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25.09.2019

Tags: Puerto Rico, Manufacturing, Rockwell Automation, Automation, Digitalization

*Alejandra Quevedo, sales leader Caribbean Region, and Alejandro Ramos, channels & territory manager at Rockwell Automation in Puerto Rico share what makes the company the partner of choice for the life sciences manufacturers on the island by enabling them to achieve their business goals and how they accompany them in their journey to become Connected Enterprises through the merger of OT and IT systems.*

**Could you start by giving our international readers an overview of your operations in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean region?**

Alejandra Quevedo (AQ): At Rockwell Automation, the Latin American market is divided into four regions. The Caribbean, Central America, Columbia and Ecuador together form the Andean region. The other three regions are Brazil, South America and Mexico. In the Caribbean sub-region, a USD 20 million operation, the Pharmaceutical sector is our main market, followed by Oil & Gas. We employ about 36 people and provide the full portfolio of both services and projects. The advantage of being a US territory is that we can count on the support from the US anytime that we have a project which requires special expertise.

Alejandro Ramos (AR): What differentiates us from other automation companies is that we are very flexible on how we handle projects. We are not close, we are very open to doing business, not only with end users but also with our partners. We can either conduct projects by ourselves or support our system integrators. If a project is key or difficult, we will handle the project in-house, but if one of our partners is pursuing the project, we are ready to help them.

**As demand for industrial process automation rises across the pharmaceutical arena, what makes Rockwell Automation a partner of choice compared to competitors like Honeywell and Siemens?**

AQ: Developing a new medicine can take more than a decade and costs more than a billion dollars. As a result, biopharma companies aim to be present on the market as soon as approval is granted by regulatory agencies. Moreover, the pharmaceutical industry is highly regulated, and companies are wary about potential compliance issues which could result in large fines. Lastly, manufacturers need to be flexible in their production processes in order to make changeovers quickly. Our solutions enable them to achieve these three goals: faster time-to-market, regulatory compliance and production flexibility.

Biopharma companies are looking for two things: automation technologies, both hardware and software, and process engineering. As the number one automation company in the world, we provide both industry-leading technology as well as experts in chemical and material engineering who understand the business drivers of biopharma manufacturers and support them in their processes. Beyond technology, it is our expertise in biopharma processes which makes us the trusted advisor of manufacturers.

AR: We have state-of-the art technology but what makes us unique is the way we do business. Our systems are open so that we can connect technologies from partners when it makes sense. On the other hand, other companies have closed systems which compel users to utilize their solutions only.

AQ: Finally, the vision of biotechnology companies and our vision are aligned: improving the quality of life. Our automation engineers understand that the lives of people are at stake and that the ultimate goal of making a process faster and more efficient is to save lives. Not all the providers share these values.

**While Puerto Rico remains a pharma manufacturing powerhouse, volumes have been contracting and the island has not seen major greenfield investments in a while. Is this a constraint on growth or does it present opportunities?**

AQ: Even though the pharma manufacturing industry has been contracting, the pharmaceutical sector has been a growing business for us in the last four years as we have solidified our position as the trusted partner of manufacturers around the island thanks to our customer-oriented mindset. The trust that our customers place in us has only increased since Hurricane Maria when we demonstrated our commitment to ensuring the continuity of their operations. Two days after the hurricane devastated the island, we were already back to work serving customers. We strategically divided the island into parts and coordinated the responsibilities for the different industries in each. As communication was severely disrupted, we proactively went out knocking on customers' doors without waiting for them to contact us. A lot of equipment was damaged, but we were able to quickly replace it thanks to our local stocks and the support of the US organization which prioritized the provision of equipment to Puerto Rico. Two weeks later the president of Latin America came here to visit customers and express his support. As a result, this event strengthened our bond with customers but also brought us closer together as a team.

Moreover, the ageing infrastructure presents tremendous opportunities to revamp and upgrade all the installations. Since we know our customers' operations inside and out, their processes, equipment and people, we are the trusted advisor to perform these upgrades.

AR: It is not only the ageing equipment that needs upgrading, but also the software. One of the major constraints our customers face is that their operating systems are getting out of date. This presents a great opportunity for us to help them realize business benefits. Upgrading for the sake of upgrading is not enough. We need to show the benefits to the organization so that the upper management sees the value and endorses change.

AQ: Another opportunity lies in cybersecurity. As equipment becomes increasingly connected through IoT, network vulnerabilities are a growing concern. As experts in the field, we offer customers a comprehensive assessment of their entire network and solutions to secure it from risks such as cyberattacks.

**In June of last year, Rockwell Automation made a $1bn equity investment in PTC. How does your combined offering help you better meet the challenges of pharma manufacturers?**

AR: The strategic partnership with PTC is key to accelerate the transformation to Industry 4.0. Leveraging our joint expertise, technology, and resources enables us to provide manufacturers with real-time analytics, predictive maintenance capabilities, and a unified view across factories. Our two companies have brought their smart factory technologies into the FactoryTalk InnovationSuite.

Backed by the largest combined IoT ecosystem in the world, the FactoryTalk InnovationSuite makes all the bytes of data around the shop floor more accessible and turns it into actionable insights enabling managers to make informed business decisions. Now we can talk business with the executives, not only process improvements with the automation engineers on the shop floor.

AQ: PTC brings their award-winning information technology in IoT and Augmented Reality, and we bring our leading operational technology in industrial automation and analytics as well as our deep knowledge of the industry. This combination is unique. By unifying OT and IT systems, decision-makers will unlock the operational intelligence they need and have better visibility, understanding, and ability to act on real-time conditions. The partnership with PTC is a giant leap forward to our goal of creating the Connected Enterprise.

**Martin Petrick, Life Science Strategic Account Manager for Rockwell Automation in Switzerland, told us that the level of automation on the shop floor of pharmaceutical manufacturers varies greatly because the implementation of more automated systems requires processes to be revalidated by regulators. As a result, there is a lot of room in pharma to do more and unlock value at the shop floor level. How would you assess the progress of pharmaceutical manufacturers in Puerto Rico toward becoming Connected Enterprises?**

AQ: Transforming pharmaceutical manufacturers into Connected Enterprises is our goal. When they hear about this concept, they come to us to understand what it means. As the pharmaceutical industry is highly regulated, it is always a little bit behind other industries in embracing new technologies because of the validation process. New technologies need to be proven before they are implemented.

The first concern pharma manufacturers have is what to do with their data. This is the first step in becoming a Connected Enterprise. They collect data from many silos and now the question is how to combine all of it and transform it into meaningful information to make better decisions such as when to perform maintenance on a piece of equipment before it fails or when to make changeovers, anything that can be predicted.

AR: Industry 4.0 is a journey. It took 50 years to go from Industry 3.0 to Industry 4.0. We need to begin with the first step. Often our customers do not know where to begin. This is where we can help. First, we need to determine where they want to go and set up the expectations not only from the local pharmaceutical plant but also from the corporate suit at headquarters. Then we need to assess the current situation and how far we are from the goalpost. In some cases, the corporate level has already defined their expectations, where they would like to be in 10 years, and we can help them take the initial steps. Since the life sciences industry is highly regulated, you cannot make big changes right away, but you can have a plan. Once expectations are established, it is a matter of setting achievable milestones along the way. Having this kind of relationship with customers is an ideal situation as we understand what Industry 4.0 entails and the journey to get there to unlock its full business value.

AQ: When customers are just starting the journey, we have to start by explaining the concepts. What does digital transformation mean? What is Industry 4.0? Is it the same as the $4^{th}$ Industrial Revolution? Following the example of PTC, we have started bringing together different departments to the table, not only IT and Operations but also Finance, HR and other departments, to discuss these concepts and how they will affect the way they work. By bringing these different departments to the same table, we can now talk business with decision-makers.

AR: While we would like things to move faster, we also need to be realistic. You first need to put the idea in the heads of decision makers, so it starts to germinate and grow. I am certain that in two or three years, everybody in the life sciences industry will be talking about their plans for Industry 4.0.

**Another major challenge for manufacturers on the island is the high cost of energy. How do your solutions help them reduce their energy needs?**

AQ: This is another great opportunity. Energy costs in Puerto Rico are the most expensive in the US at 26 cents per kWh. We offer a portfolio of products and solutions aimed at saving energy and reduce emissions for instance through condition monitoring.

AR: When customers come to us to help them save energy, I naturally ask them where they are consuming the energy. Although it sounds surprising, almost all of them do not know the answer. So the first thing we need to do is identify the key equipment consuming the most energy. Once this is done, we can offer products and solutions to save energy.

Moreover, most pharmaceutical manufacturers such as Amgen and Pfizer have completed or are in the process of building co-generation plants and use our solutions to control them as we have the right know-how and knowledge in the power area. They are able to receive all the data from the co-generation facility on their smartphone and control the output of steam and gas remotely.

We are very active in co-generation projects with our partners, not only for pharma manufacturers but also for hospitals, hotels and other sectors. One of our system integrators has at least 5 projects in co-generation. We can provide our solutions to any type of business.

**Regarding human resources, how do you assess the availability of talent in automation engineering on the island?**

AR: It is difficult to find automation engineers in the US in general and particularly here in Puerto Rico. The lack of automation engineers in Puerto Rico is a problem we are trying to address. The first thing we need to do as an industry, not only the automation industry but also the life sciences industry, is to sit down with universities to explain what type of engineers we need so that students can prepare themselves to the real world. I have participated in meetings with the director of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department of UPR-Mayaguez to discuss these issues. I think there is a lot of room for improvement on both sides.

AQ: Our customers face the same issue. We need to develop a program together with the industry and academia to support students with internships and trainings. We would like to replicate the success story of one of our system integrators in Colombia that makes it possible for university students to use their labs and familiarize themselves with Rockwell Automation technology. They also offer scholarships and a class to learn about Rockwell Automation technology was created at partner universities. We want to do the same thing here by working together with the industry and have brought this system integrator to share best practices.

**Looking forward, what are your priorities to continue driving the growth of the affiliate?**

AQ: Develop local talent is one of our main priorities. I believe Puerto Rico has tremendous potential and I think we need to develop our local capabilities by working together with academia, the pharmaceutical industry as well as with our network partners and system integrators to develop the industry and state-of-the-art technology.

AR: I agree. There is a high demand for good engineers, but unfortunately, many of them are leaving the island. I think part of the problem lies in the widespread belief that there are no opportunities in Puerto Rico. Parents and teachers encourage young people to move to the mainland to find a bright future. I was also told to same. I began working in Cleveland but moved back to Puerto Rico as I found this great opportunity. In my view, we need to provide the young generation with a more accurate picture of the opportunities available here on the island and let them decide for themselves.

AQ: Everybody believes the economy in Puerto Rico is terrible. While the economy is challenging, it should be noted that even after the removal of tax incentives (Section 936), the Hurricane and the bankruptcy, Puerto Rico still has a 50 percent manufacturing index and companies are staying here and investing in projects.

**You have both been working at Rockwell Automation for more than a decade. What makes you so dedicated to this company?**

AQ: Rockwell Automation is such a dynamic and innovative company that it is impossible to get bored. Moreover, the company provides us a great deal of independence, welcomes our ideas and trusts our judgement. I create my own job description. Finally, we are also extremely customer-oriented and have the technology and knowledge to answer all the concerns of customers.

AR: In my case, I love working for Rockwell Automation because of the technology we have. I can honestly say that we have industry-leading state-of-the-art technology. I also never get bored because every day brings new challenges, both inside and outside. And last but not least, it is a great feeling to be able to discuss with customers about what they want to achieve and fulfil their expectations.

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