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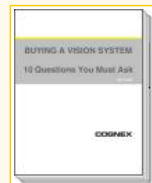
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### Can the cost of an OEE solution be minimized?

Last week in Machine Automation Insights I mentioned Stone Technologies' Kirk Weiss and his work as project manager of the MES (OEE, Reliability) Definition Team. That group is seeking ways to define MES functions in a standard way.

"Much of what we're trying to do is reduce the cost associated with putting an OEE system or solution in place," says Weiss. "What's interesting is that a big part of the effort is not the configuration of the OEE application itself. The effort is in configuring the control layer needed to acquire information that describes machine conditions. You need it in a form that you can then exchange with a higher-level application.

"In some ways it's not that big a deal. But depending on the design of the architecture in place, there may be considerable effort involved. You may have one system with a GE PLC on it. On another you have Omron or Rockwell Automation. It's disparate technologies within an organization that has grown over time. As you go to integrate these systems, you encounter one that's missing an Ethernet card. So you purchase an Ethernet card. You then encounter a machine that is still relay based, which means you have to put in some specialized IO to even be able to capture information. You may have to re-engineer this machine to some extent because it's not PLC-based."

The reality is that equipment installed in the 70s is still running in so many plants today, says Weiss. That equipment is not going to be ripped out because it makes an OEE implementation difficult. But engineering and operations managers are still being asked to improve the efficiency of the lines on which these machines are running.

"It's always tempting to say, 'Let's just get rid of the controls and put new controls in place,' says Weiss. "But that carries a cost, too. These are the issues we're wrestling with."

#### NEW AUTOMATION PRODUCTS

##### Push/pull valves

Clippard's line of manually-operated push/pull spool valves are available in 3- and 4- way configurations. Available in detent or momentary versions, the valves provide flexibility for unlimited applications. The valves provide an operating temperature of 32F to 140F degrees and an operating pressure of 0 to 115 psig.... [Read more](#)

##### System diagnostics via web

B&R's System Diagnostics is based on the B&R real-time operating system and allows system diagnostics from any location using any web browser (Intranet or Internet). The only requirement for using all of the diagnostics options is a web browser and a TCP/IP connection. The system provides simple and fast access to diagnostics data during commissioning, field tests and operation of the machine. In addition to system configuration and runtime ... [Read more](#)

##### Ethernet switches with alarm

Wago's 852 Series ethernet switches offer an alarm contact, enabled via dip switch, to signal an error condition on the switch. This feature is standard on both managed and unmanaged switches (non-ECO versions). The power input connector on the switch has two dedicated alarm circuit connections that can be wired to any warning device, such as a PLC... [Read more](#)

##### Safety network controller

Omron's NE0A-SCPU01 safety network controller provides twelve safety inputs, two test outputs and six safety outputs. The controller can be used as a standalone controller, a safety slave or a DeviceNet standard slave. The NE0A features pre-configured and TUV-certified program templates to select based on an application's safety requirements. Easily create safety circuits and save them... [Read more](#)

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and providers of contract packaging and related services and materials. "Economically Bringing Automation to Repacking" is scheduled for Wednesday, September 9 at 2 pm EST. Free registration is now open.

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