

Press Release

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Belden committed to Lumberg Automation™ and Hirschmann™ brand connector growth

In the run-up to SPS/IPC/Drives, Dr. Hubert Ermer, General Manager of Belden's connector division is looking ahead to a positive future. He is responsible for Belden's Lumberg Automation™ and Hirschmann™ connector business globally. Here he describes the new position of the Lumberg Automation™ and Hirschmann™ Connectivity brands and highlights the principal benefits for customers.

When in 2007, Belden acquired the business of Lumberg Automation™ – and that of Hirschmann™, many people wondered what the future would hold for this business, and some questioned if Lumberg Automation™ Brand had a future at all. Dr. Ermer points out that today the company has gone through a major reorganization. Belden has fully integrated the products and portfolios of Belden, Lumberg Automation™ and Hirschmann™ and these are now a part of a large global business: “This gives our customers the benefit of very advanced support facilities, whilst we have gained access to a global product portfolio that goes way beyond the traditional connector business – and way beyond our traditional geographic reach.”

Describing the business today, Dr. Ermer says: “In some ways it is business as usual: we are introducing new products and finding new ways to deliver improved performance to our customers. Our R&D facilities are extensive – and mostly still centralized in Europe.

For connectors the centers are in Schalksmühle and Neckartenzlingen, both in Germany – and our Cable R&D is based in Venlo, the Netherlands. So we have fast access to knowledge and this makes a quick response possible.” However, there have been significant changes too. Dr. Ermer: “We are not only able to provide technical support in local languages throughout Europe, we have become a broad-based supplier and one of the few players in the world who can offer a complete connectivity portfolio: connectors, distributed IO’s and cables – in fact all the products offered by the Hirschmann™, Lumberg Automation™ and Belden brands – all backed by many years of experience and manufacturing excellence.”

Producing a real sample in weeks

Talking about customer benefits, Dr. Ermer says: “A key advantage we can now offer our customers is speed, enabling faster time-to-market. For example, for a cable that is not yet available on the market, we can produce a real sample, produced on a manufacturing machine in just weeks, not months. And we can supply the full assembly, including a modified connector and a new cable in a third of the time. We have developed a special process for this and our “Customer Application Team” handles all new requests from customers, helping to develop the application and launch the customized product in the shortest possible time.

“Another major advantage is that we now have access to new technologies. Today Belden is already working with Ethernet switches and wireless technology. In the future we will be able to take an early lead in implementing these technologies into customized solutions for plant automation. This would largely extend the functionality of our product family by all major Ethernet protocol types.

Total connectivity solutions supplier

Describing Belden as a total connectivity solutions provider, Dr. Ermer explains: “If you put it all together, our biggest strength is that today we are able to offer total connectivity solutions. In fact, we can now connect any actuator or sensor with any wire or cable. Our portfolio includes the full range of Lumberg Automation™ connectors and I/O modules, Hirschmann™ connectors and switches and Belden cables, supported by a strong and experienced team of experts.

And to demonstrate our commitment to the markets we serve, we have continued to invest in our individual brands.

“Offering total connectivity solutions allows us to expand geographically, and we are also looking beyond our traditional market, machine building. Lumberg Automation™ and Hirschmann™ products have an excellent fit in both the traditional energy markets, oil and gas, and the alternative energy markets, including the capture of solar and wind generated power.”

Total Cost of Ownership

A key consideration is Total Cost of Ownership (TCO). Dr. Ermer says: “Despite our progress into new markets and geographies, or maybe because of it, we are able to offer our existing customers significant benefits as we set out to reduce their Total Cost of Ownership. Whilst the complexity of machines is increasing – mostly in order to reduce labor costs and increase output – we are helping our customers to reduce wiring costs, through the application of Fieldbus and/or further standardization. Because we are not locked into any proprietary protocol we are able to offer solutions around any protocols. And if such a proprietary protocol does not exist, we are able to create a customer specific solution.

“Our business has gone through a major restructuring exercise, not because we were afraid to go out of business. Our restructuring process was driven by a desire to be ahead of the changes our customers are facing today, especially in machine building. When we saw that the crisis would inevitably lead to a reduction in demand, we acted immediately.

Instead of waiting to see what would happen, we implemented cuts and made the required adjustments, ahead of the market. A major restructuring such as the one we have gone through is painful – and any transition always has a cost. We call it ‘short term pain for long-term gain’. I am convinced that going forward, we are now a stronger partner, a more credible and financially secure supplier that is already fully adjusted to the new market conditions.”

Dr. Hubert Ermer

Dr. Hubert Ermer is the General Manager of the Belden Connector Division, which encompasses the connector business of Belden's Lumberg Automation™ and Hirschmann™ connector brands. Dr. Ermer, who studied physics at the University of Freiburg and holds an MBA from Marquette University, previously worked for Dr. Johannes Heidenhain GmbH and KRONES AG. Most recently he was the COO for KRONES Inc in the US.



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About Belden

Belden designs, manufactures and markets signal transmission solutions, including cables, connectors and I/O modules as well as network devices and control, load sensing and load moment limitation systems designed for safety-critical applications ranging from industrial automation to data centers, broadcast studios and the aviation and aerospace industry. The company focuses on segments of the worldwide cable and automation markets that require both highly specialized and readily available products. With manufacturing facilities in North America, Europe and Asia, Belden has recorded a total revenue of USD 2 billion for the fiscal year 2008.

Together with its brands Hirschmann™ and Lumberg Automation™, Belden offers an extensive and highly specialized product portfolio covering the full range of data communications – from the information and control levels down to the field level. The company has more than 15 offices throughout Europe, the Middle East and Africa, with manufacturing facilities in Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands, UK, Denmark, Italy and Hungary.

For more information about Belden, please visit www.belden-emea.com.

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