

TMC/HERO Technologies

Making engineers as productive as the robots they install

EPLAN combines quality, efficiency and performance

An industrial robot is as dumb as the proverbial bag of hammers when it is newly manufactured. It only becomes a smart piece of technology – capable of outperforming human labor for both speed and accuracy – when it has been dressed with the right work implements, software, and is married to tasks for which it is suited. That's usually the role of the robotic or systems integrator, who is often the party that works with the end user to identify and design the ideal robot interface or automated system for an auto assembly plant, paint shop or bottling plant. Integrators like TMC/Hero Technologies of Belgium take the basic robot – usually a catalogue product – and give it customized software, end effector(s) and tooling for specific tasks like arc welding and materials handling.

“We want to give our robots ‘senses’ in 2D and 3D and in ‘force sensing’. We are also aiming at having an optimal interface in place between man and machine. We have recently started to work with EPLAN for the realization of our design diagrams. It was a logical choice. With the exceptional growth of our switchbox department, we found more and more often that we needed a design software system that combined quality, efficiency and performance. That pretty much pushed us straight into the arms of EPLAN.” says Karl Ruelens, business manager at TMC/Hero Technologies.

ePLAN *your* **engineering**

EPLAN

shortens project turnaround times

“It simply couldn’t compete with the functions that make EPLAN so special: automatic online generations, auto-connecting, macro variant technology, etc.,” says Ruelens. “These functions help ensure we can design faster and in a more user-friendly manner.”

Making robots smarter than man for the assigned job is the role of the engineers at TMC/Hero Technologies. Making the engineers as productive and accurate as possible is the job of EPLAN Electric P8 software.

Rapid growth needs a new design software

For TMC/Hero Technologies, EPLAN was the obvious choice for the advanced capabilities it offers and for the ability it provides to share output with suppliers or other project participants. The four-year-old company has done robotic customization and installation for such major automakers as Volvo Trucks, Opel Belgium and DAF Trucks as well as Kraft Foods, Procter & Gamble and Pentair Water. With success and rapid growth came the conclusion that it had to have more robust and full-featured design tools that were also industry standard and would generate output in a format that TMC/Hero’s suppliers and customers could utilize. Its old design software no longer was up to the job.

Information sharing made simple with EPLAN

Switching to EPLAN Electric P8 also enabled TMC/Hero Technologies to operate on a single, widely recognized standard. “This leads to uniformity and clarity,” says Ruelens. So many of the company’s suppliers and other partners also have EPLAN that design information can flow back and forth in EPLAN format a lot faster, so that projects get done more quickly. EPLAN Electric P8 comes with many output, import/export and interface capabilities to facilitate information sharing, such as:

- DXF/DWG Import/Export with customizable settings
- Intelligent PDF Export
- Import common image file formats like BMP, GIF, JPG, PNG, ICO and TIFF
- Export project pages in many of the same formats
- XML Import/Export

And language is never a barrier in a continent like Europe. With EPLAN Electric P8’s complete Unicode compatibility, schematics like wiring diagrams can be submitted in any language and everything is translated to make it even easier to collaborate with partners in different parts of the world.





DESIGN

work done in-house
using EPLAN Platform

Directly customer contact

TMC/Hero Technologies assigns a project manager to each installation or job. The project manager assumes responsibility for direct customer contact. He or she is the driving force behind each project, becoming familiar with the customer's operation and what they expect the robot installation to do in terms of functionality and productivity. By getting to know the customer's operation from A to Z, the project manager can ensure that all the correct decisions are made during the design phase.

TMC/Hero Technologies does 80 to 100 percent of all project work in house, requiring a staff of 15. The company is a partner integrator of FANUC Robotics, a Japanese-based multinational that manufactures the actual robots for a wide range of applications, including arc and spot welding, handling, sealing, assembling, painting, deburring, laser cutting and food and pharmaceutical handling.

“From concept and the first internal study to design, testing and simulations. We subsequently take the automation solution to the customer and integrate it with their processes. We even provide customized, turnkey solutions.” says Karl Ruelens.



By using the software that's rapidly becoming the industry standard, TMC/Hero Technologies can move design information back and forth between itself and suppliers with ease.

SUMMARY

Design software
to grow with

TMC/Hero Technologies chose EPLAN Electric P8

Having irrevocably outgrown its previous design software, TMC/Hero Technologies chose EPLAN Electric P8 software to have access to a robust, fully featured and expandable platform that would boost design productivity and facilitate the expansion of a young and already successful robotics integrator and facilitator. Using EPLAN Electric P8 makes the company's engineers more productive with access to key features such as automatic online generations, auto-connecting and macro variant technology. Project turnaround time is accelerated.

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