



Automation Innovation

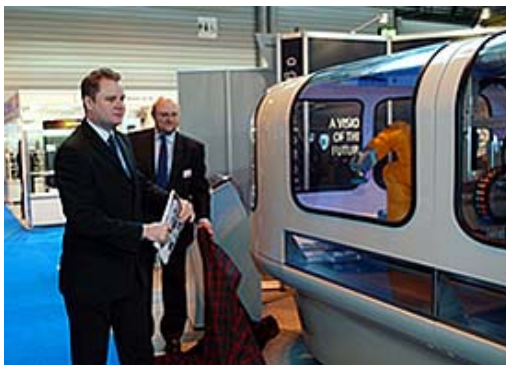
News Release

Wednesday, 22 February, 2006

Scottish Innovators Unveil The Future Of Automation Assembly

A GROUNDBREAKING Arbroath manufacturing firm has again put Scottish innovation in the spotlight, as it unveiled its latest product at a recent medical device trade show in Birmingham.

AGR Automation showcased the new machine, which is set to revolutionise the automation assembly industry, at the two-day 2006 Medical Device Technology trade show held last week 15-16 February.



The PLM Modular Platform device is essentially a high tech 'shell' which can be easily reconfigured to suit a number of operations and to serve different industries. Traditionally most machines built for automation assembly are designed to perform a specific function and either made redundant when the product line stops or need to be reconstituted at great cost.

AGR Sales and Business Development Manager Lawrence Davie believes his firm have crafted the 'future of automation assembly.' Although there are other machines that are flexible like the PLM, none of these machines match its versatility or its sleek design.

In a first for the industry, the PLM Modular Platform combines a stunning and unique design concept with cutting edge on-board software. This sleek white enclosed module measures over 4m in length, 2m width and 2m in height, weighing around 2300kg, and is made from stainless steel and aluminium.

Both versions employ a sophisticated interlocked guard system, which ensures maximum operator safety.

The PLM series will enable users to scale new heights of efficiency and productivity, allowing lines of up to 12 metres long and the capability to link up with several other lines. AGR's Lawrence Davie believes that this high degree of flexibility is what will give the module the leading edge over competitor machines available overseas.

He said: "We're currently the only company of our kind operating in the UK, with our main competitors based in mainland Europe and the US. I would argue that this development takes the technology for modular assembly systems into a new dimension.

"Traditionally these types of machines tend to favour functionality over aesthetic value, where as the PLM series scores highly on both fronts. This incredibly stylish and highly versatile creation has the potential to revolutionise the automation assembly production line, by increasing efficiencies and the scope of work which can be undertaken.

"We're proud that, as a Scottish company operating in a highly competitive field, we have been able to come up with something which is genuinely ground breaking and will help to advance the industry."

Gwyn Tudor, Chairman of Medilink UK, the umbrella organisation of Regional Medical Device Company networks in the UK unveiled the new machine.

Speaking at the trade show, Mr Tudor said: "The UK has made substantial progress in the field of medical device development in recent years and I am delighted to unveil a British machine which is capable of manufacturing many of them."

The PLM Modular Platform device is the latest innovation for the company, which is the UK's leading designer and manufacturer of high speed bespoke automated machinery to clients around the world.

They offer an unparalleled breadth of assembly and packaging solutions from precision micro assembly through to substantial subassemblies for the packaging and automotive industry. The firm, which started in Arbroath in 1960, currently employs 55 staff and has a turnover of £5M.

At the end of last year they hit the headlines when they unveiled a large bespoke machine, which assembles pen needle devices used in insulin injectors, via a highly advanced automated process which produces hundreds of devices every minute.

The company was also highly commended in the 2005 Angus achievers awards for this export order.

Next month AGR are set to dazzle the overseas market when the PLM 218 makes its European debut at the MEDTEC trade show in Stuttgart from March 7 – 9.

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Press Contacts: For more technical information on AGR's breakthrough projects, photos or to arrange an interview with Lawrence Davies from AGR please contact Alison Middleton or Mike McPartlin at Catchline Communications on 01592 643200.

Notes to Editors: AGR has been a wholly owned subsidiary of the Blakell Europlacer Group since July 2000. Blakell Europlacer is a manufacturer of automation and robotic assembly for the electronics industry. They have manufacturing sites in England and France with worldwide sales.