

Making sensors for the future



Thomas Sattes
General Manager
Balluff China

The 2014 PTC Asia will be held in Shanghai between Oct 27 and Oct 30. China Daily reporter talked with Balluff China's general manager Thomas Sattes to discover more about this German sensor manufacturing company.

Q: Could you please give a brief introduction to Balluff? In general, who are you and what services and solutions do you provide?

A: Balluff is a small-to-medium-sized German enterprise with more than 50 years experience in sensor technology and connectivity products. The company, owned and managed by the 4th generation, has its own product lines for every area in automation. Our sales and service offices in China are spread across 12 major cities and offer a wide range of products and industry specific applications.

Our focus on the 2014 PTC Asia is on the fluid power market. Our key solutions for this market are our Balluff Micropulse Transducer BTL for accurate positioning in hydraulic cylinders used in many industries. We also provide magneto-inductive position sensors (BIL)

for position feedback on grippers, high-pressure inductive sensors (BES/BHS) for end-of-travel positioning on hydraulic cylinders and our BMF sensor range for pneumatic cylinder position feedback.

Q: How many times has Balluff participated in PTC Asia?

A: This year will be our sixth time participating in PTC Asia and we are impressed with the development of the exhibition over the years. The PTC Asia is one of the core exhibitions we attend in China.

Q: Why it is necessary to participate in PTC Asia? What results have been achieved in the past few years?

A: PTC Asia has evolved into a key exhibition in fluid power and mechanical transmission sectors with the leading companies demonstrating the latest technologies and trends. Balluff is a solution provider and is an enabler for increased levels of automation needed across all industries. Over the past few years, we have worked closely with local cylinder manufacturers who we met at the PTC to upgrade their product portfolio by using Balluff Micropulse Linear Transducers BTL to increase accuracy and durability.

Q: What do you expect to achieve by participating in 2014 PTC Asia?

A: We have three goals for the 2014 exhibition - to learn about new developments in the industry, demonstrate our

achievements in fluid power and mechanical transmission businesses, and most importantly discuss new business opportunities with new and existing customers.

Q: What will Balluff present in 2014 PTC Asia? Will there be new products launching?

A: We will display 10 product "cubes" with focus on fluid power, mechanical transmission and beyond. It will include our portfolio of object detection, measurement, identification, and networking. We will also demonstrate our IO-Link demo wall - a fully integrated demonstration wall which shows the advantages of IO-Link in modern architectures. Visitors will have the chance to see how IO-Link allows components to be integrated seamlessly.

Q: How is Balluff's market performance in recent years? Could you share the growth figures with us?

A: Balluff China went through a major reorganization in the past 18 months to be better positioned for the future. Our business grew by 30 percent in 2013 and is expected to achieve double-digit growth in 2014 again.

Q: Will the economic slowdown in China affect Balluff's performance in the Chinese market? Will the PTC Asia help to ease some pressure?

A: Indeed, the economic growth is slowing down in China have lowered

However, as fluid power and mechanical transmission are widely used in multiple industries it will be a great opportunity to open the door for new business.

Q: How are you going to differentiate Balluff from your competitors?

A: What differentiates Balluff is our product portfolio - no other company has such a wide ranging product portfolio. Secondly our product quality - German quality based on more than 50 years' history. Lastly but most importantly - our people, who are experienced in key industries with their passion for automation.

Q: It is expected that the sensor market will grow significantly in China as the demand is increasing in sectors such as intelligent buildings and automotive manufacturing. How are you going to capture the emerging opportunities and increase Balluff's market share?

A: Indeed, driven by government incentives and increasing demand in machine builders and the automotive industries, we have seen significant growth in the sensor sector, where we have the longest history.

Our regional sales team and vertical industry management team are working closely with customers to share best industry practices and demonstrate how Balluff products and solutions enable customers to perform better. We are confident Balluff will continue to grow in China with a broad product portfolio and increasing demand.