

BERNARD CONTROLS HAS A LONG HISTORY OF PROVIDING PROVEN TECHNOLOGY AND STRONG SUPPORT TO ITS CUSTOMERS. OVER A PERIOD OF EIGHTY YEARS IT HAS EARNED ITSELF A LEADING POSITION IN ELECTRIC ACTUATOR TECHNOLOGY, SUPPLYING TO THE NUCLEAR SECTOR AND ADDITIONALLY TO SOME OF THE MOST DEMANDING INDUSTRIES OF OUR TIMES – NAMELY POWER, WATER, INDUSTRY, AND OIL & GAS. THIS VIBRANT, STRONG-PERFORMING AND INDEPENDENT GROUP OF COMPANIES SUPPORTS THE COMPLETE ELECTRIC ACTUATOR MARKET IN THE BROADEST SPECTRUM OF ACTIVITIES RANGING FROM HEATING VENTILATION AND AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS RIGHT THROUGH TO THE CONTAINMENT AREAS OF A NUCLEAR FACILITY AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN. IN RECENT YEARS THE OIL & GAS MARKET IN THE MIDDLE EAST HAS BECOME PARTICULARLY SUCCESSFUL FOR THE GROUP. VALVE WORLD INDIA JOURNAL CAUGHT UP WITH TONY STARK, EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT OF INDIA, MIDDLE EAST, AND AFRICA OPERATING AREA OF BERNARD CONTROLS TO TALK ABOUT THE GROUP'S CONTINUING SUCCESS STORY AND ITS RECENT DEVELOPMENT OF A WHOLE NEW RANGE OF PRODUCTS.

By John Butterfield

Bernard Controls: providing first-class products and support to enable its customers to excel



Recent milestones

“Over the past decade Bernard Controls has regularly augmented the pace of its investments and innovations,” begins Mr. Tony Stark. “We do this to make ourselves an exemplary Group that maintains and nurtures both the quality of its relationships with customers and its eminent technological reputation.”

The success that the Group has achieved is much due to its commitment to productivity, innovation, quality, and safety: commitments that it has strongly respected in an ever increasingly demanding industrial environment without making any compromises. This feat has not happened overnight but in a number of carefully planned stages. For example, in 2010 the Group changed its identity to reflect its expertise in controls, whilst at the same time production and manufacturing processes were enhanced. Between 2011/2012 Bernard Controls continued to rapidly grow, strengthening its market position in a number of sectors, which included the oil & gas sector. To do this it built on its strong international reputation in the nuclear segment. As a result of these successes the Group opened up new offices in Russia and the Middle East. 2012 and 2013 further saw Bernard Controls segment its more recent product offers by launching its First BC and BC Premium labels, which provided technical and economical solutions perfectly adapted to the various market areas that it was serving. Following on from this the Group organization was redesigned to additionally improve customer contact with even better and faster services.

Three years ago the company drew up a Duty and Modulation Classification System to guide customers in their product selections. It was so designed to take them through the steps needed to obtain an electric actuator that perfectly met their requirements even if they might not have clearly known what these were at the starting point of their search.

“We believe that our ability to adapt as a company is the best way to innovate.”

At the same time a web application was developed to help users find their actuation solutions accurately, and in record time.

A lot has therefore been happening to tie in with the company's ambition to rapidly enhance its position as a major global electrical actuator supplier, which provides not only first-class technology and but also exceptional customer satisfaction.

New products to meet new needs

To keep in line with these goals, Bernard Controls has recently introduced a new range of weatherproof actuators that has been especially designed for the power, water, and various other industrial applications. The Group's previous range of products in these industry segments came on the market almost twenty years ago and since then needs and

requirements have continued to change. “As such,” says Mr. Stark “our Management looked at all the technologies needed by these market segments and, at the same time, listened carefully to the requirements and thoughts that were put forward by our customers in order to come up with this completely new range of products. These will not only have

an immediate commercially favorable impact on markets now, but also well into the future.”

AQ range

One of these new developments is the AQ range of products – a series of quarter-turn electric actuators established for standard applications where moderate environmental and

operational constraints prevail. “One of the outstanding features of this range of electric actuators is that they have a heavy duty design – a fully aluminium enclosure protected by powder coating. The design is also exceedingly compact. It additionally contains standard Bluetooth and LOGIC control, and during assembly, before delivery, all products are tested with automatic process,” relates Mr. Stark. The range is even closer to standard actuation needs than the former FIRST BC generation of products, and because they are multi-voltage and multi-frequency are suitable for use whatever the customer's location is around the globe. The AQ range of products features two control types, namely an electromechanical SWITCH version and an integrated an integrated new LOGIC version. In particular, the LOGIC version has an option that has been especially redesigned to provide the main functions expected from modern integrated controls. The turn-key integrated control system allows non-intrusive settings and it is compatible with most common fieldbus protocols. It further has a large LCD



New LOGIC control with a large display.

display and Bluetooth communications. The Bluetooth is standard to the equipment and allows it to communicate with Bernard Control's new mobile application – the BC APP, with its user-friendly settings, basic commands, and troubleshooting diagnostics. Additionally, product architecture and torque range can be specifically adapted to the customers' requirements. It can be used in temperatures ranging from -40 to +60°C.

AT range

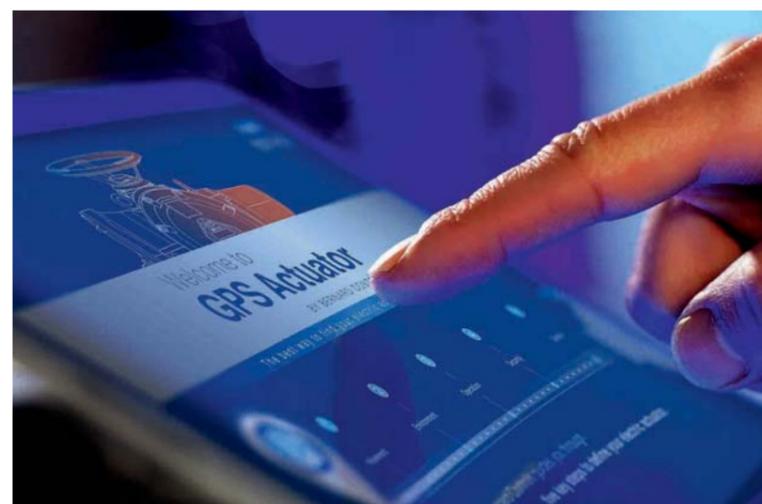
Also new is that multi-turn applications will soon be addressed with the launch of Bernard Controls' new range of AT products. These have been designed for standard actuation needs in the power, water, and various other industries. As with the AQ range, they guarantee essential functions that are required to operate a valve or a damper in moderate



AQ quarter-turn electric actuators.



“ We strive to achieve the highest standards of quality, timely and fast deliveries, and overall customer satisfaction. ”



GPS actuator: five key steps to find your electric actuator.



The AT model with LOGIC integrated control.

environmental and operational constraints. Advantages are that they are easy to use and fast to set up. The LOGIC version has a large display for user-friendly commissioning and local command, which is easily orientable by means of a few clicks. They further possess a declutch-free manual override so that it is possible to arrange quick intervention on site. The SWITCH versions also have a mechanical positioning indicator, which means that customers can check the position of a valve in an instant.

Looking to their performance for multi-turn actuation, they have a direct torque range of 30-500 Nm, and up to 8000 Nm on request. They also have a wide range of speeds to address all types of applications, including a very low speed. Other features worthy of mention are: a wide stem acceptance with an easy to install and watertight stem cover, the fact that they are self-locking at all speeds without the need for any additional features, can be used for modulating applications (Bernard Controls Class III complying with EN15714-2 Class C), and that fieldbus communication can be

added as an option with integrated LOGIC control: Modbus, Profibus devices, etc. “In summary” adds Mr. Stark: “the AT range has an innovative, reliable, and optimized design. All the new and improved features have been calculated to provide turn-key solutions that are both time and cost saving solutions.”

BT range

Soon to be available in 2018 is Bernard Controls’ newly revamped BT range. This fully new concept has been designed as a modular plat-

form with many options to offer a perfect solution for simple and safe management of the most demanding applications. Again, it contains all the technological developments of the AQ and AT range to ensure that its working is entirely state-of-the-art. Designed for working in temperatures of from -20 to +60°C, it is also possible to introduce an option to ensure that it can even work at as low as -40°C just like the AQ or AT models.

Strong customer support

Strong customer support has always been an essential part of Bernard Controls’ proffered services. “Nowadays,” says Mr. Stark “product quality and efficiency are absolute essential conditions but they are not always enough to guarantee full customer satisfaction. This is why we not only concentrate on providing the highest quality of products and timely deliveries to our customers but also in providing them with everyday support, which is over and above our technological commitment.”



BT multi-turn actuator with new INTELLI+® advanced integrated control.

Therefore regardless of the location of the Group’s customers, its support teams are constantly available to provide help and guidance along each step of the production pathway whether it be from design to installation, commissioning, maintenance, or training. For example, with regard to installation and commissioning Bernard Controls will often provide specific and focused expertise when it comes to commissioning electric actuators. This is especially true when the customer’s motorized valve is controlled by a complex system such as a fieldbus. As such the Group’s specialists regularly advise and provide support to customers with regard to: valve adaptations, installations, set-ups, and start-ups. Additionally, technicians are regularly sent out to help customers on site with such challenges as: periodic actuator functional check-ups, preventive maintenance operations, and diagnostics and repair. Similarly, Bernard Controls’ technicians also regularly organize training sessions for customers and its own distribution network. All sessions handle topical themes such as actuator technology, settings, operating, and maintenance. All this is carried out to ensure that customers can run their businesses with the minimum amount of downtime.

Competitive edge

“When it comes to talking about competitive edge,” says Mr. Stark “one of the things that makes us unique is that we are still an independent, privately-owned, family company. “There have been a lot of consolidations, mergers, and takeovers in recent years in the valve

and actuator markets leading to a rapid decrease in the numbers of companies in operation. Obviously, a lot of the big multi-nationals that have resulted are without doubt very successful. Nevertheless, we believe that a smaller company is often more flexible and can more easily adapt to changing market needs, particularly in the development of new products and technologies. Smaller companies are far less confined by the constraints of the bureaucracy that is sometimes common within large corporate organizations”. Moreover, we are very proud of our drive to achieve the highest standards of quality, timely and fast deliveries, and overall customer satisfaction, which we believe come part and parcel with the fact that we are a tightly knit, ambitious, and enthusiastic organization.”

The future

Unquestionably one of the major priorities of Bernard Controls in the coming period will be to further increase the growth of the company as the result of this new product range. A next phrase will be to upgrade the company’s oil & gas range of product range, just as it continues to upgrade its nuclear segment products because of the particularly stringent requirements in this latter market. “Above all,” says Mr. Stark “we will continue in our strong belief that our ability to adapt as a company is the best way to innovate. By improving our competencies and the efficiency of our processes, we will be able to go on enhancing the quality of our products and services to achieve further success.”