

HOMAG Automation - This is how the future will look

Innovation will occur in processes, interlinking, and the related faster and leaner production of furniture parts.

Our customers are already today characterized by closer networking, best informed customers with highly qualified decision-maker. We use this competency and develop the offer for the future in cooperation with our customers.

Innovations for the future

In my view, innovation will less occur in products than rather in processes, interlinking, and the related faster and leaner production of furniture parts.

We see one main field of innovations for the woodworking machine's future in the sector of automation. Another important point is the more and more user-friendly operation of machines and plants. The operator is quickly and clearly informed about the status of the machine and his current production. Special interfaces help to keep full control and overview at any time. We can already see this, for example, in the storage technology.

About ten years ago, also smaller companies have initially started to invest in their first automated panel storing systems. Today, when purchasing a panel cut-to-size saw, the potential purchase of an automatic storage system is almost always checked. And this for a good reason; the effect of rationalization are considerable and the payback period has reduced because of clearly decreased purchase prices. In addition: Not only cutting is rationalized but the user will also get a considerably added value in his storage management and organization as well as in material planning.

Future Trends

Automation - there is nothing more to mention. Our customer's increasing product variety, who themselves work with always shorter delivery times, will result in constantly growing interlinking and automation. The one who considers only personnel cost savings in amortization calculation for automation, disregard other complex effects of automation such as e.g. increase in dependability and thus the utilization ratio of operating machines, dependence reduction of qualified employees in view to the demographic change, but also the reductions of throughput times especially in system interlinking!

Many systems that are already installed in the market, don't work unmanned but lightly manned, since expendable materials, such as edges, dowels, and also tools for most lines have to be monitored and newly equipped, in case of need. Although, one has to take into consideration that the employees, who operate such cell have to be considerably higher skilled. Where formerly, for example, employees fed lines or transferred parts by hand, today, the main task is to supervise the whole process and control it supported by IT.

Future Markets

Here, a distinction is necessary. The industrialized, established markets still have some potential especially in the sector of automation, here will continuously be invested in interlinking and process optimization.

In contrast, there are the emerging markets, which are in the beginning of industrialization, they will increasingly invest. In handling surely not only to find personnel cost savings, but

also or especially, because a deeper use of interlinked operating machines is possible, which enables a considerable better and, above all, constant quality.

Our customer's behavior is already changing. Our customers are already today characterized by closer networking, best informed customers with highly qualified decision-maker. We use this competency and develop the offer for the future in cooperation with our customers. This helps us to faster understand market trends and eventually better deal with our customers to make them successful, what is also the basis for our future.

HK spoke with managing director, Holger Blötscher, about innovations, trends and future markets on the occasion of their 50th anniversary.

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Kontakt:

HOMAG Automation GmbH

Frank Scholz
Marketing

Industriestr. 8/13
21745 HEMMOOR
DEUTSCHLAND
www.homag-automation.com