

Systems become retro-“fit”

A retrofit increases the safety of 24/7 operation; users benefit from an optimised production process. In an interview with C2, Sebastian Muchenberger, area sales manager at Hildebrand Technology (St. Gallen, Switzerland), explains how to efficiently implement a retrofit in practice and why optimal results can be achieved with iONstream discharge bars

C2: Mr Muchenberger, Hildebrand Technology is known for its solutions in the fields of antistatic and web cleaning. What do your customers appreciate most about your products and services?

Sebastian Muchenberger: First and foremost, our customers appreciate our efficient, robust and modern products. In addition, they can rely on fast, professional support and short delivery times for every project.

C2: How do your iONstream 4.0 - 6kV, 12kV and 18kV discharge bars stand out in retrofitting on existing plants?

S. Muchenberger: Our iONstream 4.0 - 6kV, 12kV and 18kV discharge bars are a perfect and industry-proven all-rounder system for all applications, which is characterised by the following features:

- » Easy to install; standard 5-pin/ M12 connector.
- » No high-voltage cable, no external mains transformer
- » 24V DC system with integrated micro-controller
- » Dynamic substrate polarity and charge detection
- » System status via LED colours as well as clean bar output, for stand-alone or network use
- » All versions and lengths available within 2-5 working days

C2: How would you describe the typical project procedure for retrofit enquiries?

S. Muchenberger: Before a retrofit is implemented, planning and conception are required. Here we support our customers with advice and practical help. During a customer visit, we check the existing equipment and measure

the existing electrostatic charges. This results in a proposal for the optimal positioning of the iONstream 4.0 discharge bars. At the customer's request, we schedule a demonstration of the test bar. In addition, there is a 30-day return policy on every first order and our customers benefit from a simple and, if required, step-by-step installation with short downtimes.

C2: What results do your customers achieve after a retrofit with your iONstream 4.0 discharge bars?

S. Muchenberger: A retrofit with iONstream 4.0 discharge bars leads to a significantly better discharge thanks to our patented AUTO DC Technology System. Thanks to the permanent efficiency monitoring of our iONstream 4.0 bars, our customers benefit from increased safety in 24/7 operation and from an optimised production process.

C2: Are there any current products and developments from your company that you would like to introduce to our readers?

S. Muchenberger: Yes, with pleasure! One of the new products is our industrial panel iONcontrol with touchscreen. The iONcontrol was redesigned by Hildebrand Technology and optimised for Industry 4.0 applications. The entire system can be controlled via the industrial touch screen with self-explanatory user interface. Clear icons, concise statistics and logical menu navigation make it easy for the user to operate the industrial panel. The control system is designed to be networked with all components. Production and maintenance processes are simplified and line management becomes even more efficient. The iONcontrol can be flexibly and easily integrated into any



Sebastian Muchenberger

production environment. Whether as a component in a control cabinet or as a stand-alone console; the iONcontrol is used directly at the location of the process. Secure data exchange with higher-level systems takes place via an Ethernet connection.

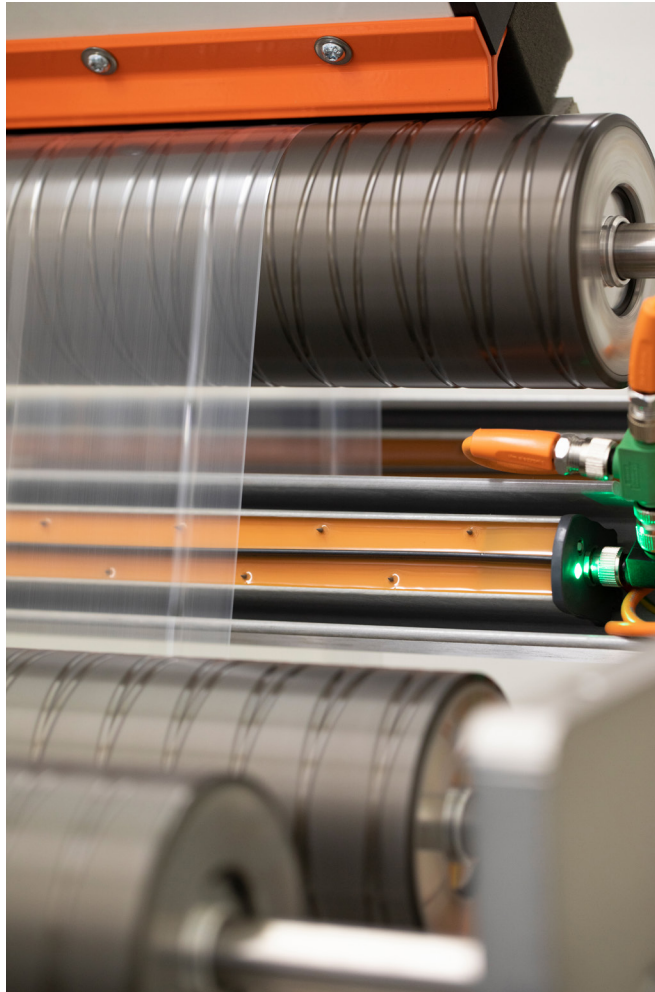
Let's talk about the areas of application: The comprehensive functions of the iONcontrol control are used wherever high and reproducible discharging, charging or web cleaning is required. The iONcontrol is also ideal for applications where fully automatic and process-reliable discharging, charging and web cleaning is to be achieved. Vertically, the iONcontrol control can be easily integrated into existing systems and production infrastructures and allows bidirectional data exchange for an effective production process. Horizontally, iONcontrol is networked with all Hildebrand Technology components and allows a high degree of automation.

C2: Is there still a need for education on the topic of Industry 4.0, or do your customers already know quite well which automation solutions they want, or which ones make sense for a particular production environment?

S. Muchenberger: Most of our customers already know what level of automation they would like to achieve today and in the future. We can meet all requirements here, as our electrostatic and web cleaning systems can be used stand-alone and can also be easily networked later. It is becoming increasingly important for our customers not only to ensure the electrostatic discharge of their product before delivery, but also to measure the residual charge and record it during production.

C2: Last but not least, a brief review and outlook: How did Hildebrand Technology and its parent company Gema Switzerland GmbH experience the past months during the Corona crisis?

S. Muchenberger: We experienced very high demand from our main target groups, the plastics



Electrostatic discharge with iONstream 4.0 and AUTO DC technology

and packaging industries, during the pandemic. At the same time, we managed to maintain our good delivery performance. We conducted tests in our customer laboratory digitally with MS teams and several cameras. Our customers can thus participate live from their screens.

While there were fewer live customer visits and trade fair participation overall, there were more visitors to our Hildebrand website and active digital customer contact via MS teams.

C2: How do you see yourself prepared for the coming, certainly uncertain, period?

S. Muchenberger: We have a good order situation and also receive new enquiries every day. Thanks to our efficient and flexible organisation, our innovative system solutions and the satisfaction of our customers, we are well prepared for the future. From our point of view, it will be even more important in the future to work out an optimal solution together with the customer and to react flexibly to the wishes and needs. We are well prepared for this. ■

*Image sources:
Hildebrand Technology*