and by monitoring and control of all the devices in our customer's process. Having planned instead of unplanned maintenance cycles significantly reduces the cost of a plant and drives a more reliable production process."

Mr. Wierod emphasises that the Internet of Things (IoT) and Industry 4.0 overall is a great opportunity for ABB. "We believe that better transparency and visibility of what is going on in the operations will enable faster and better decision making. ABB has the right people, products, services and tools to identify and realise these improvements for our customers."

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