THE QUEEN'S AWARDS FOR ENTERPRISE: INTERNATIONAL TRADE 2009

innomech
Automation Solutions

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NEWS RELEASE

Innomech launches 'robot in a box'

Automation consultancy GB Innomech (Innomech) has today announced a new concept in high performance, low cost robotics that will enable even low volume manufacturers to cut costs and improve their competitiveness by automating critical product manufacturing processes.

RoBox – literally a 'robot in a box' – uses a fast, highly accurate robot that can be fully customised by Innomech to carry out repetitive, labour-intensive or hazardous product assembly or quality testing tasks in sectors where it can be difficult to recruit or retain staff. Initial target markets include healthcare, consumer, industrial and food product manufacturing. RoBox is also perfect for today's short product life cycles and the demands of flexible production because it can be quickly and easily reconfigured without its operators needing any specialist programming knowledge.

"Robot-based automation is widely accepted as one of the best ways for companies to save costs but many UK manufacturers are reluctant to invest, compared with other developed nations because of outdated views about cost, set-up time and reliability. RoBox is being launched to address these concerns head on. Our novel approach is based on a new generation of high performance, industrial robots that are essentially general purpose tools which can be easily and inexpensively reprogrammed to handle multiple new tasks," said David Beale, technical director at Innomech.

Flexible automated workcells such as RoBox are also being increasingly brought in to help manufacturers protect their businesses from some significant costs that are frequently over-looked when calculating the full labour costs associated with manual manufacturing methods. For example: time lost from staff sickness or holidays, heating and lighting costs, the cost of personal protective clothing and the commercial risk of an occupational injury or litigation claim resulting from Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) and other musculoskeletal disorders.

… continued

A recent report from the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work is further strengthening the case for manufacturers to review their current processes and re-consider which steps need to be automated. The study found a rapid increase in the number of RSI cases, low skilled manufacturing jobs are usually most at risk and repeated hand and arm movements - common in product assembly, testing and packaging operations - are the single biggest risk factor.

Notes to editors:

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders in the EU – Facts and Figures
Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) arise from movements such as bending, straightening, gripping, twisting and reaching. These common movements are not particularly harmful in daily life, but in work environments it is the continued repetition and most of all the speed of movements and lack of time for recovery that makes them hazardous.

For more information and to download a copy of the 2010 report by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work please see: http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/TERO09009ENC/view

Typical RoBox tasks
RoBox can be easily configured to handle a range of manufacturing assembly and testing tasks in a number of different markets. Typical applications include:

- assembly of electrical connectors, medical devices and other products;
- production of intricate precision mechanical assemblies such as sensors or switches, especially where batch sizes are small and changeovers frequent;
- placing wires into assemblies and integrating with a high precision servo-controlled welder;
- inspecting automotive components and connecting into sub-assemblies;
- lab cell culture / microbiology / biological sample handling and processing;
- decorating cakes/cookies/Easter eggs and other product finishing;
- and packing chocolates or other similarly sized products into trays/boxes.

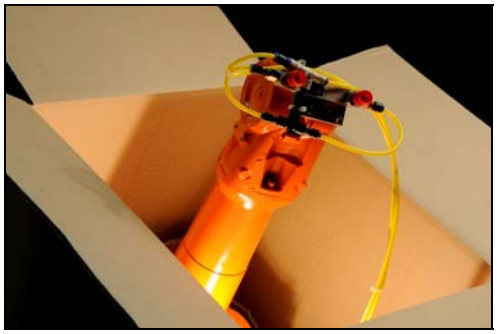
About GB Innomech
GB Innomech (Innomech) specialises in automating highly complex and labour-intensive manufacturing processes to maximise outputs, improve product quality and boost business performance. The company works with major international manufacturers in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, medical devices and environmental, as well as earlier-stage businesses looking to bring breakthrough technologies or products to market.

Innomech has a growing market reputation for solving the toughest of manufacturing problems by the early identification and management of risk, often cross-fertilising technologies and techniques from a range of industry sectors. All projects from initial feasibility studies through to building production-scale machines are conducted to high specification pharmaceutical industry standards and are designed to comply with GAMP5, FDA and other international standards.

The company was founded in 1990, is based at The Innovation Centre in Witchford, north of Cambridge and was awarded The Queen's Award for Enterprise 2009 to recognise its sustained growth in international markets.

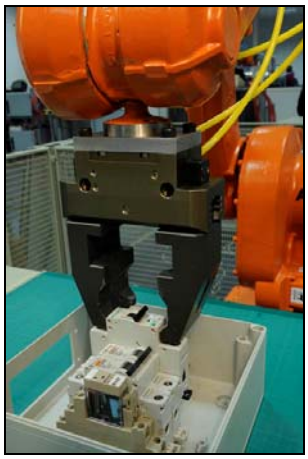
For additional information about GB Innomech please visit or contact:
- www.innomech.co.uk
- Press enquiries to Simon McKay on +44 (0)1353 741075 or email to simonmckay@innomech.co.uk
- All other enquiries to Tim Mead at Innomech on +44 (0)1353 667394

Photographs
Print quality JPEGs of the images below have been sent attached to the original email or are also available on request from Simon McKay (details above):



Innomech is launching RoBox as a high performance, low cost flexible workcell that has been fully customised to carry out repetitive manufacturing assembly or testing tasks. RoBox is designed to work straight from the box!

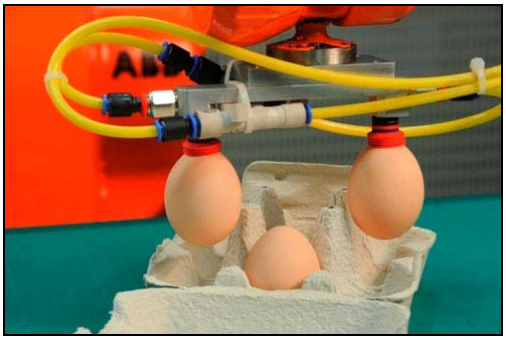
Photo credit: ABB Robotics.



RoBox is essentially a general purpose machine tool that is perfect for multiple manufacturing tasks, such as control hardware assembly as shown here.

The robot can be easily and inexpensively re-programmed making it ideal for short production runs and fast switchovers.

RoBox replaces highly labour-intensive, repetitive and low skilled assembly tasks where it can be difficult to recruit or retain staff. For example: 'pick and place' of finished products such as chocolates.



RoBox can handle even the most variable and fragile products. It works at high speed, accurately and incorporates advanced sensors to ensure it never breaks a single egg!

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