

PRESS RELEASE

19/05/2015



Industry 4.0 in the Food and Beverage industry

The practical advantages that the new cyber-physical interface of Industry 4.0 brings are acknowledged by engineers across a range of industries. Jeremy Shinton, Product Manager – Business Solutions at Mitsubishi Electric Europe B.V. Automation Systems Division, explains how food and drink manufacturers in particular can benefit from the implementation of Industry 4.0:

Industry 4.0 can be defined as the development of manufacturing technologies to allow higher levels of interconnectivity, leading to greater communication between machines and decentralised/local processing of data. The result is smart factories in which machinery is increasingly autonomous, so able to manage its own service and maintenance requirements, and adapt instantly

to new production requirements.

Food and drink manufacturers could benefit from the implementation of Industry 4.0 even more than most industries.

- The constant pressure on costs in the food industry means it has a long history of innovating, so is likely to embrace Industry 4.0 quickly and enthusiastically.
- The need for traceability right through the production chain has already ensured that machines are interconnected and archiving data. Industry 4.0 will enhance this.
- Greater flexibility will enable bespoke production for each customer and rapid adaption to changing product specifications.
- Energy usage can be monitored and optimised to new levels.

The net result will be improved machine performance, optimised maintenance and reduced costs. This should help win new customers and retain existing ones. It is also likely to create new revenue streams in the form of value adding services, and allow seamless connectivity with upstream and downstream supply chain partners.

Significantly, Industry 4.0 is not just a 'big boys' toy'. If anything, it offers even more opportunities for small- and medium-sized food and drink producers, which will be able to form seamless links with their machine builders and technical services suppliers. This will make their production systems just as advanced and sophisticated as those of their larger brethren.

For instance, it will permit the optimisation of preventive maintenance programmes, so that expensive and delay-inducing machine failures are all but designed out. Put another way – the overall equipment effectiveness (OEE) strategies that to date have been the preserve of larger companies, will come within reach of all.



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We can sum up Industry 4.0 as improving data management through better communication and data collection across all machines in the production chain; instant archiving and data historian functions; real-time analytics; multifunction alarm management; web-publishing; as well as interconnectivity and data transparency throughout the entire value chain.

Most engineers are able to see the practical advantages that the new cyber-physical interface of Industry 4.0 will bring. However, like the internet 20 years ago, or mains electricity a hundred years ago – it will almost certainly over-deliver on expectations by orders of magnitude. This is because while we can foresee the immediate and obvious benefits, far more will almost certainly evolve over time.

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With around 124.000 employees the company recorded consolidated group sales of 39.3 billion US Dollar* in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2014.

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

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*Exchange rate 103 Yen = 1 US Dollar, Stand 31.3.2014 (Source: Tokyo Foreign Exchange Market)

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