

PR032019

Economy

1 April 2019

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Strong performance in fiscal year 2018: innovations, increased production capacities and an expanding global sales network

Beckhoff Automation boosts sales by 13 % to 916 million euros

- worldwide sales in 2018: 916 million euros (+13 %)
- 4,300 employees worldwide (+10 %)
- continued focus on technology development

Beckhoff Automation generated global sales of 916 million euros in 2018, a gain of 13 % on the previous year. This success can be credited in equal measure to innovative technological advances, greater production capacity, and expansion of the company's sales network.

“With global sales totalling 916 million euros, we had another strong financial year in 2018,” says Managing Director Hans Beckhoff. “In line with this solid business growth, the company has built out capacity across all departments in terms of facility space as well as human resources, and now employs 4,300 people worldwide.”

Expanding production

“We expanded our production facilities by a total of 40,000 m² in 2018 through new builds as well as the purchase of additional facilities, and are now gradually putting this added space into operation,” explains Hans Beckhoff. “Our newly built electronics manufacturing facility, which provides 11,000 m² of space, has doubled our primary production capacity.”

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Global expansion strategy

Beckhoff is pursuing a clear-cut expansion strategy and invests continuously in extending its global sales network. As the managing owner explains: "Our goal is to grow by 15 % a year". The company has enlarged its sales organisation in several countries, both by creating new branch offices and by boosting headcounts at existing locations. "Our new subsidiary in Taiwan has now started operating; we have set up Beckhoff Mexico; and we will incorporate our current Korean distributor to create Beckhoff South Korea during the first half of this year," Hans Beckhoff adds.

Beckhoff Automation is also set to take over ADL Embedded Solutions GmbH, headquartered in Siegen, Germany, on 1st April 2019. ADL is a specialist company well-known for producing deep embedded applications using motherboards and specially adapted peripherals. Working closely with its customers, it creates tailor-made, turnkey embedded solutions. For many years now it has based its projects on Beckhoff industrial motherboards, and with the acquisition of ADL by Beckhoff, this successful collaboration can progress to the next stage.

Beckhoff currently has subsidiaries and representative offices in 38 countries worldwide. The company maintains a presence in 75 countries around the world through a network of distributors and its own sales companies.

Success through innovation

In no small part, Beckhoff owes its sustained business success to its rigorous focus on technology, which is evident throughout its product portfolio. The company will again unveil new, more powerful Industrial PCs as well as Bus Terminals, fieldbus box modules, drive technology

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solutions and new software functionality at this year's Hannover Messe industrial technology show. This year, Beckhoff has lined up no fewer than three landmark product launches: the XPlanar drive system; ultra-fast EtherCAT G communication technology; and the first machine learning software modules using artificial intelligence. Hans Beckhoff explains: "XPlanar, which we unveiled in late 2018, is an absolute technology highlight. It consists of levitating product carriers known as movers that can travel freely across floors consisting of planar tiles. The system's ability to position movers dynamically and flexibly, plus the fact that it is contactless and thus wear- and abrasion-free, has the potential to revolutionise fields like packaging and assembly technology. It brings to life the concept of a flying carpet."

Hans Beckhoff continues: "We have another innovation to report – this time in the field of data communication. For many years now, the EtherCAT system, originally invented by Beckhoff, has been a firmly established communication standard worldwide due to its excellent performance and stability. The time has now come to go a step further – by introducing EtherCAT G, which operates at standard Ethernet 1 Gbit/s data rates, and EtherCAT G10, which runs even faster, at 10 Gbit/s. EtherCAT G and G10 deliver new levels of performance that will help our customers to build the best high-performance machines in the world."

One area of technology with immense potential for the manufacturing industry is artificial intelligence, particularly in the context of machine learning – which is underscored by Hannover Messe's lead theme of "Integrated Industry – Industrial Intelligence" in 2019. "Beckhoff will be presenting application scenarios designed to clearly highlight and exemplify the specific benefits of machine learning," says Hans Beckhoff. In addition, the company will be unveiling TwinCAT Machine Learning, a real-time-capable machine learning solution that is

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seamlessly integrated into the control technology. It offers machine builders an optimum foundation for enhancing machine performance through capabilities like predictive maintenance, process self-optimisation, and autonomous detection of process anomalies.

Training tomorrow's talent

Beckhoff trains young people in a wide range of occupations to safeguard its future supply of talent. Since 2010, the company has also focused on providing practice-integrated degree programmes and, today, offers degrees in Mechatronics/Automation, Industrial Engineering, Digital Technologies, Product Service Engineering and Digital Logistics in association with the Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences at the latter's Gütersloh Campus. For Beckhoff, these practice-oriented engineering degree programmes have proven to be a worthwhile model: Currently, there are 89 students employed by the company, and, to date, 129 young people have successfully completed degrees and now work in various departments throughout the company. To meet the need for onward qualifications following on from bachelor's degrees, Beckhoff also supports extra-occupational master's programmes in Applied Automation and Industrial Engineering, again offered by the Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences at its Gütersloh Campus.

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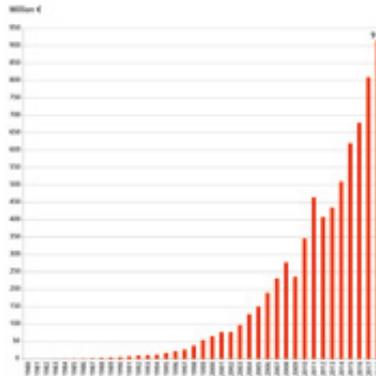
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Hans Beckhoff, Managing Director of Beckhoff Automation GmbH & Co. KG

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Picture caption:

Sales development of Beckhoff Automation

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