

# GET READY FOR INDUSTRY 4.0?

## The demands faced by technology distributors



▲ From Upper Franconia to around the world: Countless shipments leave WEBER's headquarters in the Frankenwald nature reserve

For around 70 years now, the family-run ROLF WEBER GROUP, based in the town of Schauenstein in Germany's Upper Franconia region, has been in the business of supplying replacement parts to distributors, tradespeople, and industrial customers. The company sends shipments from its range of over 600,000 articles around the world every day, and roughly 120 employees at its locations in Cologne, Berlin, Chemnitz, and Hamburg ensure problem-free maintenance and production processes for its customers.

### CHANGES IN THE DISTRIBUTION BUSINESS

However, the distribution business as we know it (rolling bearings, linear technology, drive technology, sealing technology, lubricants and adhesives, hoses, and fittings) has undergone significant changes over the last few years. The focus has long ceased to be solely on shipping the right product in the right quantity, and is now also on "predictive maintenance". The measuring technology sector has grown exponentially, for example.

At WEBER, there are many key questions to be answered, like when and why damage occurs, how it can be detected

ahead of time, and more importantly, whether damage forecasts can further optimize the condition of machines and equipment and whether downtimes can thus be largely prevented. A wide range of different measurement methods are used to answer these questions: In addition to conventional speed and vibration measurement, others include shock pulse measurement and temperature measurement using thermal imaging technology, as well as the recording of additional key data from the production process.

### A LEADER IN INDUSTRY 4.0

Long before the term "Industry 4.0" became a media buzzword, the application engineers and measuring technicians at WEBER were already thinking of ways to make the vast quantities of information generated by a wide range of production processes usable for maintenance purposes. WEBER is working with the Institute of Information Systems at Hof University (iisys) and further partners from the IT sector to create a "smart solution" for maintenance that optimally combines all of this different information. Numerous projects for recording and processing information have been developed for this purpose, which



▲ 4.0 is a key philosophy at WEBER – and communications are no exception

are independent of individual machine component and measuring technology manufacturers. In this collaboration between science and business, WEBER works to continually match the results of the key data evaluations to the requirements of the maintenance sector, thus ensuring that equal consideration is given to the IT data that are gathered and traditional maintenance expertise.



▲ Training and advanced training complete Service 4.0 – and naturally include Schaeffler products



## THE MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN OF TOMORROW

It is clear to everybody at WEBER that this approach is absolutely necessary: Germany is characterized by medium-sized, family-owned companies that use machines and equipment maintained by experienced personnel for long periods of time. Because a problem-free production process is an essential success factor for every production company, maintenance teams bear a huge level of responsibility. Members of such teams have also experienced a change in their job profiles, from being mechanical or electrical engineers in the conventional sense to being measurement technicians and IT administrators. This shift highlights how important it will be in the future for such key positions to be filled by a team that is outstandingly well-trained. In this field, the ROLF WEBER GROUP offers a wide range of support services, from machine and equipment development and the implementation of 4.0 requirements (e.g. using individual “smart maintenance solutions”) through to training and advanced training of personnel. Our status as a partner for supplying and stocking industrial technology still remains unchanged, of course.

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