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Blue Workforce  Få vores nyheder på mail

Multi-million Euro investment in robotics company Blue Workforce

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A Chinese investor and business partner invests a double-figured DKK million amount in the company and brings more than 20 years of experience from the industry.

Preben Hjørnet is founder of Blue Workforce A/S and happy to announce, that he has entered into a definitive agreement with a Chinese investor and business partner, who invests a double-figured DKK million amount in the company. Besides the investment the new business partner brings more than 20 years of experience from the industry and software automation with multi national customers and technology investments.

The specific terms of the deal cannot be disclosed as the investor is private and doesn't want to be mentioned. The capital injection is to be used to streamline the company, strengthen the sales promotion and prepare the increasing demand by quadruple the production capacity within a year.

A new joint-venture entity, Blue Workforce Robotics (Asia Pacific) Co., Ltd, headquartered in Hong Kong has been created to target the Asian market, which is the fastest growing market in the global robotics industry. The new j.v. will provide additional engineering capabilities to supplement our Denmark engineering team and is an entirely new channel for market penetration throughout Greater China and the rest of the Asia Pacific region.

"The Blue Workforce Ragnar solutions platform is perfectly aligned to meet the needs of the emerging packaging automation market in China and throughout Asia-Pac," said Hai Chang, board member of Blue Workforce Robotics (Asia Pacific) Co., Ltd. "Their complete go-to-market strategy and business model specifically serves those factory operations seeking to utilize material handling robotics with easier deployments, greater affordability, and lower cost of ownership. We believe our clients will appreciate their innovative and scalable robotic handling platform that takes down the entry barriers to reliable automation solutions, while realizing greater value in their investments by not overpaying for any unnecessary performance or feature capabilities that won't be utilized."

At Blue Workforce, our goal and vision to make robotics accessible, applicable, and affordable remains true and steadfast. Together with Coppelio Robotics GmbH, Switzerland, (merger with Blue Workforce was completed on December 28, 2016, as recently announced), we're extremely excited with our expanding global footprint through our upcoming Asia JV operations and our shared vision and combined synergies in technology and product development, market penetration, and operational productivity.

The management team of Blue Workforce A/S, Denmark stays on the bridge, led by CEO Preben Hjørnet. Marc Freese remains in his capacity as general manager for Coppelia Robotics GmbH, Switzerland. Our new China partner principal will join the Blue Workforce board of directors upon investment closing.

Blue Workforce A/S is the third Danish robot manufacturer at the global market for collaborative robots, which is in explosive growth globally. Collaborative robots – so called co-bots – can work without fencing side by side with humans.

"We are very happy to have experienced investors who bring competences to develop our products and future co-operations. We are growing rapidly and expand our competent staff considerable to meet the global demands," says Preben Hjørnet.

The Danish Growth Fund sees a great potential in Blue Workforce A/S who can contribute with new jobs in Aalborg. "The product holds unique possibilities in an industry in massive growth. For The Danish Growth Fund the right person is essential, and thus important that Preben Hjørnet showed a great involvement and drive in Blue Workforce A/S, says head of business clients in The Danish Growth Fund Henrik Larsen.

Preben Hjørnet has developed and designed the unique pick & place robot Ragnar that can do everything within packaging, sorting and handling in the food industry – from dough to sushi. Mind you, to a fourth of the price compared to other robots at the market with a complete solution for only 40.000 Euro. It is an unusually low price solution in the robot industry compared to others.

"We hope that the investment in Blue Workforce A/S can add to make clear that Denmark is an innovative nerve centre where talents and innovative companies develop the leading technologies of the future", says Christian Hannibal, head of Digital Taskforce, Confederation of Danish Industry.

"The global market for robots is expected to increase fivefold during 10 years in that respect it is excellent that a Danish robot manufacturer once again can attract global investments."

Rapid delivery

Blue Workforce A/S looks forward to showing the robot Ragnar to well-known and new customers. One months of delivery is very rapid for a new robot especially when you have in mind that Ragnar is ready to use at once. One day, one week, one month – is part of the company's work rhythm:

One day – the customer completes the simulation to determine the optimal robot solution

One week – customer test and quotation

One month – the customer has Ragnar in the factory, ready to use

"I think robots must be as easy as possible to use and to switch to another production that you don't need to be educated an engineer to run them. We need to expand robot technology to include small and medium size companies to keep up our competitiveness", says Preben Hjørnet.

Technology Manager at Robot Technology, Danish Technological Institute Søren Peter Johansen has several times seen Ragnar running, e.g. at OpenLab arrangement at the Danish Technological Institute, where several robot companies showed different solutions within robotics:

“The unique of Preben Hjørnet’s solution is that it is a scalable robot for a relatively low price. It is a type of robot that covers many needs at the market, Søren Peter Johansen thinks.

An additional robot in reserve

Some customers have chosen to buy two robots and an additional robot in stock to ensure that the production line is running in case one robot should stop. The replacement of the robot will only be brief due to the flexible software and Ragnar’s frame which is available on wheels.

A customer outside Denmark use Ragnar for packaging of doughnuts and other baked goods where the robot pick the dough from one conveyor to another where it will be wrapped.

Other customers use Ragnar to handle cosmetics, toys and waste.

With a low price solution like Ragnar the decision to implement a robot is not always to be made at the level of the CEO. It is as such not an investment.

Ragnar is delivered with a complete 3D simulation developed by Mark Freese from Coppelia Robotics GmbH, vision with data collection, frame, automation and gripper technology and meets the standards of Industry 4.0.

The software solution is easy to understand and can be used at home on line like a computer game using modules to build up the solutions that fits the needs of the single customer.

The gripper is energy-saving, food approved and without vacuum, but uses pneumatic drives which runs in linear movement to the gripper.

About Blue Workforce A/S

Preben Hjørnet founded the company in frustration and astonishment over how expensive and complicated it seemed to be to implement robots into the industry. His philosophy is to create a robot solution which is affordable for not only 10 percent of the companies, but 90 percent can buy. He is very much inspired by the American professor and expert in disruptive innovation Clayton Christensen.

Preben Hjørnet has been in the robotics business for 25 years, is Master of Science in Process Control and Digital Images and has an MBA from Harvard Business School and was a teacher of disruptive education as part of the executive MBA and Master of Manufacturing and Technology program at Aalborg University.

He is a “serial-entrepreneur” and has founded several companies, which has been bought by multinational companies.

Blue Workforce A/S was founded in 2012 of Preben and Charlotte Hjørnet in Frederikshavn, where the development department earlier was located. Today there are eight employees and the number is growing.

The robot Ragnar is named after the first Danish Viking king.

The name “Blue Workforce” indicates that it isn’t “warm hands” working, but electronic equipment in the shape of robots.

The logo in Blue Workforce A/S is a symbol of a Viking castle.