

Thinking globally... acting locally

The PROFIBUS Group was founded in May 1993. Twenty years on, it is still going strong in the UK. Control Engineering Europe asked UK chairman, Bob Squirrell, about its secret for success in a rapidly changing industrial environment.

The success of the organisation is due to several factors – local implementation of a global strategy, easy-to-use technologies, vendor neutrality and a spirit of co-operation. The PROFIBUS Group is part of a global organisation, known collectively as PI, short for PROFIBUS/PROFINET International. Local groups around the world support its members and manage its marketing tasks according to their own skills and culture. They react locally, but profit from central support. The technologies are defined centrally of course, but the groups exchange ideas and experiences and profit from centrally-provided services.

Over the years the organisation has developed a number of easy-to-use technologies designed to meet the needs of the market. Technologies such as the original fieldbus – PROFIBUS – now with over 40 million installed nodes; PROFINET – the organisation's implementation of the best of Ethernet's capabilities with enhancements for real-time capability applied to the needs of industry (over five million installed nodes), and PROFIBUS PA, the profile specifically developed for process industry applications, now with over seven million installed nodes worldwide. (More about these technologies can be found on PI's website at <http://www.profibus.com/technology/>)

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Vendor neutrality

The technologies are vendor-neutral which gives users a feeling of security, freeing them to select best-of-class products for their requirements from over 2,800 products from around 300 manufacturers. There is a product selector for this purpose on the PI website at <http://www.profibus.com/community/regional-pi-associations/united-kingdom/products/>

The organisation is led by a network of motivated and committed people who work together for a common cause, irrespective of the companies that employ them. Evidence of this co-operation can be seen in the many free-to-attend seminars organised by The PROFIBUS Group, covering a range of topics such as system safety and security, networking and diagnostics and practical aspects of PROFIBUS and PROFINET in Process Automation.

Each of these events features 'how to' presentations, case studies and hands-on practical demonstrations from member companies. The emphasis is always on how PROFIBUS and PROFINET should be applied to solve process and automation issues. The spirit is that of collaboration and co-operation to help users and potential users. Without this attitude and these people in the various associations, committees and working groups around the world, PROFIBUS and PROFINET would not have reached its current level of success.

The next decade

In acknowledgment of its first two decades and looking forward to its third in the UK, the PROFIBUS Group will be celebrating with a one-day conference with workshops

and a table-top exhibition to be held on 26th June 2013 at the Stratford Manor Hotel in Stratford-upon-Avon.

The conference is designed for engineers, managers and anyone concerned with the real issues of implementing fieldbus and/or industrial Ethernet technologies. The programme will contain a mixture of presentations, demonstrations and hands-on practical sessions that are suitable for delegates with a variety of experience – from first-time users to those with extensive experience with working systems. It will cover the latest developments in PROFIBUS and PROFINET technology for process automation, including hazardous areas, SCADA, wireless implementations and integration with the Internet.

More about the conference can be found on the Conference website at: www.profibusgroup.com



Bob Squirrell is UK chairman of The PROFIBUS Group.

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