

Bosch Rexroth committed to the leading edge in technology, partnership and issues of the future.

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- **Rexroth presents numerous Industry 4.0 solutions in Hanover**
- **Expenses for research and development remain high**
- **Sales in 2015 were around 5.4 billion euros**

Seize the leading edge and translate it into growth. This is how Rolf Najork, Chairman of the Executive Board for Bosch Rexroth AG, describes the current strategic priorities of the company at the 2016 Hannover Messe. Among these are: technological differentiation, synergies with internal and external partners and a prioritization of future-oriented issues such as Industry 4.0. The company is therefore focusing its development priorities on the electronification of hydraulics, as well as on products, solutions and services in an interconnected industry.

"Currently, the market for machinery and equipment is undergoing a period of upheaval and we at Bosch Rexroth are adjusting accordingly. In future, we will be focusing strongly on three strategic goals", states Rolf Najork during the company's yearly press conference at the Hannover Messe 2016 (Hall 17, Stand B38). According to Najork, one of these is the distinctive technological differentiation through competition over products, solutions and services. On the one hand, this is shown in new products such as CytroPac, a particularly compact and efficient hydraulic power unit, which performs condition monitoring on its own. On the other hand, this is also made clear in the course of major projects: "Especially when it comes to the project market, Bosch Rexroth can gain an edge with customers through our comprehensive technological know-how", explains Najork. He mentioned the modernization of the elevator in the west column of the Eiffel Tower in Paris as a recent example. Using the company's own simulation software SIMSTER, a team from Bosch Rexroth reconstructed the historic original model and equipped it with all advantages of modern technology. As such, the elevator was made more available, while energy use was decreased by 25 percent.

Synergies through partnership

Najork listed a constant willingness to cooperate openly with partners as a second important factor for success. Bosch Rexroth is unparalleled in its support for open standards. With the help of Open Core Engineering software, the company was one of the first to break through traditional technology barriers to create a bridge between automation and IT. Additionally, Bosch Rexroth has developed server and cloud applications in the course of development projects with other Bosch business units. As an example, the Rexroth cordless nutrunner Nexo sends screwdriving data from millions of safety-critical tightening processes to the Bosch IoT cloud. The Bosch software solution "Process Quality Manager" then recognizes any process deviations in real time and alerts experts in quality control. A rapid response follows and, when necessary, intervention. This results in avoiding mistakes and reducing reaction times by up to 50 percent.

Industry 4.0 for retrofit

Najork considers the company's edge with respect to issues of the future as the third important driver of growth. At the Hannover Messe, for example, Bosch Rexroth laid out an Industry 4.0 production line that combines fully automated stations with manual workstations. The approach: Industry 4.0 for retrofit. Current machines will continue to be used and run together with new systems as part of an interconnected environment. This enables high-variant production, even with manual work processes. Here is where the assistance system ActiveAssist will initially be presented. ActiveAssist connects each individual workpiece with its virtual image in the enterprise software and guides the associates interactively through the assembly steps. For example, light signals show exactly which parts should be assembled, installation instructions are projected onto the work surface and 3D cameras and ultrasound detect errors in the work process and help associates address them. This leads to production of a diverse range of product variants at the very same workstation.

Expenses for R&D and investments remain high

The importance a company places on product innovation is also revealed by how much it spends on research and development. At around six percent of sales in 2015, expenses for R&D at Bosch Rexroth represented more than the industry average. The focus was on the electrification of hydraulics and development of Industry 4.0-capable products, solutions and services. In addition, the company invested around 120 million euros in 2015, including in the modernization of company-specific products, which will be outfitted with Industry 4.0 solutions.

Number of associates around 31,000

The preliminary corporate statistics for the year 2015, published in April, were confirmed in the year-end report: Bosch Rexroth ended the fiscal year 2015 with a decrease in sales of 3.2 percent, representing around 5.4 billion euros. The sales trend already takes into account the sale within the year of the large gear business to ZF Friedrichshafen AG. The reason for the business trend is above all due to the fact that numerous companies in industries dependent on raw materials have postponed investments. As a result of this development and the sale of the large gears business, the number of associates was decreased by 7.8 percent to a worldwide number of 31,100, of whom 15,100 are in Germany.

In 2016, Bosch Rexroth expects merely modest growth impulses from the markets. For example, hardly any investment is expected in existing or new fields, or in downstream industries, due to the still very low price of crude oil worldwide. The company views markets that are less dependent on raw materials more favorably. In factory automation, the advancing connectivity of production will be an important driver of growth. Najork sees diversity and innovative potential as important for the future of Bosch Rexroth: "Our technical know-how is what we can build on, above all in tough times. Bosch Rexroth will master the upcoming challenges with determination and success."

Source: Bosch Rexroth