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Engineering Students to Explore the Food and Beverage Industry in 2015

With the 2014 PneuDrive Challenge Engineering Design Competition having been concluded, SEW-EURODRIVE and Pneumax, co-sponsors of the competition, have announced that students will need to design a “Game Changer” for the food and beverage industry in 2015.

DTI statistics for commodities associated with the food and beverage industry report that the industry was valued at more than R 132 billion in 2013. It is also an industry that the South African government has identified as one of the top three priority areas for creating jobs, with a plan to see the creation of 145,000 jobs in the agro-processing by 2020. By challenging young mechanical, electronic and mechatronic engineering students to design applications that can improve productivity, reduce wastage and ultimately improve the bottom line for businesses in this industry, SEW-EURODRIVE and Pneumax have created a valuable platform that brings academic potential and the real needs of business closer together.

Game Changers Needed

Food and beverage companies are under pressure worldwide. Small, medium and large businesses in this constantly changing and competitive industry face a myriad of essentially unpredictable challenges. Adverse weather conditions, legislation changes, rising commodity prices, higher transportation costs and consumers becoming increasingly conscious of what they purchase are a few to mention.

Large companies have more resources and better access to capital to address challenges. However, it is the small-to-medium size processors and manufacturers that have to proactively find solutions to these pressures if they want to maintain or grow market share. Small-to-medium size businesses, who often lack easy access to finance, need to unlock potential growth opportunities by implementing efficient and well-managed systems. It is here where innovative ideas from talented engineering students could play an important role.

Technology + Innovative Engineering + Talent = Growth Potential



The importance of offering students access to the latest in drive and pneumatic technology, and how these can be used practically in business, cannot be stressed enough. With the rollout of the competition to universities around the country at the beginning of each year, the co-sponsors typically find that students have very limited, if no knowledge at all, about the latest drive and pneumatic technology that is available. This suggests not only a lack of technology awareness that universities obviously cannot keep up-to-pace with, but a serious gap in student understanding of how the technology can be used to improve business and manufacturing processes.

Started in 2008, the PneuDrive Challenge has proven itself as a successful model that can accelerate the introduction of young engineers into industry. In 2015 the competition organisers will be on the lookout for talented young engineers brave enough to think out of the box, and with the potential to design applications that could make a big impact in the food and beverage industry. Roadshows, technology workshops and coaching interventions through the year will aim to introduce, support and nurture students so that they can take a step into industry with confidence. The winners of the competition will receive a ten day all expenses paid trip to Germany and Italy where they will have an opportunity to present their designs to the head offices of the sponsor companies. SEW--EURODRIVE and Pneumax also offer more than R300,000 worth of equipment to competing universities to ensure that future students are afforded the opportunity to experiment with the latest in drive engineering and pneumatic technology.

Images:

With more than 2 billion can ends being produced annually by Nampak DivFood alone, engineering students who take part in this year's competition are going to need to jump into the deep end of the food processing and manufacturing industry if they want to compete well.



**Presseinformation
Press Announcement**

www.pneudrive.co.za



PneuDrive Challenge 2014 theme logo / mascot



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