

PRESS RELEASE

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EAMA welcomes positive government response to Automation Study

The first study of automation within UK SME manufacturers has identified the main barriers to take-up as their lack of knowledge and skills and their attitude to risk. Other factors also have an impact.

A four-country benchmarking study commissioned by members of the Engineering and Machinery Alliance (EAMA), with support from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and British Automation and Robot Association (BARA) members, shows manufacturers have invested significantly less in modern manufacturing technologies than their counterparts in mainland Europe. As a result many UK manufacturers aren't as competitive as they could be.

In a relatively high cost economy such as the UK, the application of automation is an essential ingredient in the sustainability of many manufacturing businesses enabling them to compete more successfully in the global market. Automating manufacturing processes not only drives costs down, it improves quality, reduces waste and optimises energy use.

According to the report (*Application of Automation in UK Manufacturing 27th Sept 2010* (ref www.eama.info)), UK manufacturing has fallen a long way behind our European competitors. Taking robot use as an example, Germany has an installed base of 144,800 industrial robots and Spain 28,600, whereas the UK records only 15,100.

Martin Walder, Chairman of EAMA, commented: "By comparing UK companies with similar businesses in Germany, Spain and Sweden this study highlights our weakness in automation. If UK manufacturing is to remain competitive we have to act now."

Business Minister Mark Prisk said: "I am delighted to announce today that we will be contributing £600,000 for a two year automation and robotics programme to be developed and run by EAMA and BARA. The programme will better prepare companies to introduce new automated/robotic systems and help them increase productivity, reduce waste and increase precision in their manufacturing process."

In addition to supporting the automation and robotics programme, BARA with the assistance of members, including ABB Robotics and Kuka Automation + Robotics, and other trade bodies, such as the Food and Drink Federation, the Processing and Packaging Machinery Association and other EAMA members, is implementing a regional events programme to help SMEs understand the benefits of automation.

Notes to editors:

For more details about the report please see:
www.eama.info/automation-and-growth.htm