Keeping Customers Engaged in a Changing World

*By **Hakan Erdamar,** Group President, Discrete and Industrial, Emerson Automation Solutions*

» **NO ONE COULD** have foreseen the enormous personal, financial, and social damage of the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses and livelihoods have been disrupted around the globe, presenting challenges beyond those brought by new technologies, climate and demographic change, and government regulations. But with those challenges come opportunities to strengthen commerce and our relationships and communities.

Customers are counting on us to deliver. We need to meet their evolving needs and expectations. Our focus on our customers has increased efforts to ensure our customers are safe, well-informed, and continuously educated. Here are a few ways we've adapted to their needs.

As an essential business that supports critical infrastructure, we have numerous strategies in place to safeguard our employees' health and ensure that customer interaction is safe.

We have rethought key aspects of how business is conducted. For example, we successfully moved our entire sales support staff to a remote model during the height of the pandemic and leveraged the technology to train and expand capabilities. And we actively engage with our customers to assess when we can safely resume face-to-face collaboration.

In some cases, personal interaction is still preferable to aid the application of new technologies, support a solution design, or help with operational and service issues. One way to do so is with our Mobile Road Show, which will allow us to meet with our European customers over the next year. We now have a virtual means of sharing the same experience with customers who cannot allow third parties into their facilities because of social-distancing practices.

We've pivoted to meet the evolving needs of our customers by adjusting and prioritizing production to help ease supply-chain burdens caused by demand ramp-up in key categories. Our facilities are operating with minimal downtime, and we've implemented extensive safety protocols.

The channels through which we communicate with our global teams and customers are changing. We have reimagined how we use digital tools for trade shows and industry events that were shuttered. Our priority remains being available to collaborate with our customers and partners on the operational, safety, and efficiency challenges they face. And that's why we've prioritized updates to our website, developed interactive content, and made investments to keep our sales teams well-equipped and our engineers accessible.

The COVID-19 pandemic has afforded us an opportunity to leverage our digital tools and communications capabilities to reach out to our field sales, service, and business development resources and provide training and development opportunities.

Over the last several months, we've executed more than 7,000 training sessions globally covering new products, solution approaches to help customers, and skill-enhancing training topics.

In many cases, our customers are working with reduced staff or staff that is being tasked with responsibilities to which they are not accustomed. As part of our commitment to helping our customers through the pandemic, Emerson is making many of the same online learning resources used by our teams accessible for free through the remainder of 2020. With more than 100 self-paced learning modules, this no-cost online training will be of particular value to contractors, wholesalers, end users, facility maintenance teams, engineers, and original equipment manufacturers who want to stay up to speed on

new technologies. We believe encouraging our customers to continue their professional development during the pandemic and over the course of the economic recovery helps them adjust to their changing circumstances and supports their long-term success.

We are also offering specialized Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) introductory sessions, providing customers the opportunity to learn how to build successful IIoT strategies while leveraging Emerson's Digital Transformation toolkits and architecture. This approach makes it easy for customers to start small, turning actionable insights into operational improvements, and calculating a return on their IIoT investment. It can also make it easier to strategically scale across multiple production lines, a single facility, or a broader operational model.

When a crisis hits, companies need to react to new challenges without losing their vision. They need to respond quickly but also plan for the long term. The world is challenged right now – in our businesses, our communities, and even our families. There are no easy answers.

But with disruption comes opportunity. New skills and capabilities develop. New opportunities to serve customers at a deeper level present themselves. And being accessible and willing to help takes on a greater meaning.

This is a chance to reconnect with our customers, yes, but also with our employees and our families. Now is the time to strengthen our communities, build an inclusive, diverse workforce, and challenge ourselves to change. By approaching the pandemic as an opportunity to establish deeper connections, rethink old paradigms, and create new value, we can move forward with confidence to fully support our customers' businesses while enriching the global community. ●
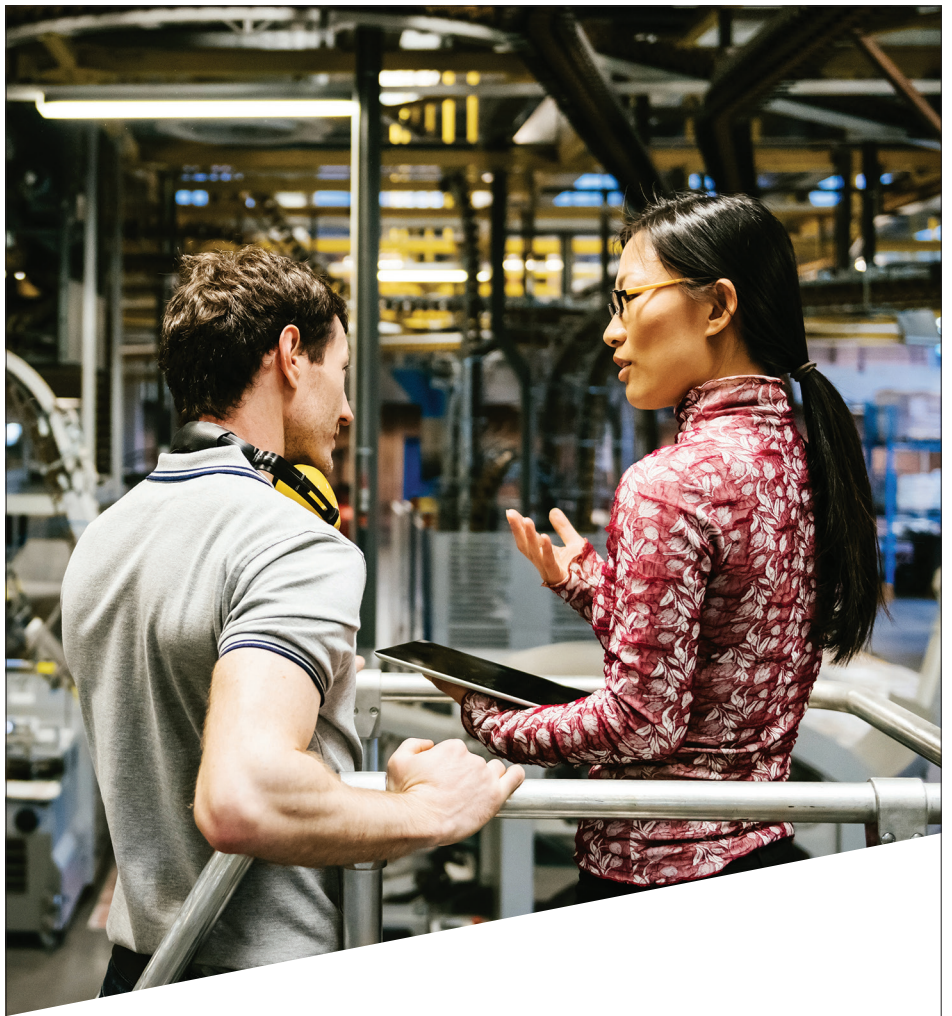
Industry Tailored Solutions and Support for Your Toughest Challenges

From projects to operations, your success requires a deep understanding of the challenge. Our brands — ASCO™, AVENTICS™, SolaHD™, TESCOM™ and TopWorx™ — offer leading products to help deliver the reliability and speed required in the changing automation solution market.

Partner with Emerson for applied industry expertise for your most demanding applications and environments. Emerson is a global leader in providing proven engineering technologies and services. Visit us online for additional support: **Emerson.com/Automation**

EMERSON.

CONSIDER IT SOLVED™