

VISION 2012 SHOW: DONATO MONTANARI'S INTERVIEWED BY THE EDITOR OF VISION SYSTEMS DESIGN

Those of you who traveled to last week's VISION 2012 show in Stuttgart might have noticed that I wasn't the only editor from Vision Systems Design to attend the event.

That's right. On my trip to Germany I was accompanied by none other than our European editor Dave who was also there to discover what was new, original and inventive in the vision systems business.

During his time at the show, I asked Dave to stop to chat with Signor Donato Montanari, the General Manager of the Vision Business Unit of Datalogic (Bologna, Italy), a company which -- as you may recall -- took over Minneapolis, MN-based PPT Vision last year.

I wanted Dave to find out how a large multinational company like Datalogic was faring in these precarious economic times, as well as to discover what new technical developments, if any, had taken place since the takeover.

On the European front, Dave was hardly surprised to hear that Datalogic vision business had remained pretty much flat this year, since most of Southern Europe is still in the economic doldrums. But Signor Montanari painted a much more optimistic picture of his company's fortunes in the US and Asia. Thanks to the fact that the entire US Datalogic sales force had been brought to bear to sell the new vision product line, business was up ten percent this year in the US and a whopping forty percent in Asia.

But what of the technology that Datalogic inherited, I hear you ask? Well, apparently, there have been some changes there too. While the old PPT had subcontracted out the manufacture of its cameras, the Datalogic management has now brought the manufacturing process in-house.

But that's not all. On the hardware front, the PPT cameras that were based on an embedded PC architecture have now been redesigned and rebuilt based on digital signal processors, resulting in a subsequent cost reduction. And, in a six month effort, the existing PPT drag and drop vision programming software environment has been ported over to them.

Now, as many of you may know, PPT had a rather interesting business model with respect to its cameras and software. If you bought cameras from the company, the software development environment was provided for free. For the time being, it appears as if Datalogic will be keeping to that model.

But next year Signor Montanari said that Datalogic had plans to make the integration of third party software into its software development environment a whole lot easier for engineers than it has been in the past. And he also said that the company was beefing up its technical support centers across the globe to offer the capability of customizing the PPT software for specific customer applications.

Whether the company becomes a dominant player in the machine vision business still remains to be seen. But from listening to Signor Montanari speak, Dave seems convinced that it's a goal that the Italians will be trying their best to achieve.

For more details see:

<http://www.vision-systems.com/blogs/vision-insider.html>