

Forecast for '14

It is always an eagerly anticipated annual feature, and this year is no different as automation industry executives, analysts and commentators provide a fascinating glimpse into the business landscape, key new technologies, country and industry growth opportunities, and much more, to help you navigate your own road ahead in 2014.



Haider Rashid
Region President
South Asia,
ABB

ABB is a company that tends to be involved in infrastructure; we help generate and transmit power, and also provide technologies for industries to use power more efficiently. So despite the financial uncertainty, 2013 was a reasonably good year for us as countries continued to invest steadily in infrastructure.

We saw good developments in the developing markets of Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines, as these countries expanded infrastructure in light of their economic expansion. In the mature markets of Singapore and Australia, we saw more investments by companies being poured into improving energy efficiency.

There are some challenges ahead in 2014. Political tensions in the region, such as the recent events in Thailand and upcoming Indonesian elections, are noteworthy, while investments in the mining industry are expected to fall. Still, despite short term fluctuations, the macro trends are still there, with continued demand for power, industrial productivity and efficiency in South Asia.

In terms of industries, we have been seeing consistently strong investment in the oil & gas sector and this should continue in 2014. We also expect continuing investments in energy transmission and distribution among the larger Southeast Asian countries.

Continued demand for power, industrial productivity and efficiency in South Asia.”



Craig Resnick
Vice President,
ARC Advisory
Group

In 2013, the economy in many regions saw stronger activity, particularly in the energy sector. Suppliers to the process industries saw solid gains, while suppliers to the discrete industries enjoyed continued investment activity in the electronics and automotive industries in Asia and North America. Japanese suppliers saw a disproportionate benefit from a weaker yen. New order activity also grew, which led to a strong finish to the year for the automation market.

Overall, growth in 2014 is likely to slightly accelerate from 2013 due to Western Europe bottoming out and appearing to be back on a growth path; emerging Asia recovering to mid-high single digit growth; Brazil resuming growth, especially in discrete; and the US riding energy (shale gas boom) and automotive; and the latter sector also driving Mexico in Latin America.

Key industry trends for 2014 include devices, machinery and plant equipment becoming even more intelligent and connected; mobile devices becoming a more common visualisation platform; supervisory applications slowly but continually moving to some form of cloud technology; remote asset and operations monitoring growing rapidly; 3D simulation and visualisation becoming more common; more robust cyber security monitoring being deployed; asset and product lifecycle solutions becoming more integrated; and more analytics models being deployed to monitor plant operations to improve performance and predict failures.

Plant equipment becoming even more intelligent and connected.”



Albert Huang
Vice President,
Industrial
Automation Group,
Advantech

Advantech's Industrial Automation Business returned to growth in 2013. The growth comes from several sectors, including: SoftMotion product lines for Machine Automation; Substation automation business from Smart Grids; Automation computing platforms; WebAccess Alliance Plus business model.

This year will see the unfolding of Advantech's transformation to a Global Sector-Lead Business Structure. In addition to deploying focused sales and marketing strategies and restructuring our product teams, Advantech's Industrial Automation business will have a dedicated organisation to focus on vertical sectors such as Machine Automation and Power & Energy to form a global integrated team for each of them.

Regarding the Machine Automation business, with the merger of LNC last year, we completed our deployment of three major application areas: Machine Control, Industrial Robots, and Machine Automation Open Platforms. Advantech is now able to penetrate the traditional Machine & CNC Control market and develop iRobot opportunities globally.

With the trends of the Internet of Things (IoT) and Industry 4.0, besides the target vertical sectors, we also see booming opportunities in areas such as oil and gas, intelligent agriculture, water treatment, and intelligent factory.

Overall, we see 2014 as a year full of opportunities in the automation sector and our focused market areas. Together with our implementation of business strategies and global marketing roll-out, we look forward to a good outcome for our past and present effort.

2014 is a year full of opportunities in the automation sector.”



Henry Lau
Senior Vice President
Asia Pacific,
AspenTech

Meeting our process industry customers' needs through constant innovation is a key area for AspenTech. In 2013, we continued this commitment with a rigorous product release schedule and industry breakthroughs.

Newly launched product innovations include the process industry's first web-based user interface (for aspenONE), and the industry's first marketplace, aspenONE Exchange. We also introduced applications that are critical to our customers, such as solids modeling, pressure safety valve sizing for plant safety, assay management, visbreaker and delayed coker models for the growing abundance of heavy crudes. In addition, the company acquired pipeline and dock scheduling technology to enhance our refinery planning and scheduling solutions.

In October, AspenTech was honoured to receive the Best Energy Management Technology award at the Asian Manufacturing Awards. Energy management continues to be a significant operational theme in Asia Pacific, and the award was a tremendous validation of our software's capability.

Under the leadership of Antonio Pietri, AspenTech's new president and CEO, we look forward to helping our customers unlock the full value of aspenONE software and capture new market opportunities in 2014.

Energy management a significant operational theme in Asia Pacific.”
