



CC-Link seminar explores opportunities for growth in Asia, adds new European board member

The enormous potential of open networks for automation and control systems, including forecasts for technical development, economic growth and geographic coverage, was highlighted at a seminar attended by leading European figures in control engineering and automation.

The event took place in Hatfield, UK and was organised by the CC-Link Partner Association (CLPA). Speakers included senior managers from some of Europe's biggest automation vendors, such as Balluff, Renesas, Festo and Mitsubishi Electric. There were also presentations from Gambica, the organisation representing the Instrumentation, Control, Automation and Laboratory Technology industries of the UK, the CLPA and Berners Consulting, a boutique management consultancy.

One of the key themes of the day was establishing business links with China and other growing markets of Asia. This started with an important announcement by John Browett, General Manager of the CLPA, that its hugely successful Gateway to China ("G2C") business development programme was to be expanded to cover all of Asia. The expanded programme will be renamed Gateway to Asia ("G2A") and will assist European companies to develop their business in equally important markets such as Japan, Korea, Taiwan and India. The G2A programme will continue to support growth through advertising, exhibitions, seminars, webinars and other promotional activities for companies implementing CC-Link technology in their products.

CC-Link is a leading open automation network technology in China, Japan and other Asian countries and is virtually a prerequisite for success in the region. With IMS Research (now part of IHS), a leading market research organisation, recently calculating that 46% of automation sales are now in Asia-Pacific, CC-Link capabilities are critical for global success.

Browett noted that there are currently about 11 million CC-Link nodes installed around the world and that there are least 270 manufacturers offering more than 1,300 CC-Link-enabled products. He also noted that IHS's figures indicate that this position is expected to further strengthen in the future, and hence provide continuing business opportunities.

Lutz Berners, President of Berners Consulting in Germany, gave a presentation in which he emphasised the importance of local partnering to succeed in China. He went on to explain how China has developed over recent years and to forecast future changes, such as rising wage levels, an ageing population (exacerbated by the long-standing one child per family policy) and development of rural areas by populations moving inland from the coastal conurbations.

He says that there is no doubt that China will become the world's biggest economy and that automation is essential to combat the declining population and rising costs.

This last point was also touched upon by Steve Brambley, Deputy Director of Gambica, who noted that in China the automation market is growing faster than the general economy. Further, although robot density is still low, there are signs that it will soon be growing rapidly. In a presentation for Mitsubishi Electric, Chris Evans, Marketing and Operations Manager, was able to give a double perspective – being a European supplier to the Asian markets and being part of one of the major indigenous groups in the region. He also touched on the hot topic of cyber security and how CC-Link offers some safeguards in this area.

Finally, Balluff was presented with an official certificate to recognize their admission to the board of the CLPA. The certificate was accepted by Jürgen Gutekunst, Vice President of the Business Unit Networking and Business Unit Systems. Becoming a board member is a significant commitment to the organization and allows Balluff to join an elite group of companies worldwide who provide the strategic direction for the CC-Link technology. Being the first European board member, this demonstrated the growing importance of CC-Link in the European market. Jürgen also made a presentation which explored Balluff's support for CC-Link, the Asian market and their capabilities as a leading automation devices company globally.



About the CLPA

The CC-Link Partner Association (CLPA) is an international organisation with over 1,900 member companies worldwide. The partners' common objective is promotion and technical development of the family of CC-Link open network technologies. Over 1,300 certified products are now available from over 270 manufacturers. CC-Link is the leading open industrial automation network technology in Asia and is becoming increasingly popular in Europe and the Americas. The European headquarters is in Germany, with offices throughout the continent. The key details for CLPA's Gateway to China (G2C) can be found at the URL www.cc-link-g2c.com.

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