

PRESS RELEASE

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Robot population boom to continue says Mitsubishi Electric

The boom in UK robot installations is predicted to continue for the rest of this year and beyond, according to Barry Weller, a robot and automation specialist with Mitsubishi Electric.

"Mitsubishi sales are twice what they were this time last year and our forward orders are similarly high," he says. "This reflects what the British Automation and Robot Association (BARA) is reporting – that sales of robots in the UK during the second quarter of 2013 were more than double those in the first quarter and almost as large as sales for the whole of 2011."

For Weller a deeper analysis shows up some significant trends. For instance there has been increasing interest in systems that integrate robots with other automation technologies such as PLCs and HMIs, while the food manufacturing industry has become one of the fastest adopters.

"Food producers used to be reluctant to automate because their supply contracts were often short term. But now they understand that robots are flexible so easily reprogrammed for new duties, and that their delicacy of touch and ability to run unattended for long periods are ideal for many tasks in a food factory," he says.

Earlier this year Mitsubishi launched a new robot designed for the food and other hygienic industries.

This uses food grade lubricants, has internal cabling, clean-line design details etc. Interest in this was almost immediate and it is also being welcomed by the pharmaceutical and medical sectors as they are looking to increase their production efficiency.

"I am expecting change in the automotive sector," Weller observes. "They have probably reached saturation with welding robots, but there are many other functions in vehicle assembly that could be robotised."

BARA's Head of Marketing Grant Collier notes that robot sales for quarter two of 2013 have accelerated and almost matched the level for the entire year of 2011. "The specific numbers are that 1286 robots were sold in the first half of 2013, compared with a phenomenal 2400 robots in the record year of 2012. He also notes that the sales of non-automotive sector robotics are double what they were in 2009.

Weller again: "Potential users are always keen to know about the payback period, and most are surprised at how quick this can be.



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"The UK manufacturing industry is doing well and investing for a future. It is notable that we have a fairly low robot population compared to other industrialised nations, but we are making up the gap and focusing on improving global competitiveness."

About Mitsubishi Electric

With over 90 years of experience in providing reliable, high-quality products to both corporate clients and general consumers all over the world, Mitsubishi Electric Corporation is a recognized world leader in the manufacture, marketing and sales of electrical and electronic equipment used in information processing and communications, space development and satellite communications, consumer electronics, industrial technology, as well as in products for the energy sector, water and waste water, transportation and building equipment.

With around 121.000 employees the company recorded consolidated group sales of 29,5 billion Euro* in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2013.

Our sales offices, research & development centres and manufacturing plants are located in over 30 countries.

Mitsubishi Electric Europe, Industrial Automation – UK Branch is located in Hatfield, United Kingdom. It is a part of the European Factory Automation Business Group based in Ratingen, Germany which in turn is part of Mitsubishi Electric Europe B.V., a wholly owned subsidiary of Mitsubishi Electric Corporation, Japan.

The role of Industrial Automation – UK Branch is to manage sales, service and support across its network of local branches and distributors throughout United Kingdom.

*Exchange rate 120,69 Yen = 1 Euro, Stand 31.3.2013 (Source: Deutsche Bundesbank)

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