

Future Trends in Automation – Globalisation, Mobilisation, Integration, Collaboration

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Honeywell has moved from being just an automation company, Mark Zyskowski, Honeywell Executive Vice President for Global Sales told delegates at the Pacific HUG symposium in Fremantle. “We’ve really become a business transformation company.”

“We can actually help customers change the way they operate,” Zyskowski said. “Change the way that customers make the decisions, the speed of those decisions, and even change the place people need to be when they do make those decisions.”

Zyskowski said that it’s a quickly changing, highly competitive, global marketplace, adding that Honeywell would continue to supply traditional automation products to its customers.

“But there’s more than just the point solutions and the products. We want to engage with our customers in a totally different way,” said Zyskowski.

To get the advantages out of business transformation, Zyskowski said that there was a need to engage with partners early and in a totally different relationship than, for example a conventional product focused or point solution focused relationship.

Globalisation, mobilisation, integration, collaboration – Zyskowski named these as industry trends that would contribute to the need for a new type of client-supplier relationship.

“What happens is that the more-developed Western companies must now compete with the emerging region manufacturers and producers. Today, what we definitely see is that companies in the developed world are under immense competitive pressure.”

Zyskowski pointed to news this week that jobs in the Australian steel industry were being shed, but noted that in other sectors of the country’s economy there was a shortage of skilled labour.

“We see great growth opportunities in things like collaboration tools, enhancing how people work together, not just in the same office but from around the world. We also see great opportunities in supply chain solutions as companies really need to manage much bigger and much more complex scenarios than ever before on a global scale.”

Mobility is becoming a major aspect of business practice so that contact with staff and practical decision making can now be performed using inexpensive devices from anywhere a carriage service is available.

"I don't have to be tethered to my office any more to be productive," Zyskowski said. "I can deal with issues on a plane, in an airport, in a car when I'm not driving."

While mobile applications have just started to be adopted in manufacturing plants, mobile operator tablets offered by Honeywell have now been joined by a Smartphone app for Experion.

"You'll be able to pull down Experion data wherever you are. You'll be able to troubleshoot the asset operations. You don't have to be tethered to the plant."

As with integration of disparate personal communication functions in a single device such as a mobile phone, Honeywell sees opportunities to integrate multiple enterprise functions that are catered for by a range of software applications.

Honeywell also sees significant opportunities for improved operational performance arising from the use of advanced collaboration tools in the manufacturing enterprise.

"I see a world where we're shifting from generalists to specialists. A lot of those specialists are very deep in a very narrow area. We also recognise, as a result, that enabling cross functional teams to operate is essential. There's no doubt in our mind that the top tier companies of tomorrow will be the ones that learn how to leverage the unique skill-sets of their global organisations and their partners. And learn how to extend specific skill-sets across the global asset footprint, thereby creating a competitive advantage for themselves."