AGMA Robotics & Automation Committee

Summary of Activity - 2019

Robotics & Automation Committee Chairman
David Harroun, Vice President
Helios Gear Products, Inc.

Robotics and Automation

Robots used to be seen only on huge assembly lines, especially in automotive plants. In the past couple of years, we have seen a dramatic shift in this market to more and more affordable options for other manufacturers. Overall robot shipments to nonautomotive companies increased 41 percent in 2018. The rise of collaborative robots in 2017-2018 has fundamentally changed how manufacturers view automation in 2019. Moving forward, automation is now an active choice for small manufacturers. The AGMA Robotics and Automation Committee spent 2019 bringing AGMA members reports, articles, and speakers to provide up-to-date information on this changing marketplace and realworld solution options for AGMA members. We highlighted new collaborative robots, discussed the new term “Robots-as-a-service” and provided interviews to help AGMA members make more informed decisions about their automation needs.

Here are some highlights:

In April, Alberto Moen, VP of Strategy and Partnerships for Veo Robotics spoke at the annual meeting on robots. He spoke to AGMA executives about the practical side of robots – how they can be best utilized in manufacturing – and how companies should approach projects where they want to utilize automation. He discussed the best uses of robots to take the burden of the heavy, dirty, and dangerous jobs away from humans. While at the same time utilizing the intelligence and dexterity of humans. We brought Alberto back as a speaker for the MPT Conference in Detroit, MI this past October 2019 to specifically talk about their new system for safe human-robot interaction. Here is a video with more information: https://www.veobot.com/videos
In May 2019, one of the Videos of the Week was “Ford just introduced an autonomous robot to one of its factories” Committee Chair, David Harroun commented, “This video demonstrates using internal company resources to both develop something useful and help further test new technology..” Even since May we have seen many variations of this concept come to market to move things autonomously on a factory floor to deliver ‘just in time’ goods or finished work to enable the humans to work smarter.

In August, the Committee highlighted FedEx’s launch of their first robot pilot program, Roxo, for same day delivery. Jennifer Caccavo, Communications Advisor for FedEx stated, ““With the growth of e-commerce, FedEx is always looking for new, innovative ways to deliver goods ordered online with the same reliability that our customers expect. We are looking to deliver on the customer expectations of visibility, convenience and speed with the FedEx SameDay Bot and answer the call for innovation mandated by the rise in business-to-consumer shipping. We are excited about the promise that robotics and other new technologies present for transforming the transportation and logistics industry.”

In October we were excited to see even more robot and automation companies on the Motion + Power Technology Expo show floor. Including FANUC, Creative Automation, and more.

Throughout the year we posted articles to the weekly Teck Deck on this topic. Some of the top read articles include:

- Our first article of the year Advancements in Robotics: Predictions for 2019 from Robotics Tomorrow. The article discussed 6 predictions for 2019: Hype gives way to practicality; Gross manipulation vs. fine manipulation; Robotic perception; Robots-as-aService; New markets, and New jobs.
- Robotics adoption: The SMB guide to industrial automation from ZDNet.
- How to break down work into tasks that can be automated and How to tame ‘automation sprawl!’ from the Harvard Business Review.
- 5 hurdles resisting the robotics industry from becoming ubiquitous from CIO Review.
- Making the move to mobile: facing advances in mobile robotics from Automation.com.

COMMITTEE GOALS FOR 2020

In 2020, the committee will work to continue to provide top articles and reports to the AGMA membership. Additionally, the committee will interview robotics makers and integrators to provide the latest information on both industrial and collaborative robots for our multi-faceted manufacturing settings. The committee will provide case studies that are relevant to the automation projects seen within member companies.
The committee is working to provide a hands-on tour on the IMTS show floor for AGMA members that will highlight robotics and automation solutions for small and medium-sized manufacturers with discussions with robotics experts.

The committee will have a minimum of 4 meetings in 2020:

- Friday February 28th 2:00 PM EST
- Friday May 29th 2:00 PM EST
- Friday August 28th 2:00 PM EST (after IMTS)
- Friday November 13, 2:00 PM EST

HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE? Join a committee – Emerging Technology Committee participation is open to all employees of member companies. You do not have to be an expert in the technology – you just have to have a desire to learn more and engage with experts. We also encourage experts in the field to meet with us. Contact Mary Ellen Doran, Director – Emerging Technology at doran@agma.org for complete information.