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Sevro America Celebrates a Decade of Remarkable Growth in North America

Sevro America, Warrendale, PA, a suburb of Pittsburgh, today marks 10 remarkable years of growth in marketing robots and automation solutions to plastic injection molders in North America.

Since its formation, and despite one of the deepest recessions on record, Sevro America's business has blossomed, with North America quickly emerging as Sevro Group's largest and fastest growing segment. Sevro America now accounts for about 1/4 of global sales for the Group, which set a fourth consecutive annual record in 2016.

In August 2007, Sevro robots were already well established in North America. Thanks to an 18-year sales and distribution relationship with auxiliary-equipment supplier Conair, Sevro ranked first in market share in the automotive industry and for large injection-molding machines (over 700 tons). However, to develop an even stronger position, Jean-Michel Renaudeau, Managing Director of what was then known as Sevro Robotique, decided to form a joint venture, with each of the two companies holding a 50% share.

Under terms of the deal, all of Conair's automation sales, engineering and service employees transitioned to Sevro America. These included Jim Healy, who became Sevro America's Vice President, Sales & Marketing and Bill Geddis, Vice President Sales & Automation, both of whom have now sold Sevro robots for more than two decades.

Just 15 months later, buoyed by strong sales, a tightly focused North American team, and continued bright prospects, Renaudeau decided to buy out the other half of the joint venture and make Sevro America a wholly-owned daughter company, serving the U.S. and Canada. The deal was finalized in November 2008.

(More)

An engine for global growth

Sepro's bold decision to invest in the promise of the North American market marked a turning point in the company's transformation from a European-based company known for producing large robots to an increasingly global organization –renamed Sepro Group – with a diverse line that features the latest technology, explains Renaudeau.

“To be a global player in robots for the plastics industry,” says Renaudeau, “we recognized the need to excel not only in Europe, but in North America and all the major markets. Our investment in creating Sepro America, and a dedicated ‘local’ sales and service organization for the US and Canada was a major step for Sepro Group.”

Yet it was only the first step. At the same time, Sepro Group recognized the need to diversify and expand its product lines. “We had to bring the best available robot technology to customers in a full range of sizes, while meeting the challenges of making it easier to use and affordable,” Renaudeau adds.

Sepro America and its North American customers played a pivotal role in Sepro Group's global transformation, demonstrating how well Sepro's new strategic pieces – local service and diverse product technology – fit together. Between 2008 and 2010, despite the deepest recession in modern U.S. history, the new Sepro America sales team doubled its North American market share for large robots. Then, following the introduction of two new 3-axis servo robot lines – the universal Success range and the technologically advance S5 line – and the user-friendly Visual control platform, Sepro America doubled the region's sales between 2011 and 2013. For the first time, results from its fast-growing US market vaulted past those of France, Germany, and other countries to the top rank among Sepro Group's global markets.

Continued product innovation – expansion of the S5 line and industry partnerships with Staubli and Yaskawa that brought Sepro its first 5-axis and 6-axis robots – fueled further growth in recent years. So too has a growing range of partnerships with injection-molding machine makers. In these partnerships, Sepro and IMM makers cooperate to develop and provide integrated robot solutions as factory options to IMM customers. Thanks in part to these innovations, 2013 marked the first of four record-setting sales years and, by 2016, global sales had nearly doubled from €66.5 to €104 million.

Service has also been a key contributor to the success of Sepro America, explains Loic Legendre, Vice President of Service & Administration. “Local customer service is at the heart of our everyday business,” he says. “We design and manufacture robots and we are a leader in our business but, above all, we are a company ‘at your service’.” A 24-hr Service Hotline connects customers to a team of experienced technicians that is able to solve 80% of all issues over the phone. Of course, Sepro also has field-service people strategically located across the country to address more serious issues, and a huge inventory of spare parts is maintained in Warrendale, ready for immediate dispatch.

Expanding Facilities

The need to add personnel and expanded sales, service, training, and application-development facilities led Sepro America to relocate in late 2013 from its original Emsworth home to its current, 16,500-sq-ft building in Warrendale, PA. And in late 2016, Sepro Group announced an €11 million global expansion that will include doubling the size of the Warrendale facility and the addition of large-robot assembly capabilities.

“Our primary goal is to optimize delivery to North American customers, but the critical factor in our operations is quality control,” explains Jim Healy, noting that Sepro has a substantial engineering and assembly capability in Warrendale. “This facility is already our North American hub for systems integration and for designing and building complex, integrated automation cells. So, assembling the robots themselves is a logical next step. Initially, we’ll focus on Sepro’s new large robots -- the Strong, S7 and 7X ranges for injection molding machines of 800 tons or larger -- for delivery to customers in the U.S., Canada and possibly Mexico.” He adds that Sepro America will source beams and some other components locally, while the more technical components will continue to be manufactured at the Sepro Group factory in France.

About Sepro

Sepro was one of the first companies in the world to develop Cartesian beam robots for injection-molding machines, introducing its first CNC controlled “manipulator” in 1981. Today, having equipped more than 30,000 injection-molding machines, Sepro Group is one of the largest independent sellers of robots in the world. Its 3-, 5- and 6-axis servo robots, special-purpose units and complete automation systems, are all supported by the Visual control platform developed by Sepro especially for injection molders. This unique controller is a key component in what the company refers to as ‘agile integration’ – a collaborative approach to equipment connectivity and interoperability that can be tailored to exactly suit the specific needs processors and injection-molding OEMs. For Sepro and its customers and partners, “The Future is Wide Open.”

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